WEB WALKERS

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF ADULT NATIVE AMERICAN DISTANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCES:

TOWARD A STANDARD MODEL OF INDIGENOUS LEARNING

by

Sandra D. Weiterman Barton

M.S., Florida State University, 1989
B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2000
B.S., University of Wisconsin, 1983

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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Approved by:

Dr. Jennifer Calvin, Co- Chair

Dr. C. Keith Waugh, Co-Chair

Dr. D. Shane Koch

Dr. Judy Rawls

Dr. Cynthia Sims

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
July 24, 2013

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

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TITLE: WEB WALKERS, A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF ADULT NATIVE AMERICAN DISTANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCES: TOWARD A STANDARD MODEL OF INDIGENOUS LEARNING

MAJOR PROFESSORS: Dr. Jennifer Calvin & Dr. C. Keith Waugh

This phenomenological study investigated the experiences and perceptions of eight female adult Native Americans distance learners. To understand the complex issues of Native American education and distance learning, the literature review included the history of the educational policy directed towards Native Americans, Tribally Controlled Universities and Colleges, distance learning, the Digital Divide, Vygotsky and socio-cultural learning, and the indigenous pedagogical paradigm.

This study has a two-fold purpose: 1) to add to the body of knowledge on adult Native American distance learners by using qualitative methods to explore the experiences and perceptions of those learners, and 2) to introduce a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and document if the five model threads are an important component of the participants' learning processes. With the accelerated implementation of distance learning platforms in the higher

education arena, it is important to understand the experiences and perceptions of adult Native Americans. In addition, it is vital to determine if distance learning poses an underlying threat to their cultural values. Furthermore, determining which components of the learning process are important to adult Native Americans is a critical step in understanding and implementing the appropriate teaching methods and curriculum.

The results of this study centered on the experiences and perceptions of the participants in various distance learning environments. Components and practices deemed necessary for learning to occur in the distance learning environment and the face-to-face classroom were discussed and defined. Respect, meaningful interaction, relevancy, and life-long learning were important themes found in the study.

Several conclusions were drawn from the results of this study. The participants definitely differentiate between the meaning of education and learning. Building on that concept, most perceive distance learning environments that do not contain a face-to-face component as a *tool* to accomplish an *education.* However, respectful, meaningful, face-to-face interaction along with understanding the relevancy of the learning material is perceived as a *real* [indigenous] learning experience. Comments about the relationship between learning and life, made by the participants, clearly indicate support for socio-cultural learning. In addition, all participants indicated that the five threads of the proposed model are important factors in the learning process and should be incorporated into classrooms.

The implications of the study are numerous. Without a face-to-face component, distance learning will not provide the learning experience desired by many Native Americans, thereby creating a possible barrier to education. The five threads of the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning were substantiated by all participants, who vary in age, tribal affiliation, educational

background and blood quantum. Thus, the model can serve as a solid foundation for developing curriculum throughout the Native American community, rather than for just one tribe.

Recommendations for further study include conducting this study with adult male Native Americans, indigenous peoples of other countries, and other ethnic groups to determine if the model can be generalized to other populations. The teaching practices of Native American instructors and the curriculum at Tribal colleges and universities should be examined to determine if, and to what extent, the five model threads are being used. Implementation of the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning has the capability of transforming the current educational system into a truly learning environment, rather than an environment of acquiring knowledge to satisfy educational requirements.

DEDICATION

To all my relations

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I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Waugh, Dr. Rawls, Dr. Sims, and Dr. Koch for providing invaluable comments. Very special thanks go to Dr. Calvin for her patience, guidance, and wisdom. You were always there when I needed grounding, and a little rock talk. Anushiik!

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And to Carl, my dear, dear husband, navigator, chauffeur, sounding board, and biggest supporter, thank you, thank you, thank you. Your patience while I incessantly worried some little detail to death or jabbered on and on (in circles) about a thought, is amazing. I will follow you anywhere.

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Last, but not least, I want to thank my children: C. J., Alison, William, and Nina for their understanding when they heard the words, “I’ve got class” or “I have to write.” Thank you.

FOREWORD

THIS DAY

The spring rains we've reached
the green blue grass grows each day
and so will your thoughts.

Fantasy does not belong to you
    it belongs to all of us
that's what learning is all about
    theories and concepts are taught
but a feeling cannot be bought.

We ask for the feeling of learning
from sacred talk.

Henry Real Bird
May 14, 1990

in *Opening the Montana Pipeline*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

History is written by the victors

-Winston Churchill

Background

"You are walking in two worlds" or "You have one foot in two canoes" are phrases used in the Native American community to indicate that someone is balancing their life between the Native and Anglo world. Today, many Native Americans involved in the United States (U.S.) higher educational system are doing just that: walking in the world of traditional face-to-face education and in the world of distance learning (DL). However, the indiscriminate use of DL in Native American communities is potentially problematic in two ways. It is capable of eroding the current resistance to assimilation and causing a complete dissociation of the Native American community by undermining the primary cultural foundation of respect for all, seen and unseen.

For over 350 years, various methods of Eurocentric-based education have been used to "civilize/assimilate/educate" Native Americans (Adams, 1995; Cajete, 1994, 2000; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Pratt, 1964; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Spring, 2007). Thomas McKenney, who from 1824-30 served as the first head of the Office of Indian Affairs, believed that "education was the key to social control" (Spring, 2007, p. 22).

To cover the complex issues of power, privilege, and assimilation infusing the historical context of Native American education, Chapter 2 will present a literary historical review of Native American education in the U.S. from the Colonial Period to the present. Religious and governmental institutional practices will be discussed, such as the forced removal of children

from their Tribes to Anglo educational institutions, often as a form of hostage taking (Hoxie, 2001; Szasz, 1998). The firsthand accounts of the removals and treatment at boarding schools have left many Native American communities distrustful of all levels of the American educational system. Adam Fortunate Eagle (2010), a boarding school survivor and activist wrote,

> Pipestone Indian Training school opened on February 2, 1893, three short years after the massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in which an estimated three hundred Indians were slaughtered. Pipestone Indian Boarding School had students from various tribes: Sioux, Chippewa, Sac and Fox, Oneida, Pottawatomie, Omaha, Winnebago, Gros Ventre, Arickaree, and Mandan. Many of them were close to, or experienced, events we now call history. They passed their experiences on to the next generation of students, in keeping with our oral tradition. (p. xv)

The memories of those experiences now reside in a younger generation who often equate education with assimilation (Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). In addition, current research on "intergenerational trauma" documents the effects of boarding school trauma on subsequent generations (Creapeau, 2012; Pember, 2007, p. 25).

According to the 2010 National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), Native Americans have the lowest higher education enrollments and graduation rates of any other ethnic groups (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). Clearly, the Eurocentric learning models, theories, and practices are not working for the majority of Native Americans. DL can either be the panacea for this group that many institutional systems experts expect it to be, or it will be the educational system that completely erodes Native American cultural values, ensuring complete assimilation.

Education, Society, and Technology

Education is part of a society's foundation and how education functions or the 'function' of education in a society varies over time and among cultures (Ravitch, 1983). For example, a "Pre-European contact" indigenous pedagogical paradigm was introduced which consists of four stages lasting throughout a person's life (Sanchez et al., 1998). On the other hand, Anglo education typically occurs only between the ages of five and eighteen and may involve changes in educational practices. While some believe that the Anglo educational system swings as a pendulum between the traditionalist and progressive movements (Ravitch, 1983, 2003), other scholars assert that education is used for maintaining social order and control (Alfred, 1999; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Spring, 2007). In the U.S., expansion into Indian Territory usually coincided with renewed interest and efforts to educate Native Americans (Hoxie, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006;).

Although education, society, culture, and technology are different areas of research, each affects the other's evolutionary development. The development of new technology forces a change in educational processes. For example, new technology introduces new modes of delivery, which in turn influence the development of new learning theories[1]. As technology and theory change, the materials and methods used to deliver education change. These changes in turn influence culture and society. Schools then implement programs based on societal needs (Ravitch, 1983).Thus, education as well as "technology, community, communication and culture are intimately related" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, pp. 72-73).

[1] For example, when a large number of adults began returning to school, the field of adult education became a prominent area of study and research with new instructional models and theories being developed (Cercone, 2008).

Education and the Digital Divide

Education is no longer limited to the privileged few. Reform, technological advances, and new delivery methods have made higher education available to the marginalized populations of the world. DL, the fastest growing educational method today, serves the expanding population of returning adult students (Brown, 2001), including economically disadvantaged, differently-abled, and working students. In doing so, it has shifted college population demographics. Paradoxically, as technology increases accessibility to learning it also creates a Digital Divide (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 1999).

In 1991, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) defined the Digital Divide as the differential access to information, technology, and cyberspace along socioeconomic and racial lines. Longitudinal studies by the NTIA indicate that the Digital Divide among certain ethnic groups has steadily increased since 1994. As the Digital Divide continues to widen, many believe that knowledge and education will once again be monopolized by those with the resources[2], thus limiting education to the privileged few (AIHEC, 1999; Moore, P., 2001; Rogers, 2001; Smith-Hunt, 2001; Stuart, 2008).

Native Americans must not be allowed to fall into the Digital Divide. Although many Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) are implementing policies to help students access the Internet, the Digital Divide still persists in these institutions (Sanchez et al., 1998; Stuart, 2008). Many tribes do not share the same policies regarding the archiving of tribal images, ceremonies, languages, customs, and traditions.[3] Some tribes, such as the Menominee and Navajo, use the Internet in an effort to preserve their native language and offer online language courses.[4] For the

[2] The resources include, but are not limited to, money, equipment, license to broadcast.
[3] There are over 500 federally recognized tribes, each a distinct sovereign nation.
[4] These classes are restricted to enrolled tribal members and descendants (Benton, 2012).

Pueblo of Santo Domingo, however, “everything is handed down orally. Nothing is written down or recorded” (Stuart, 2008, p. 15). Tribes like the Pueblo of Santo Domingo consider DL invasive and an assault on tribal policy. Hence, the world of DL must be made accessible to all Native Americans without the fear of loss of cultural identity and values.

Education and Power

Education has been loosely defined as the system by which knowledge is transferred and, with it, power (Cervino & Wilson, 2001; Deloria, 1999a; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Freire, 1986; Johnson, 2001). The issues of educational systems, power, and the uneven distribution of knowledge to various groups have been addressed by many scholars (Cervino & Wilson, 2001; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Freire, 1986, 1998; Johnson, 2001; Spring, 2007). In the Native American community, however, “the power to decide, or self-determination, is the fine line that separates cultural adaptation from cultural assimilation.…institutional power….must be shared with Native students, their families, and their communities” (Garrod & Larimore, 1997, pp. 16-17).

The Native American community must have a voice in their education because “schools exert power and influence over the next generation” (Ravitch, 1983, p.14). Education can spread power, but it can also be used for installing, keeping, and promoting barriers within one group while increasing power to another (Johnson, 2001). Thus, it is essential to understand that information transmitted from the dominant group to the marginalized group is often skewed to support the dominant group’s viewpoint (Cervino & Wilson, 2001; Deloria, 1999a; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Freire, 1986, 1998; Johnson, 2001). Ronald Cervino and Arthur Wilson (2001), authors and adult education professors maintain:

> Higher education has served as the guardian and gatekeeper of what counts as "official" knowledge. Certain people have had the power to determine what has counted as "valid" knowledge---largely those who are white, western and for the most part, male. (p. 155)

Education, Technology, and Power

The awareness of educational power is of particular concern in the digital age. With DL and the World Wide Web, information is globally spread within seconds (Friedman, 2005). The information transferred will encourage or destroy Native American culture and values; power will be shared or withheld. It is likely Native American students walking the World Wide Web are not cognizant of this dynamic. However, it is crucial to remember that DL curricula are typically based on Eurocentric teaching methods which often ignore Native American cultural traditions (Antonio, 2006; Boyer, 1997; Brayboy, 2001; Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Lomawaima & McCarty 2006; Mankiller, 2004; McLoughlin & Oliver, 2000; Miller Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Reyhner, 1992; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Sanchez et al., 1998).

The primary cultural foundation of the Native American community is respect which is earned by face-to-face interaction. Concern exists that "distance technology makes it difficult to fulfill cultural expectations regarding face-to-face interaction . . . distance educators are denied opportunities to earn the respect of their students" (Sanchez et al., 1998, p. 8). Vine Deloria Jr. (1998), Native American educator, philosopher, and prolific author, cautions that many "tend to believe that we can apply technology on a rather indiscriminate basis and we are learning that often we do not really understand the side effects that such use creates" (p. 133). One possible effect is that the *web* will cast a *net* around the increasing number of adult Native American

distance learners. This will cause a slow erosion of cultural values, completing the process of assimilation which began over 350 years ago.

Education, Interaction, and Native Americans

Eurocentric educational learning models are based on one-way dispersion of information, its methodology is generally reductionist and in the traditional Eurocentric model, little interaction is expected or wanted from the student (Cajete, 1994; Campbell, 1991; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). This one-way type of experience is reported by many students enrolled in DL classes (Liu, 2008; Smith-Hunt, 2001; Wetsit, 1999). They also describe the DL environment as cold, sterile, and remote, which can "foster a sense of disengagement and isolation" (Wetsit, 1999, p. 6). Many researchers believe interaction is necessary to counteract this effect and build communities in the DL environment (Brown, 2001; Liu, 2008; Moore, 1997; Nasseh, 1997; Smith-Hunt, 2001; Wetsit, 1999). Although student to student and student to instructor interaction helps learners feel connected with one another (Brown, 2001; Liu, 2008; Nasseh, 1997; Wetsit, 1999), the interaction may not be enough for Native American students who have a core cultural value of earned trust and respect found and shown in face-to-face interactions. Thus, the lack of face-to-face interaction may place a barrier to learning. When we consider Native American communities, the *distance* in distance education may not only be creating a Digital Divide, but may also be contributing to the erosion of other cultural values that underlie the whole premise of community.

Native Americans and Community

In order to understand the cultural threat of DL, it is necessary to realize that the tribal community is an integral part of being a Native American. This connection is not easily explained to non-Native Americans because "for many Native Americans, personal and cultural

identity, as well as spirituality, are inextricably intertwined with connections to family, community, tribe, and homeland" (Garrod & Larimore, 1997, p. 3). The connection of an individual is not only to the tribe, but to all others, whether animate or inanimate. It is not a visible bond, but it is a part of knowing. According to Audrey Shenandoah, an Onondaga Clan mother:

> The way we describe it in our language – we are all connected. We don't describe the natural world as separate. We are part of the natural world and the natural world is part of us. And we are all family. This way of thinking keeps us connected to the whole universe. (Mankiller, p. 43)

Similarly, Deloria (1999) explains, "there is a sense that life has some unifying principles…this feeling, and it is a strong emotional feeling toward the world that transcends beliefs and information, continues to gnaw at American Indians throughout their life" (p. 139). Community is not just the invisible threads and bonds, but it is also the collective memory of a tribal community over generations. This collective memory of stories, experiences, customs, histories, and ideas specific to a community is based in the oral tradition (Adams, 1995; Alfred, 1999; Antonio, 2006; Axtell, 1997; Brayboy, 1999; Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1999a; Johnson, W., 2009; Joseph, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Mankiller, 2004; Peshkin, 1997; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Sanchez et al., 1998; Wallace, 2003) .

Tribally Controlled Universities and Colleges

TCUs are bringing education to the reservation that is accessible and relevant to the social and economic needs of the area. TCUs offer basic college courses; vocational classes; and tribal history, language, and culture courses which help to preserve tribal cultural identity. The TCUs often serve as the cultural center for the tribe because their libraries house cultural

artifacts, family records, provide reading programs, and Internet access (AIHEC, 1999; Boyer, 1997, 2002; Thull, 2008). In addition, many TCUs provide social support to the surrounding community by offering social services, health, and day care. As one non-Native American community member said, "If it weren't for the Tribal College, we might not have a community" (Williams, 2007, p. 41). Carol Davis, vice president of Turtle Mountain Community College, a TCU, wants TCUs to serve the Native American community in the way Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs) serve theirs:

> *That's* what *we* want a college to do for our reservation. We want to educate our people, our own leaders, and bring them back to the reservation where they can contribute...They come back from your institutions, and we have to educate them all over again because they don't know about the tribe. (Boyer, 2002, p. 16)

Enrollments of adult Native Americans in TCUs continue to increase and James Shanley, President of Fort Peck Community College, a TCU, believes the total number of TCUs will continue to increase (Raymond, 2004). The current thirty-eight TCUs have an open enrollment policy and DL programs that link learning centers together on large reservations. With the increase of DL platforms at TCUs and linkages with larger TWIs (using their coursework), curricula involving Native American learners must incorporate the traditions and cultural values of respect, interaction, intergenerational activity, storytelling, community, and place.

Indigenous Learning, Indigenous Knowledge, and Ways of Knowing

The terms Indigenous Learning (IL)[5] and Indigenous Knowledge (IK) are often used interchangeably; however, they do not have the same meaning. Learning refers to the process of

[5] I was not able to find a formalized articulated definition for Indigenous Learning. When referenced, most articles discuss practices or methods used to teach indigenous peoples. They do not discuss the actual components in the learning process. The label "indigenous learning" is a catch all similar to the phrase indigenous education.

verbally or non-verbally receiving and/or transmitting information (Knowles, 1998; Merriam & Brockett, 1997; Webster's, 1988). Knowledge is defined as understanding gained through study or experience and is the result of a learning process (Webster's, 1988). Not all information learned is retained as knowledge and perhaps not all knowledge is learned.

Indigenous learning.

IL incorporates the traditional methods of instruction such as storytelling, apprenticeship, dreams, mentoring, ceremony, art, and symbols to determine one's *place* in the universe (Antonio, 2006; Bergstrom et al., 2003; Cajete, 1994; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Sanchez et al., 1998). IL is the process of using traditional methods to transfer or pass information from one person to another within a Native American community. In addition, IL encompasses the cultural foundation of respect for all those seen and unseen and the interconnectedness. Although an indigenous pedagogical paradigm has been identified for pre-European contact, the authors state that IL at the pre-European level does not exist in the United States (Sanchez et al., 1998).

Indigenous knowledge.

Although IK is sometimes referred to as Traditional Knowledge (TK), both are considered to be the knowledge held collectively by a group of people within an indigenous (local) community.[6] It is based on a community of responsibility and connectedness. The term IK "has emerged over the two decades to describe the knowledge of a group of people local to a given situation, sometimes used interchangeably with local knowledge" (Fischer, 2004, p. 2).

[6] Roy Ellen and Holly Harris, from the University of Kent at Canterbury, have outlined ten characteristics of IK.

IK has led to Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK). IWOK, a pedagogy according to Dr. Adams, is focused on learning rather than outcome and emphasizes holistic understanding of a topic (Pember, 2008a).

It is important to understand that IK and IWOK have been formally defined by Native American educators as a response to Anglo educators, anthropologists, sociologists, and philosophers who developed Eurocentric theoretical frameworks, models, and philosophies to explain Native American learning and culture.

Statement of the Problem

Many adult Native Americans live in remote areas which limits their access to higher education. Distance learning (DL), a widely implemented delivery method of higher education, is breaking down educational barriers because it is accessible to working adults, marginalized students, and others who cannot physically attend a university or college. However, adult Native American distance learners who face financial, accessibility, and conductivity barriers to DL have an additional barrier: cultural values. Most adult Native American distance learners are at an educational disadvantage because DL courses typically do not include a face-to-face component. In the Native American community, the cultural foundation of respect is built by face-to-face interaction. In addition, most DL curriculums are based on Eurocentric educational models and numerous studies have shown that those models are not well-suited to Native American learners (Antonio, 2006; Brayboy, 1999; Cajete, 1994; Campbell, 1991; Deloria, 1991; McLoughlin & Oliver, 2000; Morrison, 2009; Sanchez et al., 1998). Adding to the above complexities, Wilma Mankiller (2004), former Chief of the Cherokee Nation, believes,

> Our educational philosophy as indigenous people has not been adequately articulated for the general society, which still expects Native students to be educated with national cultural values that are often counter to Native values…we need to develop educational policies that respect and integrate indigenous philosophical perspectives. (2004, p. 61)

To date, a solid, consistent theoretical framework or learning theory has not been developed for Native American learners. Susan Imel (2001), non-Native adult educator and author observes, "The literature base lacks depth. No strands of research and theory building can be detected: the literature does not seem to build on itself" (p. 1). Native American scientist and scholar, Gregory Cajete (1994) agrees, "No recognizable contemporary theory of Indian education exists to guide the implementation or direction of educational curriculum development" (p. 28). Therein lay the problems. Collaborations, partnerships, and good practices are in place, but a formalized indigenous-based learning theory or model that can be applied throughout the Native American community simply does not exist (Atleo & James, 2000; Cajete, 1994; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; McLoughlin & Oliver, 2000; Reyhner, 2002; Sanchez et al., 1998).

Although a serious gap exists, underlying cultural values were noticed in the literature, and a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning was created. The model includes five threads: Place, Storytelling, Intergenerational Interaction, Experience, and Interconnectedness. The model needs to be tested and substantiated. Hence, a question regarding each thread was incorporated into the research questions for this study.

The lack of an indigenous learning theory or model for DL developers to use at TCUs and TWIs, along with the lack of face-to-face interaction in DL, threatens to erode the cultural foundation of respect in the Native American community. Continued implementation of DL without regard to cultural values will continue fostering the erasure of cultural values and has the

potential to dismantle Native American communities thereby completing the assimilation process, which began over 350 years ago.

Purpose of the Study

Often "one of the most frustrating aspects of the university experience for First Nations' students is the role dichotomy between the producers and the consumers of knowledge in university settings" (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 6). Therefore, this study has a two-fold purpose: 1) to add to the body of knowledge on adult Native American distance learners by using qualitative methods to explore the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners, and 2) to introduce a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and document if the five model threads are an important component of the participants' learning processes.

Significance of the Study

There exists a severe lack of information concerning adult Native American distance learners. Reasons for the paucity of information may include 1) there exists only a small number of adult Native American distance learners, 2) there exists only a small number of researchers (Native Americans or non-Native Americans) conducting research on adult Native American distance learners, 3) distrust of researchers by Native Americans, 4) low number of participants due to the natural reticence to volunteer of most Native Americans, and 5) distrust of "educated Native Americans" conducting research.

Nevertheless, the fact remains; there is a dire lack of information available concerning the effects of DL on the cultural values of Native Americans. As DL continues to be aggressively implemented throughout higher educational institutions, and more Native Americans are

attending these institutions for additional education or job retraining, the effect of DL on their cultural values needs to be studied. The experiences and perceptions of these learners in the DL environment need to be documented to determine if, indeed, a cultural barrier is being added to the existing Digital Divide. The significance of a comprehensive study such as this one, which documents the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners, will help to fill the current gap in the literature.

Significance of this study also exists in the realm of curriculum and instructional design for adult Native American distance learners. Although numerous articles and books have been written suggesting best practices for teaching Native Americans, or characteristics of IL or indigenous education, little has been written for the distance learner. Studies that have been conducted typically focus on accessibility, equipment, and technological savvy rather than on the foundational components of the DL curriculum for adult Native Americans.

Although TCUs may be acting as gatekeepers for the content and delivery of DL courses on their campuses, they are not the gatekeepers for other higher educational institutions who are transmitting DL into the Native American communities via TWIs. This study's proposed model can be utilized by native and non-native higher educational systems to assure that the DL content and delivery are appropriate for adult Native American distance learners.

In addition, although the TCUs may be incorporating culturally relevant DL curriculum, a standard indigenous learning theory or learning model does not exist that can be used throughout Indian Country. This has been problematic because there are over 562 federally recognized tribes[7]. Each tribe has distinct characteristics and knowledge that define their specific community. Existing models primarily address the requirements of one specific tribe. Utilizing

[7] Although there are 562 federally recognized tribes, there are many more who lost recognition during termination, and those who are still waiting to be recognized.

those models in other Native American communities would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, due to the differing IK contained within each community. The significance of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning is that it can be utilized in Native American communities across Indian Country. Because it contains the cultural foundations of many tribes, no matter their individual practices, characteristics, or IK it is an all-encompassing learning model. According to William Tierney (1991), professor and Director of the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis,

> What we need now are sensitive studies that move beyond statistical survey and charts. We need ethnographies of higher education that incorporate the thoughts and feelings of students and faculty and administrators about their relationship to the education process instead of authorial works that are divorced from those under study. Rather than research about American Indians for policy makers…we need studies by and for Native Americans about their relationship to the world of higher education. (p. 83)

The limited success of Native Americans is often attributed to the Native American culture and the Native Americans' inability to acculturate. The *problem* has been labeled as a Native American issue, rather than as an issue of inadequate learning models or theories used when designing courses and curriculum (Antonio, 2006; Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). Articulating the culturally relevant threads of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and then bringing them to bear on the design of distance education courses for Native American learners at TCUs and non-TCUS will be an important step to breaking down educational barriers.

Theoretical Framework: Vygotsky and Socio-cultural Learning Theory

When discussing educational practices, distribution of knowledge, and power, both Freire (1986) and Deloria (1999, 2001) advise that caution should be used when using the language of the oppressor. Within the Native American community some believe that, "true self-determination and truly Indigenous models of education may be difficult to implement because we have internalized the colonizer's models" (Bergstrom et al., 2003, p. 174).

Therefore, when examining Anglo-based learning theories, the social and socio-cultural learning theories offered a solid theoretical framework for this study. Upon closer review, Vygotsky's theory, which insists on the necessity of establishing a strong social presence for learning to occur and includes the zone of proximal distance (ZPD), is best suited to serve as the theoretical foundation.

His view of human development is fundamentally cultural and posits that higher order functions develop from our social interactions; full human development depends on extensive social interaction. For Vygotsky: "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (1978, p. 89). His theory emphasizes that human intelligence originates in one's society or culture and that individual cognitive gains occur first at interpersonal then intrapersonal levels.

Socio-cultural theory is particularly suited for Native American learners because family, tribe, and community are intertwined with learning. Typically, "learning is culturally influenced and a social rather than an individual process" (McLoughlin & Oliver, 1998, p. 127). However, because of the interconnection of self and community, the traditional education is not only for the tribe, but for the individual because "in traditional society the goal was to ensure personal growth" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 43).

Nonetheless, components of Vygotksy's theory correlate to the structure of the indigenous pedagogical paradigm (Sanchez et al., 1998) or the learning theory of Native Americans prior to pre-European contact which will be discussed in Chapter 2. Vygotsky stressed the importance of language and culture in learning. He believed that from the moment we are born, we are learning. This reflects Stage One of the indigenous pedagogical paradigm (Sanchez et al., 1998).

A constructivist approach in which the learner actively participates and builds his knowledge with the help of the instructor is the premise of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky described the ZPD as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This concept is the basis of Stages Two and Three in the indigenous pedagogical paradigm (Sanchez et al., 1998).

Current educational practices, such as mentoring, teamwork, collaboration, and scaffolding are based on Vygotsky theory and, "it is difficult to exclude Vygotsky from any serious discussion of learning processes" (Schultz, 2004, p. 2). It is important to note that these are the same types of learning practices used by Native Americans before European contact (Sanchez et al., 1998), some of which are still in use in Native American communities and TCUs.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the development of the interview protocol and the overall study:

1. What were the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners in the distance learning environment?
2. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of place?
3. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of storytelling?
4. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of intergenerational interaction?
5. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of experience?
6. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of interconnectedness?
7. To what extent are the five threads of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning used by instructors in their DL and face-to-face classrooms?

Definition of Terms

Adult Learner: A person who is responsible for decisions that affect his or her learning opportunities and the resulting consequences. Could be legal-age designated as 18 or 21. Often refers to post-secondary learners. Adult learners often have special learning considerations (andragogy) as identified by Malcolm Knowles (USDLA, 2008).

Blended Course: A distance learning course that meets in the classroom for face-to-face instruction, and has on online component. The online component varies according to the

instructor, course content, and university policy. Sometimes referred to as a hybrid class (USDLA, 2008).

Blood quantum: The degree of American Indian or Alaska Native blood from a federally recognized tribe or village that a person possesses (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2013).

Community: Native American community is the primary context for traditional education. It is the context in which the Indian person comes to know the nature of relationships, responsibility, and participation in the life of one's people (Cajete, 1994).

Distance Education: A generic, all-inclusive term used to refer to the physical separation of teachers and learners. In the context of this study, distance education is defined as education and/or training courses delivered via video, audio, television, CD-ROM, or web-based technologies. The delivery format of the course is blended, fully online, video-teleconference, or pre-recorded videotapes, CD ROM, or podcast (USDLA, 2008).

Distance Learning: The acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance (USDLA, 2008).

Digital Divide: The differential access to information, technology, and cyberspace along socioeconomic and racial lines (NTIA, 1999).

Distant Site: A classroom connected remotely via a telecommunications systems to a site where a teacher is present. Sometimes referred to as a remote site (USDLA, 2008).

Fully Online class: In the context of this study, a fully online class is defined as a distance learning course that is completely computer based. The course has no face-to-face instruction, although communication could be asynchronous or synchronous. Typically an instructor is

available only via email. USDLA defines distance education, distance learning, and telecourse but does not define a fully online class (2008).

Indian Country: Refers to "land that is recognized by U.S. law: reservations, informal reservations, dependent Indian communities, allotments, and special designation" (Retrieved from http://tribaljurisdiction.tripod.com/id7.html). However, in this study Indian Country refers not only to the land, but to all Native Americans as one group composed of many different communities.

Indigenous: Term used to describe anything having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment. Cajete used Indigenous to apply "broadly to the many traditional and tribally oriented groups of people who are identified with a specific place or region and whose cultural traditions continue to reflect an inherent environmental orientation" (1994, p. 14).

Native American: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North, Central and South America who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition (USDE, 2000).

Tribe: Term used to describe a group of Native American people of common custom, language and ancestry. The term is used to identify those Native American tribal groups who still view themselves as separate distinct nations within the greater boundaries of the United States. They believe in tribal sovereignty and jurisdiction for themselves separate from state governments, based upon treaties they have made with the federal government (Boyer, 1989).

Videotape Course: A distance learning course in which lectures are recorded on videotapes for students to watch. The course has no classroom component, and an instructor is

typically not available for questions or interaction. This would include CD Rom courses and podcasts (USDLA, 2008).

Video-teleconferencing (VTT): A distance learning class using technology to broadcast the image of the instructor to a classroom. Some VTT courses are one way video, some are two way video. All are usually two-way audio. Instructor may be at the student site, or a distant (remote) site. May be referred to as IVT (interactive video-teleconferencing), DVT (distance video-teleconferencing), or two way television (USDLA, 2008).

Indigenous education: Also known as Indian education. Generally refers to the curricula, methodologies, techniques, and programs used to educate indigenous peoples (Merriam, S. B., Cafferella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. 2010). Cajete emphasizes that indigenous education is "gleaned from mainstream American education and adapted to American Indian circumstances, usually with the underlying aim of cultural assimilation" (1994, p. 28).

Indigenous Knowledge: The knowledge of a group of people local to a given situation, sometimes used interchangeably with local knowledge (Fischer, 2004).

Indigenous Learning: Commonly defined as indigenous peoples using indigenous methods and ways of knowing (Merriam et al., 2010). However I have expanded and clarified the definition. In this study, Indigenous Learning will refer to the process of Native Americans receiving and internalizing information in order to solidify their place and interconnectedness with all others, seen and unseen; the knowledge can then be shared (Barton, 2013).

Platform: The computer operating system used to support the DL course. Examples include but are not limited to: Blackboard, D2L, WebCT, and E-college (USDLA, 2008).

Traditional education: The transfer of knowledge using traditional indigenous methods that includes but is not limited to, storytelling, ceremony, mentoring, experiential, dream, and

vision quest. According to Cajete (1994) the Indian community is the primary context for traditional education. Sometimes referred to as indigenous education, although the term indigenous education varies and often includes the curricula, methodologies or programs used to teach indigenous peoples (Cajete, 1999; Deloria, 1999a; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001).

Conclusion

This chapter began with the presentation of background information of several issues that are of concern to adult Native American distance learners: historical distrust of the U.S. educational system, the role or function of education, and the Digital Divide. The topics of education, power, and technology were then explored. Following these discussions, TCUs and the vital role they serve in the Native American community were reviewed and the difference between IK, IL, and IWOK was addressed. The statement of the problem and purpose and significance of the study were then presented. Concluding the chapter was the presentation of the theoretical framework of the study, the research questions, and definition of terms.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Assimilation, however gently stated and seemingly enlightened its rationale, leads to cultural disappearance…it is…a magician's master trick: now you see 'em, now you don't

--Alan Peshkin, 1997, p. 71

Introduction

This study has a two-fold purpose: 1) to add to the body of knowledge on Native American adult distance learners by using qualitative methods to explore the experiences and perceptions of a adult Native American distance learners, and 2) to introduce a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and document if the five model threads are an important component of the participants' learning processes.

Currently, limited information exists concerning the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners or the effect of DL on their cultural values. DL, the fastest growing field in the educational system, is being widely implemented in colleges and universities. It is imperative to understand how this delivery method is perceived and experienced by Native Americans and to determine whether it presents a threat to Native American cultural values. Two underlying reasons for the scarcity of material on this subject may be 1) the small numbers of Native Americans doing research and 2) the ubiquitous Native American distrust of the Anglo educational system. To understand this mistrust, a review of the educational history of the Native American is essential.

The impact of DL on adult Native Americans and their cultural values, along with the paucity of research in this area necessitates the examination of a wide range of literature to place

the study in a historical context of assimilation, power, and traditional indigenous learning. Therefore, the literature review will examine: 1) Native American education from the Colonial Period to the present; 2) TCUs, their function, contributions, and relationship to Native American communities; 3) Education, power, and technology with a concentration on the Digital Divide, which includes the Native American barrier of cultural values; and 4) Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Learning Theory as a theoretical framework. To conclude the chapter, the pre-European learning stages will be discussed and a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) will be introduced.

History of Native American Education under Anglo Control

Many Native Americans have little or no desire to assimilate into the Anglo culture or to discard their past. It has been documented that, "Native American groups in general opposed such absorption" (Provenzo & McCloskey, 1981, p. 1). The sentiment is carried into the higher educational arena where often "Native students equate a college education with assimilation into the dominant culture" (Garrod & Larimore, 1997, p. 16). Statistics "show that the overwhelming majority of Native students would rather sacrifice their educational goals than abandon their cultural identities and values" (Garrod & Larimore, 1997, p. 17). Native Americans who have navigated the Eurocentric educational system and earned higher education degrees are often looked at with distrust and are often not considered *real* Native Americans. They are often viewed as being acculturated or assimilated into the Anglo lifestyle; no longer holding a traditional Native American belief system. Angela Gonzales, a Native American Harvard graduate concurs, "What I found…is that the degrees may close doors instead of open doors" (Mankiller, 2004, p. 60). Consequently, non-Native Americans are typically the educators of

Native Americans. Even today, only a small percentage of Native American educators are, actually, Native American.[8]

Over the past 350 years, various methods have been employed to assimilate and educate Native Americans (Adams, 1995; Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Hoxie, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Nabokov, 1999; Peshkin, 1997; Raymond, 2004; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Spring, 2007; Trafzer et al., 2006). The historical treatment "of the Native American…has focused primarily on the attempt of the mainstream American culture to 'civilize' them" (Provenzo & McCloskey, 1981, p.1). Vine Deloria, Jr. (1999), Native American philosopher, professor and prolific author, believes this assimilation continues, "The U.S. government…represented, and still represents, an effort to effect a complete transformation of beliefs and behaviors of Indians" (p. 138).

What Eurocentric-based education that did occur, rather than prepare Native Americans for higher education, was centered on vocational instruction, religious training, and, as Deloria puts it, "the niceties of European customs" (1999, p. 137). However, the educational efforts to assimilate Native Americans, whether carried out by church or state, have been largely unsuccessful.

The history of Native American assimilation-focused education can be divided into six periods, spanning the Colonial Period to the present day.

The Colonial Period

In 1617, King James I ordered the Anglican Church bishops to begin raising funds to establish an "Indian" college in the Virginia Colony. The funds were to be used "for the erecting

[8] According to the 2010 Digest of Educational Statistics, there are only 14,415 American Indian/Alaska Natives employed in higher education institutions. This number includes professional and non-professional staff members (Synder & Dillow, 2011).

of some Churches' and schooles [sic], for the education of the children of those Barbarians" (Wright, 1988, p. 3). The purpose was to *civilize* the Native Americans through conversion to Puritan Christianity. In Henrico in 1618, land was set aside for the college. However, the treasurer of the Virginia Company mismanaged the collected funds and the college was never built. Not a penny went toward the conversion and education of the Native Americans (Wright, 1988).

In 1651, in the Massachusetts Bay area, the missionary John Eliot founded the first of fourteen praying towns, which were established throughout the United States to encourage Christianity among Native Americans (Raymond, 2004). Most ripe for inculcation, of course, were the children of tribal members. Thus, boarding schools were soon established where youngsters could receive Christian civilizing instruction (Smith, 2004). Monetary rewards were promised and hostage threats were used to ensure the cooperation of families and tribes whose children were selected and sent to such boarding schools.

Higher education during the colonial period was based on a European model designed and organized to serve a society that was not generally democratic. The first universities were primarily for the male leisure class, future government leaders, and members of the professional class.[9] This education was available at institutions such as Harvard University, William and Mary College, and Dartmouth University. Although, these institutions were on occasion subject to public control, they were essentially privately-run entities (University of West Virginia, 1999).[10]

Harvard University, in 1654, established its Indian school as part of a strategic plan to solicit funds from oversea sources to support the faltering university. Tasked with the dual responsibility of Christianizing and Anglo-educating Native Americans, the school promised to

[9] Usually all of Anglo descent.
[10] Most professors were trained in the European educational system and supported the ideas of a classical education.

"wave tuition and provide housing for American Indian Students" (Peabody Museum of Archeology, 2013, node 477). Although named the Indian School, "not more than four or five managed to enter and of those but one, Caleb Cheeshahteaumuck, took his degree[11] (Kidwell, 1991, p. 86).

The charter of William and Mary College, established in 1693, called for the education of Native Americans. "Hostage education" (Szasz, 1988, p. 70) is the term often used to describe the experience of Native American students sent to William and Mary College during this time. Native American youth, taken from trading tribes and sent to the school as *hostages*, were used to ensure the trading-dependency of Native Americans. Alexander Spotswood, the Lieutenant Governor for Virginia between 1710-1722, proposed the tribes "deliver two children of Great Men of each Town to remain as Hostages, and to be educated at our College" (Szasz, p. 69). He further stated, that this plan would "prove the moste effectuall [sic] Security for their fidelity and be a good step towards the Conversion of that whole Nation to the Christian faith" (p. 69). The students were expected to matriculate with a degree in Protestant theology and return to their respective tribes as ambassadors of Christianity and western civilization. However, none of these students became missionaries, and it is estimated that no more than twenty-four Native Americans actually attended William and Mary College (p. 77).[12] The Revolutionary War interrupted missionary funding and, after that, William and Mary College made no effort to recruit Native Americans.

Dartmouth College in New Hampshire was established, in part, "for the education and instruction of youth of the Indian Tribes in reading, writing and all parts of learning which shall

[11] One year after receiving his degree, having little resistance to European diseases, he died of tuberculosis (Kidwell, 1991).
[12]The majority of students having no resistance to European diseases died while in "The East".

appear necessary and expedient for civilizing and Christianizing children of pagans" (Garrod & Larimore, 1997, p. 7). However, the monies garnered to support this effort were mainly used to expand the college for the education of white students.[13] Between the years of 1770 and 1893, fifty-eight Native American students matriculated, but only eleven of these actually graduated. Two hundred years after being established, Dartmouth had graduated only 19 Native Americans. Hence, in 1970, the college reaffirmed its commitment to Native American education. Since then the college has been fairly successful in recruiting, retaining, and graduating Native American students.

The colonial experiment in Indian higher education failed. Many Native Americans resisted and those that participated in this assimilation process generally succumbed to disease, while those that survived returned to their tribes as soon as possible. Hoxie (2001) reveals that "the benefits of education-literacy, a skilled trade, knowledge of the American governmental system-came only to the students who were lucky enough or hardy enough to survive this grim routine" (p. 38). From the colonial period to the present, the narrative of passive resistance and resilience pervades the many stories of Native American students in the Eurocentric educational systems (Adams, 1995; Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Hoxie, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Trafzer et al., 2006). Moreover, Native Americans, known for their adaptive ability, always drew together and held to their culture until able to return to their tribes (Garrod & Larimore, 1997).

The Early United States Period

[13] Eleazar Wheelock, found of Dartmouth actually opened two schools in 1769. He founded Dartmouth for "and relocated Moor's Charity School from Lebanon, Connecticut to the Dartmouth campus. Segregated and unequal, the former Moor's School was for the 'Indians'" and Dartmouth reserved for the sons of Englishmen (Garrod & Larimore, 1997, p. 7).

After the Revolutionary War, many individual states began to establish public universities which followed a traditional Eurocentric classical education template. These institutions were closed to the majority of women, African Americans, and Native Americans. With the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1802, the Jefferson administration acknowledged a federal obligation for Native American education. However it was not until 1819 that $10,000 was authorized by Congress to be distributed to mission schools throughout the United States for the education of Native Americans (Report on BIA Education, 1988).

In 1825, the Choctaw Tribe of Kentucky opened an academy jointly administered by the Tribe, church, and Federal officials. However, European standards deemed the education offered as closer to preparatory level than college level (Raymond, 2004). After the forced removal of the Choctaw from their lands to a reservation in Mississippi, the academy closed[14].

In 1834, Congress created the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to establish Indian reservation schools to segregate Native Americans from *Whites*.[15] That same year, Congress passed the Indian Intercourse Act of 1834, which forbade white men from entering any reservation unless they were licensed traders. European-model schooling was, therefore, virtually non-existent on reservations. Furthermore, the near total isolation from Anglos did nothing to prepare Native American students for success in higher education.

Throughout the 1800s and into the 1900s, the forced removal of Indians from their tribes and reservations for educational purposes continued. Military orders to First Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt of the 10th Calvary in 1878 detail his mission to select Indian children from the

[14] The Indian Removal Act of 1830 removed large numbers of eastern and southeastern tribes to lands west of the Missouri, and the Choctaw were removed even further westward.
[15] Term used during the 1800s.

Dakotas to be placed at Hampton Normal & Agricultural Institute. Pratt writes in his diary "the children, if brought east, would become hostages for tribal good behavior…" (1964, p. 258).

Civil War and Reconstruction Period

Westward expansion to the Great Plains had begun in earnest, and The Indian Peace Commission was established to remove tribes from the Great Plains to reservations in Oklahoma and the Dakotas.[16] As the populations on reservations grew, religious organizations were federally subsidized to operate Native American schools. The education consisted of instruction in Christianity; English reading, writing, and speaking; and basic math and gender-based vocations. Schooling did not include preparation for higher education.

In 1871, the federal government began to experiment with off reservation boarding schools. Among these were Hampton Institute, located in Hampton, Virginia;[17] the Carlisle Indian School in eastern Pennsylvania, which opened in 1879; and the Indian College in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, which opened in 1880.[18] In the 1880s, the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina petitioned the North Carolina General Assembly to open a school to train Native American teachers. In 1887,[19] the Croatan Normal School opened with 15 students (University of North Carolina, 2008).The General Assembly, in 1941, renamed it Pembroke State College for Indians. Until 1953, it was the only state-supported baccalaureate degree college for Native Americans in the United States. After the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, Pembroke State College was required to admit non-Indian students and the percentage

[16] From 1867 through 1871, Congress recognized Native American tribes as separate and sovereign nations.
[17] Now known as Hampton University, a HSBCU
[18] Now known as Bacone College
[19] By this time, the first HSBCU, Chenyney University, in Pennsylvania had been in existence 50 years old.

of Native American enrollments began to drop from 100% to the current 18% (University of North Carolina, 2008).[20]

During the mid-1800s, Senator Justin Morrill, concerned that a classical education was not relevant to an industrializing nation, spearheaded a movement to improve the state of public higher education in the areas of applied sciences, agriculture, and engineering. The Morrill Land-Grant Act or Morrill Act of 1862 gave federal lands to states for the purpose of opening schools to educate farmers, scientists, and educators (West Virginia University Extension, 2008). The act embodied three purposes: 1) a protest against the dominance of the classics in education, 2) to develop college level instruction relating to the practical realities of an agricultural and industrial society, and 3) to offer those belonging to the industrial class preparation for the "professions of life" (WVU, p. 5). Very few of these schools were open to African Americans, women, or Native Americans. Thus, the second Morrill Act of 1890 specified that states using federal land-grant funds must either make their schools open to both African Americans and whites or allocate money for segregated black colleges to serve as alternatives to white schools.[21] Subsequently, sixteen exclusively black higher educational institutions received 1890 land grant funds for the education of African American (NASULGC, 2008). Neither Morrill Act addressed education for Native Americans.

Ironically, while many United States territories such as Samoa, Guam, and Micronesia received land grant status between 1968 and 1990, TCUs, located within the United States and serving the original inhabitants of the U.S., did not receive land grant status until 1994, 132 years

[20] Now known as University of North Carolina at Pembroke
[21] Most of these public schools funded by the state were established between 1870 and 1910. Prior to that time, the American Missionary Association (AMA), between 1861 and 1870, founded seven black colleges and 13 normal [teaching] schools (www.collegeview, 2008, pg. 1).

after TWIs, 104 years after Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and several years after the U.S. held territories (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

The Early 20th Century Period

The United States educational system in the 1920s experienced major curriculum changes. During The Great Depression, many who would have normally gone to work stayed in school (Ravitch, 1983). John Dewey, an educator, took a pragmatic stance that education must be progressive and include vocational studies for this new class of student. In contrast, the traditionalists believed that education should be classical in nature and increase the student's intellectual powers (Ravitch, 1983). Diane Ravitch, an educational policy analyst, asserts that the United States educational curriculum swings between the progressives' and the traditionalists' point of view and that schools often implement programs based on societal needs. However, K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa McCarty, Native American professors and authors, contend that the federal policies and educational practices imposed on the Native American community by the U.S. government were not just

> 'swings of a pendulum' between tolerance and intolerance. Each generation was working out, in a systematic way, its notion of a safety zone, an area where dangerously different cultural expressions might be safely domesticated and thus neutralized…we view federal [educational] Indian policy as a sociocultural (and therefore ideological) process in which federal authorities *appropriate* policy to serve particular interests and goals. (2006, pp. xxii-xxiii)

The U.S. socioeconomic divide expanded into the higher education system, with vocational education schools for those of the lower economic spectrum and universities, women's colleges, and HBCUs for those of the upper classes. Nevertheless, education for Native Americans was

not seen as a priority; it was viewed as a problem. Moreover, Native Americans, at this point, did not have a voice in educational decisions because they were not citizens of the United States until The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924.[22]

The 1928 Meriam Report, officially subtitled *The Problem of Indian Administration,* exposed the conditions of Native American children at boarding schools and the state of Native American education, which was controlled by the BIA. The study revealed that Native American children attending boarding schools experienced underfeeding, non-existent medical care, overcrowding, and excessive physical labor (Adams, 1995; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Szasz, 1999, Trafzer et al., 2006). Isolated from their families for years at a time, Native American children at these boarding schools were forbidden to speak their native language; made to take English names; forced to cut their hair, wear western clothes, perform many menial tasks, and suffer other indignities (Adams, 1995; Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Hoxie, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Pember, 2007; Peshkin, 1997; Qoyawayma, 1964; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Spring, 2007; Trafzer et al., 2006). The Meriam report required lawmakers to recognize that boarding schools were not the answer to educating Native Americans.

In the spring of 1933, an important boost to Native American education came with the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). After the CCC was formed, the Indian Office was given money for establishing a separate Indian CCC known as the Indian Emergency Conservation Work Program (IECWP). The IECWP provided an opportunity for Native Americans to receive vocational training in the fields of carpentry, truck driving, mechanics, and engineering. In 1934, the Johnson-O'Malley Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to

[22] Because the right to vote is governed by the state, some Native Americans did not receive the right to vote until 1957; 94 years after African Americans and 37 years after women received the right to vote.

develop contracts with states to deliver education to Native Americans who had not been involved in public education.[23] Working with the BIA, sixteen boarding schools were closed and replaced by eighty four schools located closer to the reservations (Stein, 1992). By 1935, 515 Native Americans were enrolled in college (Wright & Tierney, 1991). To encourage higher education for Native Americans, Congress approved the Indian Reorganization Act in 1954, which arranged loans to Native American college students. This period of progressive education helped to deliver improved curricula, to hire qualified faculty and staff at day schools, and to reduce the number of boarding schools that separated families (Szarz, 1999).

The World War II Period

More than 23,000 Native Americans served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II and more than 40,000 left their reservations to seek jobs in urban areas for the war effort (Carney, 1999, p. 107). The effects on Native Americans of this abrupt and massive contact with white Americans reverberated long after the war.

The GI Bill, which permitted and encouraged the higher education of veterans, impacted Native Americans as well as traditionally blue-collar American workers. With the help of the GI Bill, a college education and degree became a gateway for low-income groups to move into higher paying jobs and the middle class. Moreover, while "the 1940s and 1950s were a progressive period in which the 'life adjustment education' was a major push" (Ravitch, 1983, p. 11), colleges remained highly regulated, traditionalist, and xenophobic towards Native American veterans. Although war-time had necessitated proximity and fellowship among disparate groups, peace-time reestablished boundaries. When Native Americans returned home after the war, they

[23] This was not thoroughly implemented. For example, members of the Monacan Tribe, located near Lynchburg in western Virginia, were required to attend a Mission School at Bear Mountain until 1964. In 1963, 23 Monacans applied to attend the White high schools. The next fall, the Mission School closed and the children were *allowed* to attend the public school system (Wood & Shields, n.d., p. 32).

were once again "*Indians,*" subjected to hostility, racism, and little opportunity (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995).[24]

Within the Native American community, the period between 1940 and 1960 is known as the termination/relocation time (Cook-Lynn, 1996; Diverse, 2008; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Reyhner & Eder, 2006). During this time, the United States government enacted and enforced The Termination Policy. This policy was meant to rid the United States of *recognized* Native Americans and to reclaim tribal land/reservations, to make null and void all tribal treaties signed by the U.S. government.[25] The last termination, executed in the early 1970s, was signed by President Kennedy.[26]

During this time period, to further encourage Native American assimilation into Anglo culture, the U.S. government resettled more than half of all Native Americans into urban areas. In addition, as Termination caused significant job-loss on the reservation and the surrounding areas, many Native Americans moved to the cities in search of work. Educational opportunities also diminished for terminated tribes. With no federal funding to support them, tribal schools closed. Many students in significantly remote locations were left without educational opportunities. And, those students who were bused to nearby cities for schooling often encountered hostility, racism, and isolation. In the higher education arena, members of terminated tribes were no longer eligible for government scholarships for college. A residual effect of all this is that today "more than 50% of Native Americans live away from tribal homelands and societies" (Cook-Lynn, 1996, p. 99). If family ties have not been maintained over

[24] The BIA encouraged these veterans to leave the reservation and relocate to the larger cities. However, most found the "white world strange and inhospitable" (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p.203).
[25] Individual laws such as House Committee Resolution 108, Public Law 280, and the Menominee and Klamath Termination Acts are examples of such laws enacted by the U.S. Congress during the 1950s and 1960s.
[26] President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1964

the distances, tribal members living away from home can experience disconnect of tribal identity and lack a sense of community. When these *City Indians* return home, they are often viewed with suspicion because the connection to traditional practices may not have been maintained.

Cook Lynn, a Native American academic, novelist and founder of *Red Pencil*, asserts that "the extent to which we resisted the pressures thrust upon us during those times is, I believe, the extent to which we have been successful in acquiring leadership roles in modern Indian society" (1996, p. 103). With the push for Native American self-determination and the establishment of TCUs in the decades following Termination, strong leadership has proven essential.

1960s to the Present

The Civil Rights era of 1954-1968 helped break many barriers for not only African Americans, but for many marginalized peoples including Native Americans. While President Kennedy signed the last Termination, Presidents Johnson and Nixon believed in and encouraged Native American self-determination. The American Indian Movement (AIM) helped bring awareness to that ideal. "Indeed, the wave of hope generated by the civil rights movement helped inspire a grassroots movement in Indian Country that worked to pass the Tribal College Act" (Pember, 2012, p. 20) resulting in the establishment of the first TCU on the Navajo reservation in 1968.[27]

In 1972, the presidents of the six established TCUs formed the American Indian Higher Education Consortium [AIHEC] (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 1999; Pember, 2008b). The Consortium, in an atmosphere of cooperation and support, provides a united Native

[27] Originally named Navajo Community College; now known as Dine.

American educational voice, helping "to support the work of TCUs and the national movement for tribal self-determination" (AIHEC, 2008, p. 2).[28]

In 1975, Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination & Education Assistance Act, which helped with tribal control and the building of schools closer to reservations. Then, in 1978, Congress passed the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistant Act.[29] The AIHEC created the American Indian College Fund in 1989, which helped with the establishment of the AIHEC Student Congress in 1990 and the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education in 1999. These important entities contributed to the development of TCUs and the students they serve (Gipp, 2003).

The Native American Higher Education Initiative began in 1994 when the TCUs and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation started a seven-year partnership. "In 1994, TCUs attained Land Grant status; this helped expand their course offering in environmental, agricultural and natural sciences" (Pember, 2008, p.12). By signing the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities in 1996, President Clinton created an important partnership between the TCUs and the federal government. In 2001, President Bush reaffirmed the TCU initiative.

Tribally Controlled Universities and Colleges

TCUs are as diverse as the reservations and populations they serve. While one reservation may cover three million acres, another may cover less than 1500 acres (Boyer, 1997; Raymond, 2004). One college may serve over 60 tribes and another only one tribe (AIHEC, 1999; Boyer,

[28] AIHEC's mission statement "adopted in 1973, identifies four objectives: maintain commonly held standards of quality in American Indian education; support the development of new tribally controlled colleges; promote and assist in the development of legislation to support American Indian higher education; and encourage greater participation by American Indians in the development of higher education policy" AIHEC, 2008.
[29] Renamed in 1998 as The Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act (Gipp, 2003).

1997; Hill, 2004). One curriculum does not fit every college; however, all are student-centered and culturally-oriented. Mission statements focus on the common themes of preservation, enhancement, and promotion of cultural traditions, including the restoration and/or preservation of traditional language skills (Benham & Stein, 2003; Boyer, 1997; Kidwell, 1999; Krumm, 1997; Pember, 2008b, 2012). Carrie Billy, president of AIHEC says, "The most incredible aspect of the tribal college movement has been the constant commitment to sustaining tribal culture, language, and community. Tribal colleges have never lost sight of this mission" (Pember, 2008b, p.12).

TCUs "are becoming institutions of first choice not last chance for tribal members" (Boyer, 2002, p.17). Consequently, the number of TCUs has steadily increased and is expected to continue (Raymond, 2004). [30] The steady growth of TCUs has led to an increase in college-enrolled Native American students representing over 250 different tribes of the federally recognized 562 tribes (NCES, 2008). [31] In 2005, The NCES reported approximately 16,000 enrollments of American Indian/Alaska Native students in TCUs,[32] a number that has doubled in the past 30 years from 0.78% in 1976 to 1.1% in 2006 (2008, p. 126).

Currently, there are thirty-eight TCUs: thirty-seven in the U.S. and one in Canada (AIHEC, 2013). Some are four-year institutions and others are two-year community colleges. Programs range from remedial, certification, and associate's degrees to bachelor's and master's degrees.

[30] Since Dine College was established in1968, the number of TCUs has increased to six in 1973, 33 in 2002, 37 in 2008, and 38 in 2012 (AIHEC, 2008, 2013).
[31] Enrollments at TCUs between 2001 and 2006 showed a 23% increase (NCES, 2008, p. 130).
[32] AIHEC reports TCUs serve approximately 20,000 students (Paskus, 2012, p. 8).

TCUs are true *community* based colleges, embracing both the tribal and non-tribal communities. Although TCUs are located on reservations, they have an open enrollment policy.[33] They often serve as gathering places for tribal members, commonly providing intergenerational projects (Wallace, 2003). TCUs also function as a community resource, providing social services such as day care and health care (AIHEC, 1999; Boyer, 1997).[34] The TCU cultural centers are typically libraries located in the center of campus,[35] housing cultural artifacts, antiquities, and tribal records. The libraries serve students, faculty, and community members searching for genealogical records (Thull, 2008; Wallace, 2003). The "tribal colleges are unique; they are vital to their communities" (Krumm, 1997, p. 157).

For most Native Americans, community is the means by which they "come to understand the nature of their personhood and their connection to the communal soul of their people" (Cajete, 1994, p. 165). Moreover, the "ability to 'create community'" is one of the most powerful survival skills of Native Americans (Garrod & Larimore, 1997, p. 15). There can be no doubt that TCUs help create community.

Deliberately working as a bridge between the Native American community and the surrounding Anglo world, many TCUs have articulated agreements with four-year TWIs and other mainstream colleges and universities to serve as pipelines to those universities (Kidwell, 1999; Pember, 2008). With this connection, Native American students overcome the cultural shock many experience in leaving family and community to attend college.[36]

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[33] In the fall 2006 semester, seventy-nine percent of the enrollments were Native Americans; 21% were other ethnicities (DeVoe, et al., 2008).
[34] "More than 46,000 community members rely upon the services and programs" TCUs provide (Paskus, 2012, p. 8).
[35] Symbolic of a communal fire.
[36] Cultural shock has been listed as one of the primary reasons for the low matriculation rates of Native Americans in TWIs (Boyer, 1997, 2002; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Shirley, 2004; Tierney, 1995).

The bridge is not only to TWIs; TCUs will also partner with local companies to offer vocational education programs. Paul Boyer (1991), founding editor of Tribal Journal College of American Indian Higher Education observed that "students are trained in skills needed on a reservation and communities also benefit directly through college-sponsored community development projects" (p. 121). The meaningful connections built by the Native American communities and TCUs to institutions beyond the reservation enrich both the Native American society and surrounding Anglo society. Boyer declares, "By combining the resources found off a reservation with the knowledge found only at a tribal college, there is at last a potential for significant social change" (1991, p. 124).

Distance Learning and the Digital Divide

TCUs are closely connected to their students, the tribe, and the outside world. Their success is reliant upon these relationships, although "their first loyalty was to the members and culture of their tribal nation, making them institutions of opportunity, not assimilation" (Boyer, 1997, p. 25). To supplement their resources and be as efficacious as possible for these communities, TCUs also use DL to supplement traditional courses. The experience of adult Native Americans with DL is often affected by financial, accessibility, and conductivity issues. The most significant concern, however, is cultural.

Distance Learning

DL once referred to students who enrolled in paper correspondence courses that were sent through the mail. However, today DL can refer to a variety of platforms including but not limited to, blended, Video-teleconferencing (VTT), and synchronous and asynchronous fully online courses. Some courses are on CD-ROMs, thumb drives, or delivered as podcasts.

DL enrollments have steadily increased since the introduction of the Internet. Almost 96% of the largest universities offer some type of distance learning course (Sloan Consortium's fourth annual report, 2006). The growth rate of online enrollments increased 100% between the fall of 2005 and the fall of 2011. [37] According to the Sloan Consortium report in 2013, approximately 6.7 million students were enrolled in a DL course during the fall of 2011.

Because student "focus is on convenience, quality, service and cost" (Levin & Cureton, 1998, p. 6), many universities that are trying to maintain fiscal solvency and reach large populations of students are pushing to implement a wide range of distance learning options without considering the unintended consequences.[38]

The global economy demands that education for working adults be flexible and relevant. Many working adults travel and cannot be restricted to a traditional classroom setting, so DL offers a convenient alternative to traditional classrooms. Additionally, with an increasingly technological society, adults need to stay current to be employable, and DL offers the ability to continue with professional development.

Digital Divide

At first glance, DL appears to be a panacea for reaching marginalized learners and working adults, increasing financial solvency of universities, and serving larger numbers of students. The second glace shows an unintended consequence: the Digital Divide. In 1999, NTIA defined the Digital Divide and asserted that the Digital Divide has turned into a "racial ravine" (1999, p. 8). For some researchers, the increased use of DL causes concern:

[37] In the fall of 2005 approximately 3.2 million students were enrolled in online courses (Allen & Seaman, 2006). In the fall of 2011, approximately 6.7 million students were enrolled in online courses (Sloan Consortium, 2013).
[38] For instance, in 2012, The University of Virginia found itself embroiled in controversy over the firing of the school's president when the Board of Directors determined the president had not been implementing DL courses fast enough. The president was subsequently rehired, but the role of DL at that TWI has yet to be determined.

> Given the current debate concerning the nation's information-haves and information-have-nots, the fact that a majority of institutions rely on a level of technology that may preclude the participation of certain members of society raises the questions of equal and fair access to educational opportunities. (Smith-Hunt, 2001, p. 201)

Many researchers have corroborated the existence and spread of the Digital Divide (Moore, P., 2001; NTIA, 1999; Smith-Hunt, 2001; Stuart, 2008; Zickuhr & Smith, 2012). [39] Many of these researchers believe that technology "has set the stage for a new form of classism and racism known as the Digital Divide" (Rodgers, 2001, p. 5). Several reasons for the divide include: "lack of basic utilities, rural settings, outdated equipment, accessibility, affordability" (Stuart, 2008, p. 14). Additionally, the "skills required to take advantage of distance learning opportunities may create greater encumbrances for the economically disadvantaged and academically unprepared" (Smith-Hunt, 2001, p. 56). Age, culture, fear, and personal priorities are also recognized as obstacles learners face when considering DL opportunities (Smith-Hunt, 2001). In the Native American community, many elders are often traditional and do not value technology. One participant in Smith-Hunt's study said about elders using computers, "it seems to be an about-face for what it is that they're valuing [traditional lifestyle]" (2001, p. 193).

TCUs and the Digital Divide

TCUs, like other educational institutions, will need to be flexible to reach and retain their technologically savvy customers and keep enrollments at a profitable level. At TCUs, programs are implemented to keep the Digital Divide from widening. The Northwest Indian College and Dine maintain a laptop loan program that allows students to checkout laptops to do homework

[39] Although the PEW report has demographics, Native Americans are not included in the study. The classifications in the study are: White, non-Hispanic, Black, non-Hispanic, and Hispanic.

and research. Many students cannot afford computers, have limited financial resources, and limited or no Internet access due to remoteness of their location (Benham & Stein, 2003; Stuart, 2008). The American Indian College Fund recognizes that although TCUs have identified purchasing equipment and implanting technology as high priorities, most do not have the money to invest in keeping up with the necessary technology upgrades.

However, DL classes with their Eurocentric based curriculum originating from TWIs may not take into account the cultural importance Native Americans afford face-to-face interaction. This culturally-specific value, then, could present as a barrier to IL in DL environments. And, the Eurocentric-based learning (in this case DL) could be a threat to the cultural value. This should be a significant challenge to educators. Native American Professor and author, Daniel Wildcat, cautions that, "technology today seems little understood in terms of environmental and cultural contexts" and asserts that the cost of the widespread use of technology "is a growing absence of a sense of place for human communities" and "our technologies increasingly insulate us from direct experience and the acquisition of experiential knowledge" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, pp. 75-76).

Lev Vygotsky and Socio-cultural Learning Theory

Many socio-culturalists believe that the "current conceptualizations of socio-cultural theory draw heavily on the work of Lev Vygotsky" (Scherba de Valenzuela, 2002, p. 1). The socio-cultural view of human development asserts that higher order functions develop from our social interactions. Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky[40] emphasizes that human intelligence

[40] While living in Russia during the 1920s and 1930s, Lev Vygotsky developed his theory, which was repudiated by the government (Phillips, n.d., p. 1). In fact, after Vygotsky's death in 1934, his work was banned and remained relatively unknown to educators outside Russia until the Cold War ended. Much of Vygotsky's research has not

originates with interactive society and culture. For Vygotsky (1978), "Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p. 89). Therefore, individual cognitive knowledge occurs first through interpersonal and then intrapersonal levels. An individual's development must be understood as a result of interaction with the external social world in which that individual existed from birth. Learning and development occur in socially and culturally shaped contexts.

Although a socio-cultural theory is rooted in constructivism, it is focused on the role of community and environment in the creation of knowledge. The constructivist view focuses on internal negotiation of meaning. Socio-culturalists agree that meaning can vary, but they also note that meaning is defined by the community of practitioners; knowledge resides in the community. Socio-culturalism focuses on the development of the collective knowledge of a community as opposed to the development of an individual's knowledge within a community and stresses the importance of social interaction as a direct influence of knowledge construction.

The socio-cultural theories work well when comparing them to the indigenous pedagogical paradigm (Sanchez, Stuckey, & Morris, 1998), or to indigenous ways of learning. The learning "is culturally influenced and a social rather than an individual process" (McLoughlin & Oliver, 1998, p. 127). As Deloria empathically declares, "Central among those traits is our sociability" (2001, p. 74).

When examining the various Anglo learning theories, Vygotsky works best as the theoretical framework for this paper because "While Piaget stressed biological supported, universal stages of development, Vygotsky emphasizes the interaction between changing social conditions and the biological substrata of behavior" (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978, p. 123).

been translated into English, although his theories have become influential in western countries (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Oers, 2005).

He believed that at every level, humans are active, vigorous participants in their own existence, and that they acquire means to affect not only their world, but themselves. This is similar to a Native American view of the connection between self and world; they affect each other.

In order to have human mastery of a concept, idea, or experience, Vygotsky believed that the creation and use of auxiliary stimuli began at infancy. In other words, through specific stimuli an immediate situation and the reaction linked to it are altered by the human intervention. All social interaction is a part of these stimuli. He also viewed auxiliary stimuli to be "tools of the culture into which the child is born, the language of those who relate to the child and the ingenious means produced by the child himself, including the use of his own body" (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978, p. 123). This concept, too, fits well with the belief of many Native Americans that learning is a lifelong journey in search of one's self, and is influenced by all interactions.

Social Interaction

One theme of Vygotsky is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition, first as an outside force or stimulus and then as an internalized concept or piece of knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) stated:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (p. 57)

Storytelling, which is a foundational learning practice in the Native American community, reinforces Vygotsky's viewpoint (Atleo & James, 2000; Cajete, 1998; Lomawaima & McCarty,

2006; McLeod, n.d.; Ohiyesa, 1999; Sanchez, et al., 1998; Schultz & Kroeger, n.d.; St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995; Trafzer et al., 2006). Children are taught lessons, cultural values, and tribal history via storytelling sessions. Each child and each adult hears the story differently and will internalize the words needed at that time. Personal experience by observation or action is another learning practice which supports the process of external then internal processing.

Zone of Proximal Development

Another theme of Vygotsky is that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which begins at birth. Vygotsky described the ZPD as " the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p. 86). This person(s) is defined as non-intrusive (Schutz, 2004). Active agents can include people, books, computers, and other tools to establish communities of learning. The skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone. Full development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. Some authors such as Tharp and Gillimore (1988) and Benson (1995) contend that there is no single ZPD as the zone varies with culture, society, and experience. Vygotsky (1962) claimed that the larger the zone, the better the students will learn. Current educators and researchers often use the term *scaffolding* to refer to the concept of the ZPD zone. The learner's knowledge is built in successive increments with the guidance of one who is more knowledgeable. This practice resembles the intergenerational teaching and mentoring found in traditional Native American learning practices. The "teachers are all members of the community" (Campbell, 1991, p. 102). Lessons were taught by others, first by observation and then via supervised practice until proficiency was reached (Cajete, 2000;

Deloria, 1999; Lasley & Matczynki, 1997; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Marashio, 1982; Morrison, 2009).

Experience

Vygotsky classified concepts as either scientific or spontaneous (Karpov, 2001). Spontaneous concepts are non-conscious and the result of the generalization of everyday personal experiences. Scientific concepts are taught in school in a systematic order and acquired consciously. Vygotsky believed that as long as curriculum supports the necessary material, the development of scientific concepts will run ahead of the development of spontaneous concepts. Scientific concepts are formed in the process of instruction in collaboration with an adult. Mastery of a higher level of scientific concepts will raise the level of spontaneous concepts. Some researchers believe that "scientific concepts are learned *"downward*" through written symbols to examples, where spontaneous concepts are learned *"upward"* from sensory experience to generalization" (Tharpe & Gallimore,1988 as cited in Benson, 1995, p. 5). This hypothesis formed the basis of Vygotsky's work that consciousness is not found in the brain, but in everyday practice. This supports the Native American belief that experience is a foundation of learning and that knowledge is then used to help the tribal community survive. Ryder (1998) declared, "Consciousness is manifested in our labor, in the communities that are formed by what we do, in the tools we use and in our language: the products of yesterday's understanding appropriated for today's problems" (p. 1). Vygotsky viewed cognitive development as the "gradual reorganization of consciousness" (Ryder, 1998, p. 4).

Interaction in the DL Environment

Vygotsky insists that social interaction is the basis of learning and that the culture will affect the learning. If social interaction is withheld, a barrier to learning is created. Hence,

communication and interaction play a vital role in the distance learning environment. The theory of transactional distance (Moore, 1997), was one of the first studies to examine the relationship of interaction within a DL environment. Subsequently many researchers have studied various aspects of interaction within the DL environments. Community-building, an important part of DL, is formed by the "modeling, encouragement, and participation of the instructor" (Brown, 2001, p. 31). Although Liu's (2008) primary focus was to study the effect on achievement of student-student interaction in online learning environments, he found that "the instructor had to be the one who deliberately took the effort to initiate student interactions" (p. 4).

When researching the effect of the computer as a catalyst of learning in the classroom, McLoughlin & Oliver (2000) used Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory as a framework. They determined that a group in a classroom working together around a computer is a social activity where learners talk, discuss ideas, share the resource (computer), and collaborate. When the teacher is involved as a facilitator, a dialogue is opened and scaffolding can occur, resulting in a higher level of learning. This supports Vygotsky's view that learners must take an active role. However, the study does not address students working solo on a computer taking an online class. In 2002, McLoughlin published a paper concerning learner support in distance education environments. She specifically used Vygotsky's principle of scaffolding and said that it "needs to be reexamined because it is not readily translated into contexts where the teacher is not present, such as in online learning" (p. 1).

Batts et al. (2006) and Garrison and Cleveland-Innes (2005) determined that online instruction needs interaction to be affective; however, they did not include a Native American population in their studies. McLoughlin and Oliver (2000), Sanchez et al. (1998), and Wetsit (1999) agree that instructor interaction is a necessary component for Native American learners

who are working online. Tierney (1995) suggests that active, rather than passive learning is important for the academic success of Native American students. Collaboration, teamwork, scaffolding, apprenticeship, mentoring, and the sharing and building of knowledge are methods by which Native Americans teach and learn. All of these methods involve significant amounts of social interaction and reflect the way in which knowledge is increased in the ZPD in Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory. Many of these techniques were practiced by Native Americans before European contact and are still used in many Native American communities today to transmit tribal knowledge, skills, and ceremonies.

Traditional Indigenous Learning

The Native American community and the Anglo community do not view the purpose of education through the same lens. In Native American communities, "Learning comes early… not through lectures but through experience: customs, habits, and practices" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 33). Wildcat further elaborates "The primary lesson learned is and was that knowledge and understanding come from our relatives, the other 'persons' or 'beings' we have relationships with and depend on in order to live" (2001, p. 33). Traditional IL then is something for the whole tribe and not just the individual. And yet, the whole purpose of IL is for each person to develop their complete inner self. Cajete wrote, "The ultimate goal of Indigenous education was to be fully knowledgeable about one's innate spirituality. This was considered completeness in its most profound form" (1994, p. 42). It seems paradoxical, but it is not. Deloria explains, "Tribal man is hardly a person 'self' in our modern sense of the word. He does not so much live in a tribe; the tribe lives in him. He is the tribe's subjective expression" (1973, p. 201). Thus, although learning is an individual process for Native Americans, it is the responsibility of the individual to use and

share with the tribe the knowledge gained. This helps to ensure survival and contributes to the combined continuing repository of tribal knowledge, which fosters community and place. It is circular. Pember said, "Indigenous knowledge…is based on a community of responsibility and connectedness" (2008a, p. 20). Cajete declared, "Indian community is the primary context for traditional education" (1994, p. 165).

The Native American viewpoint regarding the purpose of education is different from the Anglo viewpoint. Thus, it seems logical that the stages involved in traditional indigenous education are very different from the Eurocentric model of education. In most cases, to ensure conformity, the Eurocentric model employs a one-way distribution of facts and information from the teacher to the student. Native American educational policy professor, Joel Spring (2007) sees that,

> In the United States the historical issues of cultural and linguistic genocide, and educational segregation, are still alive in the twenty-first century. The problem is the inherent tendency…to use their educational systems to create uniform culture and language usage as a means of maintaining social control and order. (p. 137)

According to Deloria (2002) "Higher education in America is one of most conservative Western cultural institutions," and little has changed since the 12th century (p. 10). Anglo "education today trains professionals, but it does not produce people. It is, indeed, not expected to produce personality growth in spite of elaborate and poetic claims made by some educators" (Deloria, 1991, p. 138). Anne Campbell (1991), multicultural educator agrees, "the purpose of modern education is not to educate human beings who are part of a community. The purpose is to train minds and to develop skills that will enable an individual to take his/her place in the corporate structure" (p. 104).

The approach to education in a traditional indigenous community is completely opposite of Anglo methodologies (Campbell, 1991; Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Benham & Stein, 2003; Ohiyesa, 1911; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Reyhner & Eder, 2006). Deloria (2001) asserts, "Education in the traditional setting occurs by example and not as a process of indoctrination" (p. 45). Native American educator and activist Rosalie Little Thunder, is "greatly distraught by all the energy our people waste on western education when we already have the wisdom of teaching, learning and living in a good way" (Mankiller, 2004, p. 72). Campbell (1991) summarizes the issue by pointing out that there is a "basic incompatibility between the values and beliefs underlying traditional [Native American] education and the unquestioned assumptions underlying the modern [Eurocentric] educational system" (1991, p. 101). The underlying values and beliefs are what I outline in the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL). They are the foundations of Native American IL, not just components of Native American education.

Indigenous Pedagogical Paradigm

Sanchez, Stuckey, and Morris (1998) described "four stages that typify an indigenous pedagogical paradigm" (p. 3) prior to European contact. The four stages are:

1. Birth to approximately five years: the child was completely immersed in the culture of the tribal community. Emphasis was on the cultural survival of Tribe. Participation in all activities was encouraged. "No absolute linear pedagogical device was in place" (p. 3) that required each individual to learn in the same pattern at the same pace at the same time as others.

2. Five years to approximately12 years: individual shows interest or talent in one or two areas. Parents identified possible mentors willing to share skills and knowledge "proffering an education based in personal experience…through cultural saliency" (p. 3).
3. Twelve years to approximately 25 years: service to tribal community is emphasized; skills are dedicated to the tribe. Skills are further "developed with a focus on the communal good and expertise is eventually acquired" (p. 3). Individual assimilates to changing circumstances.
4. Twenty-five years and up:[41] individual eventually establishes status as an Elder and begins to pass skills to another individual. "Tribal belief that everyone is both student and teacher is enacted, and the community is enhanced" (p. 3).

Sanchez et al. state that many factors including relocations, death of Native Americans by European disease, incarceration of Native American leaders, boarding schools, along with the forced destruction of tribal communities have "all contributed to the dissolution of the indigenous pedagogical paradigm, even within the traditional American Indian communities" (1998, p. 3).

Although the complete paradigm may not be in effect, I believe there are components or elements that still remain and are practiced. In fact, it was through my literature search that I found commonality of certain cultural practices and beliefs. While some sources only contained one thread, others contained two or three. However, underlying most of the literature I saw the foundation of a standard model of indigenous learning.

A Proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL)

[41] Unlike today, life expectancy then, was between 45 and 50 years

Today, indigenous education at the traditional pre-European level does not exist, although some of the methods and components are used in TCUs and Native American communities. None of us, neither Native Americans nor Anglos, can go back and undo what has been done. We must move forward. Native Americans can continue to reveal, revitalize, and expand traditional language, knowledge, and methods of learning. And Anglos can continue to incorporate traditional Native American educational practices such as teamwork, mentoring, storytelling, and cooperative learning into their educational systems.

Native American educators have begun developing lists of characteristics, tenets, and practices that should be incorporated into curriculum for Native Americans. The elders who hold the knowledge and the wisdom of their tribes are being consulted to determine best practices that respect, uphold, and adhere to cultural values (Benham & Stein, 2003). Eventually, an indigenous model and an indigenous theory will be developed that can accommodate both the Native American approach to education and the acceptable practices of Eurocentric education. Currently, "a void seems to exist in areas that examine ways by which American Indian values and world-views might be incorporated into educational designs appropriate for the age of self-determination" (Foreman,1987, p. 2). Cajete (1994) agrees that,

> No recognizable contemporary theory of Indian education exists to guide the implementation or direction of educational curriculum development. Instead what is called 'Indian education' today is a 'compendium of models, methodologies and techniques gleaned from various sources in mainstream American education and adapted to American Indian circumstances, usually with the underlying aim of cultural assimilation'. (p. 28)

Eber Hampton, Native American professor of ethics and organized behavior (1988) identified qualities he believed should be considered in the move to construct an "Indian theory of education" and he lists twelve standards for judging a theory. The Family Education Model, developed by American Indian educators, social work professionals, and university advisors from five TCUs, has helped increase retention rates of Native American students (Heavy Runner & DeCelles, 1997). However, the model does not address actual learning and curriculum. Cajete (1994) presented three pages of "Foundational Characteristics of Indigenous Education" in his book *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education* and developed "The Indigenous Stages of Developmental Leaning", which addresses stages in the indigenous learning process. In *Spirit of the Game: An Indigenous Wellspring*, Cajete (2005) points out twenty-three elements that characterize indigenous education (pp.19-20). In addition, educators and authors Linda Cleary and Thomas Peacock (1998) devote an entire chapter to "Ways of Learning" which discusses various learning styles of Native Americans. Bergstrom et al. (2003) in a chapter labeled "Lessons for Educators: Teaching, Curriculum, and Research" express the need for an indigenous model of education. All of these writings are insightful, useful, and clearly presented; however, no one has presented an articulated learning theory or an indigenous learning model that can transverse the many different Native American communities.

The literature search did not produce a fully articulated, formalized indigenous learning theory for Native Americans, adult Native Americans, or adult Native American distance learners. Although Iris Heavy Runner's dissertation (2009), *Miracle Survivor (pisatsikamotaan): An Indigenous Theory on Educational Persistence Grounded in the Stories of Tribal College Students* was examined, it does not present as a learning theory. It is theory documenting "what constitutes educational persistence in a tribal college setting and how students believe they came

to ‘persist’ in the tribal college” (p. iii). Brayboy (2005) has proposed the Tribal Critical Race Theory which not only places value on stories and narratives as important sources of data, but also “emphasizes that colonization is endemic in society while also acknowledging the role played by racism (p. 430). Although storytelling is part of his theory, it is not a learning theory for adult Native American distance learners.

The literature search did reveal *The Indigenous Experiential Learning Model* proposed by Molly Bigknife Antonio (2006). Her thesis addresses Native American learning as experiential in nature which begins with place. This is an intriguing model, but she admits, “this thesis relied solely upon personal experience and literature review as its primary research methodologies” (p. 134). Additionally, this study does not address the issue of DL or the effect DL has on Native American cultural values.

In an essay titled *Toward An Indigenous Model of Education,* Peacock (2003) wrote, “Given the great diversity of Indigenous philosophies, we cannot assert one model that all Native people should follow. Tribal nations will have to develop their own models, using their own philosophies or modeling themselves on others” (Bergstrom et al., p. 174). In that case, any model developed will be for a specific tribe or Nation within that Native American community. It is clear that consistency does not exist within the aforementioned suggested practices, characteristics, models, and/or theories. And, yet, an indigenous model that can be applied across the entire Native American community can and should be developed. Furthermore, the adult Native American distance learner must be addressed.

One prominent paper in the Anglo community is Chickering and Gamson’s *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* (1987). The concept of the Seven Principles has been applied and modified to fit other learning environments from kindergarten to

the military. The principles were used as the conceptual framework for a study, *"Comparing the academic engagement of American Indian and white college students"* (Cole & Denzine, 2004). The author's findings indicate that there were no significant differences between the two groups of students studied. However, once more, the study did not involve DL. Batts et al. (2006) applied the Seven Principles to an online learning study at a TWI and found evidence of all of the principles being used. Once again, Native Americans were not included in the participant group. Julie Ray (2003) used the Seven Principles for her dissertation study of web-based teaching strategies at the University of North Texas. Her study concentrated on the instructors, rather than students at the university and did not contain Native Americans in the population studied.

Recently, the Spring 2012 issue of the *Tribal College Journal* was devoted to Technology and Culture. Various articles concentrated on areas/issues of technology in the higher education classroom. The issues focused on difficulties connecting, new equipment, collaborative efforts, navigating online, and best practices. None of the authors discussed or addressed the appropriateness of using Eurocentric-based curriculum in a DL environment for adult Native Americans. Patty Moore (2001) did examine *"Access and success in web courses at an urban multicultural community college: The student's perspective."*[42] Although her study did include Native Americans, the study concentrated on the Digital Divide, access, and technology experience. The effect of DL on cultural values was not addressed. Clearly, there is a gap in the available literature concerning adult Native American distance learners and their experiences and perceptions of DL and the effect DL will have on Native American cultural values.

[42] Dissertation title, 2001.

Through my research, I have isolated five fundamental beliefs or threads that permeate the literature within the indigenous communities of the United States and Canada. These threads form the foundation of a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) that can be implemented when developing curricula throughout the Native American community regardless of tribal affiliation or age. The five threads are:

1. Place

Place involves self-examination in order to find one's place with respect to the whole. McLaughlin and Oliver (2000) argue, "For Indigenous community members a sense of 'place' is critical to identity" (p. 8). Deloria and Wildcat (2001) see, "place being the relationship of things to each other" (p. 23). Wildcat simply states to be "indigenous simply means to 'be of a place'" (p. 31). However, place does not simply imply a physical location. Many Native Americans instinctively understand place. It is where they are physically, emotionally, and spiritually at a specific moment. It encompasses the self, others, the respect, and the interconnectedness of all things seen and unseen. Wildcat elaborated, "Place or space is concrete and palpable. Is it a profound sense where one discovers…self" (p. 144).

Often, it is "this tribal knowledge and the stories give native people a sense of identity, of belonging, of knowing their place in the world" (Mankiller, 2004, p. 44). In 1911, Ohiyesa, better known as Charles Alexander Eastman, wrote, "it is true that we had no schoolhouses, no books, no school hours. Our children were trained in the natural way-they kept in close contact with the natural world. In this way, they found themselves and became conscious of their relationship to all life" (Ohiyesa, 1999, p. 98). I stress the phrase, "they found themselves," for this is place. And place is connected to *all*. The other threads in this model connect back to place because everything affects place. Ohiyesa explains, "We conceived the art of teaching as, first

and foremost, the development of personality; and we considered the fundamentals of education to be love of the Great Mystery, love of nature, and love of people and country" (p. 99). Place is an inherent part of our lives and ourselves because we are affected by all things and all things are affected by us. There is an awareness and respect for the "universal oneness of all" (Marashio, 1982, p. 5). It is important to understand that place changes, as moments change.

Vygotsky does not use the term place in his writings. However, he touches on the idea when he says that "there can be no universal schema that adequately represents the dynamic relation between internal and external aspects of development" (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978, p. 125) due to the varying opportunities of learning experiences that exist. The place of one person is not the same as another because "a functional learning system of one child may not be identical to that of another" (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978, p. 125). We all have our own realities shaped by our ideas, thoughts, culture, experiences, and imaginations.

2. Storytelling

Storytelling is perhaps the most profound and primary method of teaching. Until a written language was created, communication was oral. Stories and storytelling have been a part of human culture since language began. Prominent paleontologist Peter Dodson says, "Ours is a storytelling species. We delight in understanding our past and weaving available data into compelling narratives. So powerful is oral tradition, that a completely recognizable version of Homer's *Odyssey* is still recounted orally in the Balkans" (2000, p. xviii). Stories can be real, stories can be fiction. Stories can be short, stories can be long, but all societies, even the academic society, have stories. For example, in qualitative research, a case study is basically just a story.

In the Native American community, story is given life from the storyteller's breath (Atleo & James, 2000; Cajete, 1998; Sanchez et al., 1998; Schultz & Kroeger, n.d.) and "the sounds making up words are just as important as the meaning of those words" (Supernaw, 2010, p. 45). Native American scholar Ella Deloria (1988) explains, "Speech is holy; it was not intended to be set free only to be wasted. It is for hearing and remembering." (p. 50). Therefore, Cajete (2005) asserts, "Language is a sacred expression of breath" (p. 20).

Stories are just not used to convey knowledge; they are also used to teach the listener to listen. Each listener processes the story differently and hears the lesson needed at that time. As Cajete (2005) points out, within stories there are "cycles within cycles, i.e. that there are always deeper levels of meaning to be found" (p. 19). Those lessons become mixed with experience and turn to wisdom. St. Pierre and Long Soldier (1995) explain the process:

> Children in the nineteenth century heard stories about the origins of their people and ways of life many time from before they could speak, until and even after they became adults. They had years to absorb the subtleties and nuances of these stories. These stories are the skeletons upon which the flesh of understanding is hung. They form the basis of Lakota society and spiritual practices. (p. 36)

Storytelling and listening to stories is a skill that "is difficult, if not impossible for those not raised within a culture to participate meaningfully in those ceremonies [ritual storytelling] or understand them completely" because "each time a story is told in oral form only the intentions, nuance, and mood of *that* rendering is captured" (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, pp. 19-20). This is an extremely important point: that although stories may appear to be the same, they are not. The Cree storyteller never tells the point of the story, but leaves the listeners to discover this for themselves. First Nation educator and poet, Neal McLeod (n.d.) explains,

> The reason that the meaning is left open is that each person will bring certain experiences into the hearing of the story. Also, by leaving it open, the listener is given a chance to internalize the meaning. The story becomes real only once it has been internalized. (p. 36)

This explanation correlates with Vygotsky's belief that an external stimulus becomes internalized. Continual "internalization is a fundamental part of the life-long process of the co-construction of knowledge and the creation of the new" (John-Steiner & Mahn, n.d., p. 13).

Stories are a principle part of the learning process of many Native Americans, and the responsibility and honor of telling stories fell to the grandparents and elders of a community to pass on the experiences and wisdom of the tribe. Ohiyesa (1999) recalls,

> Through the telling of these tales, the grandparents inspire love of heroes, pride of ancestry and devotion to country and people. But these tales did more than enlarge the mind and stimulate the imagination. They furnish the best of memory training, as the child is required to remember and repeat them one by one. (p. 102)

Because words are considered powerful in the Native American culture, when learning the stories, the children would have to repeat them exactly. Children would start out learning *little stories*, which could be told during the year. Then, as they grew more proficient in the recital of the stories, they would tell them during the proper time because of the power that they had. This practice correlates to the function of Vygotsky's ZPD: there is a developmental change in which a phase of adult support precedes a phase of independent accomplishment of the learner. The adult's reaction transforms the emerging behavior of accurately repeating stories into a social act, especially as these storytelling events were often group activities.

Native Americans utilize many types of stories, some which can be told throughout the year and others that can only be told during the winter months and other special times (Davids, 2004; Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Jones, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Ohiyesa, 1999; Spindler, 1990; St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). "In the cold winter months…the children gathered their blankets around a fire and prepared to listen and learn…Through the oral tradition, children learned lessons" (Trafzer, Keller, & Sisquoc, 2006, p. 7). This tradition of storytelling in winter continues today at Bay Mills Community College with a traditional literature class that is taught "only in the winter term because the stories are supposed to be told when snow is on the ground" (AIHEC, 1999, p. B-1). Fortunate Eagle states, "our entertainment was visiting, gossiping and storytelling, because it's with storytelling that the legends-the real history of our people-are passed on from generation to generation" (2010, p. xv). For researchers Marlene Atleo and Achaessa James (2000), "Native American oral tradition provides literacy for lifelong learning that promotes perspective transformations" (p. 1).

3. Intergenerational Interaction

Mentoring and immersion permeate IL. Typically, "the person is socialized through gradual participation in tasks, assisted by adults until full competence occurs" (McLaughlin & Oliver, 2000, p. 3). That is the foundation of Vygotsky's theory and the ZPD. Vygotsky and others believe that "learning is not just a psychological process that happens in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives, but that it is intimately related to that world and affected by it" (Merriam & Cafferella, 1999, p. 4). pedagogy but through living" (p. 120). The elders are a vital component of the Native American In the Native American community, it is the Elders who retain the wisdom and knowledge, and who are respected for their longevity and

experience. Wildcat (2001) says they, “have much to teach, although not necessarily through community as Schultz and Kroeger (n.d.) explain,

> Our elders play a very important place in our lives. They are the keepers of our traditions, values, language and history. We must show respect to them at all times. Elders are our guides to the future, as they are closer to walking the spirit road, their vision is clearer. They are the leaders in our community…the elders are needed to fulfill the role of teachers in the culture, language, and traditions, and must be included in teaching their culture to the next generation. (p. 2)

The respect for elders as the wisdom keepers is an enduring fundamental cultural value found throughout Indian Country in the United States, and is an important and necessary thread in the SMIL. This phenomenon of elder respect and wisdom is also found in the First Nations of Canada. A University of Saskatchewan study (n.d.) noted,

> Elders have a special value…as keepers or holders of the traditional, indigenous, and local knowledge that concern us. Elders are highly respected Aboriginal individuals, usually of advanced age, who may have knowledge of life on the land, of ancient stories, of aspects of society such as law, decision making, and clan systems; they may also be respected for their knowledge of how to main the core values of their people in contemporary times. While knowledge is what can be repeated, accumulated, and disseminated, analyzed and debated, elders are respected for something that escapes all of this: their wisdom. They help us understand what good life may be, how to be good, how to heal ourselves and help others. (Kulchyski, n.d., p. 19)

This viewpoint is not just a 21st- century tradition; it is a foundational cultural value that transcends the generations. For example, in 1911, Ohiyesa wrote,

> The grandparents are old and wise. They have lived and achieved. They are dedicated to the service of the young, as their teachers and advisors. In them the Indian recognizes the natural and truest teachers of the child. It is reserved for them to repeat the time-hallowed tales with dignity and authority, so as to lead the child into the inheritance of the store-up wisdom and experience of the race. (1999, pp. 101-102)

The importance of elders in the classroom as participants or leaders is recognized by many TCUs that actively involve elders in the classroom; "frequently, classes are taught by tribal elders" (AIHEC, 1999, p. B-1). Kulchyski, the Head of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba posits, "To have meaningful Indigenous Studies, we have to have Indigenous story-tellers and elders in our departments" (p. 31). The Center for Native Education's Early College High School Initiative incorporates teachers co-planning lessons with tribal members (Tulee, 2008). The implementation of another project, the Family Education Model, which integrates family members along with the student into the TCU, has increased the retention rates of Native American students in higher education (Heavy Runner & DeCelles, 2002). Lillian Wallace's (2003) dissertation outlining four principles for successful aging in the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans supports the benefit of the younger and older generations interacting as a primary function of successful aging, along with having a meaningful role in the community, and being valued by the community (2003).

These various types of interaction are supported by Vygotsky's theory which insists that learning is mediated by social interaction. Intergenerational interaction is supported by Vygotsky who believed that "development is structured through, embedded in, and mediated in and by relationships with peers and adults" (Haenen, Schrijnemakers, & Stufkens, 2003, p. 249). Vygotsky asserts that "it is through others that we develop into ourselves" (1981, p. 161).

4. Experience

Cajete (1994) states "In Tribal education, knowledge gained from firsthand experience in the world is transmitted or explored through ritual, ceremony, art, and appropriate technology" (p. 26). This knowledge is used in everyday life and in this context it is education for life's sake, which is then considered to be learning. There must be a relevancy to the knowledge gained, there has to be some application, and it must be personally experienced. John-Steiner and Mahn (n.d.) point out that being strapped to a person's back as a baby presents a different perspective and a different level of interaction than when a child is confined to a playpen. In other words, book learning, and computer learning do not always substitute for actual experience. In Heavy Runner's (2009) experience, "Students appreciated the experience of applying classroom knowledge" (p. 105).

It is extremely important to actually witness or experience the knowledge first hand. Otherwise, how do you really know what happened or how something works? Ohiyesa explains, "We taught our children by both example and instruction, but with emphasis on example, because all learning is a dead language to one who gets it secondhand" (Nerburn, 1999, p. 98). Even today in many modern Native American communities, the practice of witnessing an event or participating in the event "is far more credible than reading about it in a book or retelling someone else's account" (Waterman, 2004, p. 54). The observation or participation in an event is necessary because it validates the event. The knowledge is then internalized to become a part of a person and their place. IL in Native American communities often begins with observation of adults, then moves to imitation of adult actions, which leads to self-directed performance (Cajete, 2005; Deloria, 1999; Lasley & Matczynki, 1997; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Marashio, 1982; Morrison, 2009; Reyhner & Eder, 2006). Vygotsky recognizes play as important learning

tool; play often being the mimicry of adult actions. He believes that imitation is fundamental to internalization of knowledge (1987, p. 210).

For many Native Americans, the information is not just internalized, but it must be relevant and fit into and place because as Cajete (1994) asserts "learning is also the key to our ability to survive in the environments that we create and create us" (1994, p. 25). Reflection on experience is a necessary step in learning from that experience for the future (Antonio, 2006; Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). Adult educators and qualitative researchers, Merriam and Cafferella (1999) agree that reflection-in-action is "making judgments in complex and murky situations and judgments based on prior knowledge or experience while still engaged in the situation" (p. 3).

Wildcat (2001) stresses the connection between experience and wisdom: "Wisdom is not produced by superior 'intelligence' or rationality, but born of direct experience and subsequent reflection" (p. 73). Elders are revered and respected for that very reason— a long life filled with experience and reflection. According to Schultz and Kroeger (n.d.),

> Their expertise is of vital importance to us. They…show and tell us where people (our ancestors) started from, and the directions they have traveled….we must be aware of their upbringing and have respect for that. They teach us survival skills. They shape our way of thinking, socializing and to view our ever-changing world. That is why we must always show respect towards them. (p. 2)

5. Interconnectedness

This involves respect for one's self, one's family, one's community, and one's environment. But interconnectedness involves more than respect. It involves awareness that we

are all part of a whole and living life always remembering as Susan Supernaw (2010), Native American technology consultant and author says,

> Living a life requires recognizing the interconnectedness of all things. Everyone, everything has a purpose in the universe. Because of that everyone, everything deserves respect….The depth of your wisdom is determined by your ability to understand the purpose of all things, and to recognize the unseen relationship between all things. (pp. 68-69)

Interconnectedness is the principle that we are all equal, the four legged, the two legged, the winged, and the green; no one thing is better or worse than anything else. Zitkala-sa (1921), a Native American author wrote, "There is no great; there is no small; in the mind that causeth all" (p. 5). She further asserts that Native Americans "recognize a kinship to any and all parts of this vast universe" (pp.102-103). This is accepted fact in the Native American community (Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1973, 1999a; Deloria, E., 1998; Mankiller, 2004; Ohiyesa, 1999; Supernaw, 2010). Cajete (1994) reports that "Mitakuye Oyasin (we are all related) is a Lakota phrase" (p. 26). St. Pierre and Long Soldier (1995) define the Lakota phrase as, Mi'takuye' Oyasin to mean "I acknowledge everything in the universe as my relations" (p. 47). Audrey Shenandoah thoroughly explains the connection and the insignificance of man:

> We acknowledge that we are equal with the woodland, the trees, the berries, the two-legged and the four-legged. We share the same air, space, and water. We all need the same things to live. Everything in the cycle is always giving. If one thing drops out of the cycle, then the rest would be out of balance and soon cease to exist. But if humans were to drop out of the cycle, the rest would go on and become healthy again. (Mankiller, p. 53)

The reason for understanding this interconnectedness and subsequent respect of all others is explained by Vine Deloria, Jr. (1999a):

> The primary focus of creation stories of many tribes placed human beings as among the last creatures who were created and as the youngest of the living families. We were given the ability to do many things but not specific wisdom about the world. So our job was to learn from other older beings and to pattern ourselves after their behavior. We were to gather knowledge, not dispense it….Because we gather knowledge from older beings who have the wisdom of the world within their grasp, we must maintain a relationship with the rest of creation. (p. 131)

The interconnectedness of all things is also part of place. It was understood that "knowledge was inherent in all things. The world was a library" (Standing Bear, 1999, p. 13). Lumley and Dodds (2001) assert:

> Every part of the system, i.e. a human being, has a mind/soul of his or her own, and hence has the right and indeed the reasonability to determine his/her own ontogeny, in harmony with nature, community, society, nation or community of nations, of which they are a part. (p. 25)

Cajete believes that "traditional Native American education historically occurred in a holistic social context that developed the importance of each individual as a contributing member of the social group" (p. 26). This echoes Vygotsky's theory of learning in a social construct as well as well as the reciprocity of the learning. He further asserts that the "educational process unfolded through mutual, reciprocal relationships between one's social group and the natural world" (p. 26). Yet, Vygotsky does not incorporate the full natural world and interconnectedness in his theory in the same way Native Americans do.

This interconnectedness includes a very strong tie with the earth; the elders help teach this connection with their storytelling. Suquamish leader Chief Seattle declared over 150 years ago, "we are all related…whatever befalls the earth, befalls man" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 14). For many Native Americans, their sense of place includes a strong relationship to their tribal lands as Malinda Lowery, a Native American professor says, "My family speaks of the land as our guide, our resource, our life. It is where our identity begins and ends." (2010, p. 263)

Being constantly aware of the interconnectedness of all particles within the universe, to transform one's self to the highest level of awareness and to respect those connections while thinking the highest thoughts while walking in this world, is what many Native Americans believe to be the "good life" (Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1999; Schultz & Kroeger, n.d.). Interconnectedness is part of place or the full realization of a person's being. Chief Seattle, in 1854, explained to the territorial governor,

> Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks, which seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent shore in solemn grandeur, thrill with the memories of past events connected with the fate of my people. (2005, p. 27)

Despite the often unlawful acquisition of their land by the United States government, which took homelands from many Native American tribes, Native Americans' still retain their connection to the land as the original stewards, and maintain connections (bond) to their sacred lands[43] (Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Joseph, 2005; Mander, 1992; Peshkin, 1997). Not

[43] Native Americans understand "themselves literally as born of the Earth of their Place. This is the ultimate identification of being Indigenous to a place and forms the basis for a fully internalized bonding with that place" (Cajete, 1994, p. 193).

only do Native American identities incorporate, "a sense of place and a consciousness of status as the continent's original sovereign nations" (Lowery, 2010, p. 263), but they understand that nature is part of them and they of nature. Native Americans "are the spiritual guardians of this place" (Hau de no sau nee, 1992, p. 193).

The difference between a Eurocentric and a Native American viewpoint of this interconnectedness is extremely poignant when pointed out by Wildcat, "European immigrants looked at nature and saw resources, we looked around and saw relatives" (2001, p. 121).

Conclusion

The literature review in this chapter began with a historical overview of Native American education from the Colonial period to the present. TCUs were then reviewed, followed by DL and the Digital Divide. Vygotsky and socio-cultural learning theory as the theoretical framework for this study were then introduced. The chapter concluded with a discussion of traditional IL and the presentation of a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

For the dead and the living we must bear witness

-Elie Wiesel

Introduction

The primary focus of this phenomenological exploratory study was to document the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners. As Creswell (1994) explains,

> One of the chief reasons for conducting a qualitative study is that the study is exploratory, not much has been written about the topic or population being studied and the researcher seeks to listen to informants and to build a picture based on their ideas. (p. 21)

The secondary focus of the study was to introduce a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and document if the five threads are an important component of the participants' learning processes. The following research questions guided the development of the interview protocol and the overall study:

1. What were the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners in a distance learning environment?
2. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of place?
3. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of storytelling?
4. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of intergenerational interaction?

5. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of experience?
6. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of interconnectedness?
7. To what extent are the five threads of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) used by instructors in their DL or face-to-face classrooms?

The principle questions asked during the semi-structured interview are found on the Interview Protocol sheet (Appendix G). Table 1 summarizes the alignment of the research questions with the Interview Protocol.

Table 1

Alignment of Research Questions with Interview Questions

Research Question	**Interview Protocol Question**
1. What were the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners in a distance learning environment?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16,17, 19, 23
2. Did the student's distance learning experience incorporate the concept of place?	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19
3. Did the student's distance learning experience incorporate the concept of storytelling?	1, 4, 15, 16, 23, 24
4. Did the student's distance learning experience incorporate the concept of intergenerational?	1, 4, 7, 17, 23, 24
5. Did the student's distance learning experience incorporate the concept of experience?	1, 4, 11, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24

6. Did the student's distance learning experience incorporate the concept of interconnectedness?	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 23, 24
7. To what extent are the five threads of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning Experientially used by instructors in their classrooms, either DL or face-to-face?	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24

In accordance with Southern Illinois University Carbondale's (SIUC) policy regarding human subjects, and confidentiality, specific procedures were followed to answer the research questions posed. The research data gathered will add to adult Native American distance education, DL, instructional design, curriculum development, indigenous education, and IL literature. The proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) can serve as the foundation for IL.

The remainder of this chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework and research design used. Then, trustworthiness (and its four components) and authentic research (and its five requirements) are addressed, followed by the research methods. and procedures. The various steps taken to collect, securely store, and analyze data have been meticulously documented to show the chain of research. A discussion of the study limitations including researcher bias and assumptions concludes the chapter.

Theory

Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory served as a theoretical underpinning for this study. Socio-cultural theories stress the importance of creating a strong social/cultural presence in learning environments. Vygotsky (1978) believed that full development depended upon full

social interaction. For him, "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p. 89). This theory is particularly suitable for Native American learners because "learning is culturally influenced and a social rather than an individual process" (McLoughlin & Oliver, 1998, p. 127). Wildcat elaborates "Learning comes early in indigenous institutions, not through lectures but through experience: customs, habits, and practices" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 33).

Research Design

A phenomenological methodology served as the foundation for this study. According to qualitative researchers William Wiersma and Stephen Jurs (2009), "phenomenology is the study of phenomena; it stresses the careful description of the phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing the phenomena" p. 274). Hence, phenomenological studies "attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 25).

However, each person assigns their own meaning to a phenomena experienced in such a way to make sense of their world (Patton, 1990). Consequently, phenomenologists believe that because there are multiple ways to interpret our interactions with one another, the meaning of our experiences creates our reality. In other words, "reality is 'socially constructed'" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 26).

Not only does a researcher in a phenomenological study seek to understand the deep meaning of the participant's experiences and how the participant articulates the experience, but also "engages in critical self-reflection about the topic and the process (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 99).

For data collection, phenomenological studies rely primarily on in-depth interviews of ten or fewer participants (Creswell, 1998). Patton (1990) concurs and believes that if the cases are information rich collecting in-depth information from a small number of participants is extremely valuable.

To ensure accuracy, participants were asked to review (member check) their transcriptions. Additionally, an outside transcriptionist and two independent peer reviewers checked the manuscripts against the audio recordings for accuracy. During the research process, a field book and a dissertation journal were kept. Checklists and confidentiality measures were stringently employed throughout the study.

Maxwell (2005) believes there are two main threats to qualitative studies: researcher bias and reactivity. To reduce those threats, I have included a researcher bias statement and a researcher assumption statement to explain the bias and assumptions I brought to this study. Reactivity is an issue addressed by Bogdan and Biklen (2007), Guba and Lincoln (1981), and Shank (2006), so I was very conscious not to take notes while the participant was talking, even though many questions came to mind as participants spoke. I tried not to fidget, expressively move my hands, or exhibit facial expressions. However, I did use my hands, as my participants did, when describing or elaborating upon an idea and, at times, I laughed with participants. I tried to keep my voice neutral while asking questions and interacting during the interview, although I did make sounds of agreement to let my participants know I was listening to them.

With qualitative studies, Shank (2006) states “alternative methods to reliability, validity and generalizability are used” to maintain rigor in a given study (p.114). Throughout this study, I have tried to maintain a rigorous study as defined by Shank (2006) by carefully designing the study, conducting the research in a proper method, and analyzing the data correctly. In addition,

to maintain rigor, I used the components of trustworthiness in my research and authenticity to guide my research.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is defined by Shank (2006) as "the degree to which we can depend on and trust given research findings" (p.115).The concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research was defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a qualitative validity concept with four components. Those components are: 1) Credibility, 2) Dependability, 3) Transferability, and 4) Conformability.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree of believability of the research findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Shank, 2006). According to Shank, when the research is credible, the data collected will be cohesive and consistent rather than scattered and contradictory (2006, p. 114). Based on Shank's definition of credibility, the information gathered from my participants is credible, as the information was cohesive and consistent. Nonetheless, in order to increase rigor, the techniques of member checking and peer debriefing were employed to substantiate the participants' spoken words.

Member checking. Member checking is the process by which a researcher confirms that the words the participant spoke were the words that the researcher wrote. Each participant was offered a copy of their transcribed interviews to read for accuracy. Five of the eight participants said they would like to review a copy; no corrections were offered.

Peer debriefer. Two peer debriefers were used: one academic and one non-academic who served as my "intellectual watchdog[s]" (Rossman & Rallis, 2005, p. 69). The peer

debriefers listened to the recorded interviews and also read the typed transcriptions of each interview. This process confirms that at least one outside person has verified that the actual words spoken were recorded correctly by the professional transcriptionist I used. Since no mistakes, besides spelling, were found by the debriefers on the transcriptions, my professional transcriptionist also served as an informal peer debriefer, completing a final accuracy check.

Dependability

Dependability refers to knowing where the data in a study originates, how it was collected, and how it was used. It is an audit trail. Shank (2006) states that, "with an audit trail, there is a clear and constant path between the collection of data and its use" (p. 114). Throughout my entire research process, to ensure accuracy, I kept a field book detailing my thoughts, memos of self-reflection, procedures for collecting and safekeeping information, and notations of revisions to documents made. Also included in the field book were suggestions made by my academic and non-academic peer-reviews and notes about additional literature to read. Noteworthy events related to this study and recorded in dissertation journal were also transferred to the field book. When it was time to write this study, I had meticulously detailed notes to serve as my outline. The dependability can be increased through peer debriefing which occurs "when outsiders examine the notes and data of the researcher to make sure these data are saying what the researcher claim they say" (Shank, 2006, p. 114).[44] An outside academic examined all of my data, read my field book, and reviewed my findings for consistency and accuracy.

Transferability

Shank (2006) believes transferability is "the degree to which the results of a given qualitative study can be transferred to another setting, or used with a different population" (p.

[44] Shank actually refers to this as a member check. However, in order to avoid confusion with the member check of the actual interview by the participant, I choose to call my outside reviewer a peer-debriefer.

115). To ensure or establish the transferability, a detailed description laying out the whole research process involved in a study must be recorded accurately. In this study, I have carefully noted every step, in great detail, taken throughout the research process to ensure that another researcher could use this study with a different population or within a different setting. Transferability is essential for this study for I believe it will be necessary to generalize the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning to include other populations.

Confirmability

The methodological audit trail should present a clear picture of the methodology and a map for creating a similar study. Enough detail of the methodology must be given so others may evaluate the data collection and the analysis process (Shank, 2006). Throughout this chapter, I have detailed the data collection and analysis process so another could create a similar study.

Authenticity

Lincoln and Guba expanded their definition of validity to include another concept, authenticity. They believe that rigorous and valid qualitative research is authentic in five senses of the term (Shank, 2006, p. 116).

Due to the nature of this phenomenological study and the introduction of a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) I decided to include authenticity; all five requirements have guided my research. Shank (2006) believes,

> Authenticity is the plan for evaluating the potential impact of a piece of research in the world at large. Is it free as possible of defects that might affect its ability to be understood or implemented? What are its potential practical or moral implications? Is it general

enough to guide a wide variety of potential interpretations, insights, or calls to action? (p. 116)

The five requirements of authentic research are that it must be: 1) fair, 2) ontologically authentic, 3) educatively authentic, 4) catalytically authentic, and 5) tactically authentic. I will describe each term and what I have done to adhere to and fulfill the requirement.

Fair

Authentic research must be fair. "It represents many points of view in a calm and balanced manner" (Shank, p.116). Throughout this study, I have tried to present the literature, my participants' voices, and my findings in a calm and balanced manner. Authentic research, "if it does advocate a point, it does so right up front and as soon as possible" (Shank, p.116). In Chapter 1, I immediately clarify that adult Native American distance learners for whom face to face interaction is a component of respect may be at risk of losing their cultural identity. In Chapter 1, I also pointed out the need for a change to the current educational system.

Ontologically Authentic

Authentic research is ontologically authentic and "seeks to raise awareness in a genuine and legitimate fashion. As part of the process, cultural and historical insights are used with their proper emphases and in their proper settings and perspectives" (Shank, p.116). In Chapter 2, I presented a thorough overview of the historical context of Native American education under the United States Education Administration. As well, I brought in other historical educational policies enacted for the Anglo and African American populations to show the legal, political, and cultural differences.

Educatively Authentic

Authentic research is educatively authentic and should "offer us the chance to apply critical thinking to propose strong moral and ethical stances. Furthermore, these stances should be clearly stated" (Shank, p. 116). Throughout this study, I have presented information designed to make the reader think critically about the U.S. policy of education and its subsequent effect on Native American students, as well as other students. In Chapter 1 and 2, I presented the stance that the educational system is changing and that those involved in that system need to be aware of the unintended consequences of DL on adult Native American distance learners and their cultural values.

Catalytically Authentic

Authentic research must be catalytically authentic and "the research directs us to action that is appropriate to and matches its findings. The researchers neither go too far nor not far enough in their call to action, based on their data and research" (Shank, p.116). Based on the information gathered through a literature search, a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) was developed that incorporates five threads of cultural beliefs/practices that are the foundation of IL.

Tactically Authentic

Authentic research must be tactically authentic and serve "as the foundation for training others to take certain kinds of action that is appropriate to and matches its findings. Again, this training cannot be the result of underextending or overextending the actual research findings" (Shank, p. 116). The SMIL can be used when developing curriculum at TCUs for Native American students. Based on the data collected from interviews, it is apparent that all of the participants believe the five threads in the model are important to the process of IL.

Methods

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling was used to select the eight participants included in this study to ensure variances with respect to age, educational background, and tribal affiliation, which were deemed essential. Purposeful sampling is used when "units are chosen not for their representativeness but for their relevance to the research question" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 232). Furthermore, study subjects chosen via purposeful sampling are selected for inclusion "because they are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory" (Bogdan & Biklen , 2007, p. 73). In this study purposeful samples "aimed at insight about the phenomenon" (Patton, 2002, p. 40) were chosen. The snowball sampling technique was used to select participants.

Participant Population

The study objective was to have a 50/50 mixture of male and female participants; however, the participants selected were all female. This may have been due to the following factors: 1) Native American female college students outnumber Native American male college students approximately 65% versus 35% [45] (AIHEC, 2005; Lin, LaCounte, & Eder, 1988; NCES, 2005, 2008; Pavel, 1998; Snyder & Dillow, 2011) and 2) the majority of snowballs[46] were sent to females who referred other females. Additionally, although snowballs were sent to ten males, I discovered these males purposely did not enroll in DL courses. One of them offered other possible participants, but those students also proclaimed they purposely avoided online classes.[47]

[45] The actual percentages vary depending upon the study and the year, however, the ratio is approximately 60-65 % female to 35-40% male.
[46] inquiries
[47] This was a trend for both male and female Native Americans: not wanting to enroll in DL courses.

Interviews

In most Native American communities, respect is shown via face-to-face interaction. Therefore, from my point of view, conducting the interviews in person was necessary. To convey my intent to my study participants, I needed them to see me, hear me, and be with me so they could know me, and I could know them. Experiencing an event by physically being there is, for most Native Americans, an important part of the process of constructing knowledge and wisdom, which confirms credibility. Stephanie Waterman (2004), a Haudensosaunee woman noted that, "Native people also value lived experience. *I was there*. In many traditional communities, mine included, to have witnessed an event or to have taken part in it, is far more credible" (p. 54) than to know of an event witnessed or experienced by others. I agree.

Conducting interviews in a Native American community can be difficult. Generally speaking, Native American community members view continual questioning as rude behavior. Native American academics Brian Brayboy and Donna Deyhle, (2000) reveal that, "asking questions as an Indigenous person to other Indigenous people is not culturally appropriate. Asking question after question is especially problematic because in many Indigenous communities, multiple questions might be viewed as signs of disrespect" (p. 167).

I walked a fine line to ensure that I neither offended nor disrespected my participants. I knew that if I did not conduct myself in the correct manner, show the right intent, and earn the respect of my participants, any information I gathered, if I would have been able to gather any, would have been useless. As Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) explain, often "questions are an infringement on space. To ask questions is to be nosy, which means the individual asking questions is either 'shut out' from all further conversations or they are given false or misleading information to keep them at bay" (p. 167). It was extremely important to me that I conduct my

research in a culturally appropriate manner because I knew my behavior would reflect on my family.

Also critical to this interview process was my understanding the interviewees' ways of thinking (Bogden & Bilken, 2007). In order to come to this understanding, my selected questions were presented in an open-ended format using a reflexive technique with the semi-structured protocol serving as an outline. Interviewees were not asked questions requiring "yes" or "no" responses. As well, there were no perceived "right" or "wrong" answers as there would have been with closed-ended questions. This study also avoided leading questions so that interviewee answers were not influenced by interviewer bias.

The open-ended question format allowed me the opportunity to further delve into topics and experiences of particular interest or concern. Moreover, it permitted interviewees the space to explore their perspective on a subject and move the topic in the direction they wished (Seidman, 1998). The cultural sensitivity to constant questioning made the interviews reflexive in nature[48]; they had a conversational flow interviewees used to convey information. The protocol sheet was used only as a guide to ensure that all pertinent areas were addressed. In keeping with the way information is passed in most Native American communities, the interviews were focused, yes, but quite organic in nature, although not to the point of being an open-ended guided conversation as defined by Bogden and Bilken (2007).

Research Procedures

On September 19, 2012, I submitted a Human Subjects Research Application to the Human Subjects Committee (HSC) at SIUC and received approval to conduct the study on

[48] "Questions flow from a conversational style" (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000, p. 167).

September 21, 2012. Maxwell (2005) suggests a researcher should pilot-test their interview process with people similar to interviewees. Hence, I conducted a pilot study with one participant. The consent sheet (Appendix A) and demographics sheet (Appendix B) were completed by the participant and the interview protocol (Appendix F) was used as a guideline for the sixty-three minute audio-taped interview. Because Strauss and Corbin (1998) advise that research "is a 'flow of work' that evolves over the entire course of an investigative project" (p. 29), I was not surprised that changes were made following the pilot study or that during the formal study revisions were made to the demographics sheet (Appendix C) and interview protocol (Appendix G)**.**

Changes were made to the interview protocol to better clarify and focus the questions. The order of the questions was also changed to ensure a logical flow [of information] and to keep the most important questions near the middle of the interview. Finally, two additional questions were added to the protocol. While revising the pilot interview protocol, demographics sheet, and debriefing form, I contacted by telephone as many participants as possible to confirm their willingness to participate in the study and to schedule a face-to-face meeting within the chosen three week timeframe. I also reminded participants the interviews would be audio-taped. The consent form and demographic sheet were not sent to the participants prior to the interview, but given to the participants, to complete, at the beginning of the interview. Each participant was given a copy of the consent form to keep.

The consent form follows the suggested format of Seidman (1998) and contains the five major components: 1) explanation of what interviewees will be asked, by whom, and for what purpose, 2) steps taken to protect the personal welfare of the participant, 3) the participants are volunteers and have the right to terminate participation at any point, 4) the steps that will be

taken to ensure confidentiality, and 5) the planned dissemination of the information collected from the participant.

Participant Selection Procedure

After approval for the study was received I began to select participants via the snowball sampling technique, also referred to as the chain method (Patton, 2002, p. 194), or network sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009, p. 327). When using the snowball method, a researcher asks individuals to name others who would be candidates for the research project (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Patton 2002; Trochim, 2006). After contacting those candidates, the researcher asks them if they know other possible candidates. "By asking a number of people for other sources, the snowball gets bigger and bigger…" (Patton, p. 237). This method is appropriate to study a small population because people need to know a majority of the population in order to name appropriate candidates (Bernard, 2002). It is also used for populations that may not want to be identified or are difficult to find without using social networks (Trochim 2006). This is the best sampling method to use for finding and selecting adult Native American distance learners who have taken DL classes because the number is extremely small[49] and because reticence is an admired characteristic in many Native American communities and self-promotion is usually avoided, Native Americans, in general, are reluctant to participate in studies such as this.

Native American cultures promote equality of "all", no one or nothing is better or worse than another so standing out or volunteering is often perceived as an undesirable trait (Deloria, 1999; Morrison, 2009; Schultz & Kroeger, n.d.; Supernaw, 2010). Morrison (2009) reports, "In Native-American culture, calling attention to yourself or making yourself look better than others

[49] It is estimated that less than 3,000 Native Americans receive advanced degrees each year (NCES, 2005).

in a group is considered rude" (p. 361). There are, "social taboos against…attracting undue attention to themselves….Native societies try to orient children toward such traditional values as cooperation, harmony, and humility" (Garrod & Larrimore, 1997, p. 6). It is okay if someone else recognizes, volunteers, or recalls the achievements of an individual; however, individuals do not call attention to themselves or their achievements because that would be bragging or self-promotion, which is socially unacceptable. Anthropologist and ethnographer George Spindler (1990) reveals, "A person is careful not to stand out" (p. 74).

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) clarify that different cultures have different rules concerning not only human communication but relationships as well. Therefore a researcher's "methods need to take into account indigenous ways of relating and knowing" (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 94). Cultural differences exist and directly approaching a Native American without some sort of introduction or having a prior history with them can be perceived as rude, pushy, or nosy (Brayboy, 1999; Smith-Hunt, 2001; Supernaw, 2010; Waterman, 2004). In addition, the Native American community is extremely small and in some ways very cohesive.[50] Often, there is a distrust of outsiders, particularly of government agencies or educational researchers, as a result of the past history of colonization. Consequently, it was necessary that I be properly introduced to each possible participant. Someone else had to vouch for me, my intentions, and/or give my family history.

Establishing and verifying connections of a person in many Native American communities takes time especially if the person does not live on tribal land. The process to find participants was an involved and time consuming process even though the groundwork had been in place for several years. My mother, an enrolled member of the Midwest Tribe lives near the

[50] Native Americans make up only 1.7 percent of the U.S. population (http://www.cenus.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf)

reservation and she has introduced me to several elders with whom I had often spoken over the past ten years. I was able call these elders directly. I explained my project to them and inquired if they knew anyone who fit my criteria. They gave me several snowballs to throw.

Then, in 2011, I joined my mother and two aunties at a Midwest Tribe History Conference on the reservation. At this event, I met several members of the tribe who are involved with the education programs at the Midwest Tribe Reservation and at Midwest TCU.[51] They gave me permission to contact them for possible participants.

Snowball # 1 was innocently sent to a prior co-worker who inquired about my research. When I described my participant requirements, she revealed to me her Native American heritage and became my first study participant. Snowball #2 was sent to a family member who led me to another participant who, in turn, led me to three additional points of contact (Snowballs #3, #4, and #5). From those three points of contact, I was able to find two more participants. Snowball #6 went to another family member, who led me to two other people. Snowballs #7 and #8 provided me an additional two names, but Snowballs #9 and #10 did not yield participants. Snowball #11 was unintentional. I was explaining my dissertation to a coworker and she gave me a point of contact (Snowball # 12), which led to another contact (Snowball #13), who became a participant. Snowball #14, which was sent to an education director, also produced a participant. Snowball #15 was to a reservation church representative who gave me two names (Snowballs #16 and #17), but I did not find participants via this route. Snowball # 18, # 19, #20, and #21 went to former students who purposely take face-to-face classes; they did not have additional

[51] Although the Midwest TCU is full of possible candidates, I would not directly approach those students without an introduction; the Midwest Tribe and the Woodlands Tribe are different Nations, but they do share cultural similarities regarding respectful behavior.

contacts. Snowball # 22 went directly to a person I met at a conference and she became a participant. I met my next participant (Snowball #23) at a party. However, Snowballs # 24 and #25, who I met at the tribal Museum on the reservation, and Snowball #26, a volunteer at the reservation church, did not lead to study participants. Snowballs # 27 and #28 went to a brother and sister who attend college. Neither of them will take online classes. Snowball #30 is a distant cousin who graduated college several years ago. He, as well, would not take online classes. Snowball #31 was a query to a co-worker who gave me a contact who, subsequently, introduced me to a female elder who, in turn, gave me a name and number with the words, "Tell Ivy I gave you their name." That person did not take any online classes and did not result in any additional snowballs.

The probing required of the snowball sampling was extremely uncomfortable for me; it felt like I was being *pushy* and I struggled with my sense of improper behavior. However, by the time I contacted potential study participants, they often had already been notified by the original source that I would be calling. The tribal phone tree works almost as fast as the internet. In several cases, I had to give my name and number to the point of contact who then passed it on to the possible participant, who would then call me. After contacting the possible participants, we arranged to meet face-to-face at a location of their choice because "qualitative researchers go to the people; they do not extricate people from their everyday worlds" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 9).

Participant Information

The resulting participants of this study were female adult Native American distance learners ranging in age from twenty-four to sixty-seven. The participants differed in tribal affiliation, educational background, and level of experience with various DL platforms. A

summation of the participant's demographics is shown in Table 2. Due to the small number of members in certain tribes, along with the extremely small population who have attended college, I worried about participant confidentiality. This is not uncommon. Both Waterman (2004) and Brayboy (1999) faced this issue when writing their dissertations. Therefore, I followed their example by providing only a short participant overview, summarized in Table 2, and kept in-depth participant profiles in my conducted research files. Participant order was randomly selected.

Violet is a 41- year-old female of the Southeast Coastal Tribe. She is a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy and has traveled the world both as an adult and as a child of a military family. She did not attend a BIA or tribal school. She has completed five DL classes throughout her 25-year academic career as an undergraduate student, and received her B.S. from a TWI. During her military service, she experienced the early video recorded correspondence courses of the 1980s. She has also taken blended, VTT, and fully online courses, most of which were not in her major. Violet is not actively involved in the education field as an academic, but she does work full time. She does not live on or near tribal lands.

Rose is a 57-year-old female, native speaker of the Midwest Tribe, and a descendent of two other Midwest tribes. She was born, raised, and lives near tribal land in Midwest State. Although her elementary through graduate school education was not at a BIA or tribal school, she currently works full time as an administrator/Professor at Midwest TCU. Rose has completed 17 courses in her major; all courses were VTT or fully online. She attended TWIs for her B.A., MS Ed, and M.S. degrees. She is currently ABD at a TWI.

Iris is a sixty-seven year old female, native speaker of the Great Plains Tribe. She did not attend BIA or tribal schools for K-12. For her B.S. degree, she attended college out of state and

currently lives near tribal land in Western State. She did attend Western TCU for a second B.S. degree and a M.S. degree. Iris is currently enrolled as a doctoral candidate at Great Plains TWI and has completed six DL classes in her field that were blended or fully online. She works full time in the education field and occasionally adjuncts at Great Plains TCU. For her job she uses computer conferencing techniques (one way voice) to meet with colleagues in her field.

Daisy is a 40-year-old female of the Midwest Tribe. She was born, raised, and lives in Midwest State. Daisy did not attend BIA or tribal schools. She does not live near tribal land although she does visit the reservation regularly. She has taken four DL classes, related to her major. For her associate's degree at a TWI, her courses were either VTT or fully online. She is employed full time and her current job requires periodic online training programs.

Jasmine is a 46-year-old female of the Woodlands Tribe. She lives in Midwest State and did not attend a BIA or tribal school for her K-12 education. She attended Midwest TCU for her associate's degree and a TWI for her bachelor's and master's degrees. She visits the reservation regularly but does not live on tribal land. All six DL courses she took, which include a VTT, a correspondence, and a fully online course were in her major field of study. She is employed full time at Midwest TCU. Web-conferencing with others is part of her job as an administrator.

Mimosa is a 50-year-old female of the Midwest Tribe who did not attend a BIA or tribal school. She attended an in-state TWI for her B.S. degree and an out-of-state TWI for her M.S. degree. She does not live near tribal land, but visits the reservation. She has taken fourteen DL courses that include paper correspondence, blended, VTT, and fully online. The courses were both undergraduate and graduate; most unrelated to her major course of study. She works full time as an instructor at a TWI.

Lily is a 24-year-old female of the Midwest Tribe. She did not attend a BIA or tribal school for her K-12 education. She lives near tribal land, has been active in tribal activities, and currently works full time for a tribal organization. She completed her associate's degree at a TWI and is currently enrolled in a bachelor's degree at a TWI. She has taken twenty courses DL courses including blended, VTT and fully online courses. Many of the classes were related to her associate's degree program.

Poppy is a 30-year-old of Western Great Plains Tribe. She did not attend a BIA or Tribal school for her K-12 education. She was not raised near tribal land since her family had been moved by a U.S. government program to an extremely large Midwest City during the relocation period. She does not live near her tribal lands, but is active in Native American organizations. She completed three fully online courses at the undergraduate level at a TWI; only one was related to her major course of study. All of her graduate work was purposely face-to-face.

Table 2

Summation of Participant Demographics

Participant ID	**Tribal Affiliation**	**# of DL Classes**	**Type of D.L. Classes**	**Ed. Level of DL Classes**	**Age**
Iris	Great Plains Tribe	6	Blended, Fully online	U.G. Grad	67
Rose	Midwest Tribe with connections to two other Midwest Tribes	17	VTT, Fully online	Grad	57

Mimosa	Midwest Tribe	10	Correspondence (paper), Blended, VTT, Fully online	Grad	50
Jasmine	Woodlands Tribe	6	Correspondence (paper), VTT, Fully online	U.G. Grad	46
Violet	Eastern Coastal Plain Tribe	5	Video correspondence, Blended, VTT, Fully online	U.G.	41
Daisy	Midwest Tribe	4	VTT, Fully online	U.G.	40
Poppy	Western Great Plains Tribe	3	Fully online	U.G.	30
Lily	Midwest Tribe	20	Blended, VTT, Fully online	U.G.	24

Interview Procedure

Interviews were scheduled for a three week period in November of 2012. Usually one interview was scheduled per day leaving enough time to complete the debriefing form, update my field book, save the recorded interview onto a thumb drive, and travel. Once, I scheduled two interviews in one day: one in the morning and one in the afternoon, leaving sufficient time to complete the debriefing form and save the audiotape onto the thumb drive. While traveling, the thumb drive and identity sheet were kept locked in a small portable fire and waterproof safe.

Although the interviews did not have a specific time limit, the interviewees were told that an hour would be sufficient. A semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix G) was used to ask the participants to explain their experiences with the DL environment. This type of interview

allows fluidity of the information being shared and allows flexibility to ask probing questions on topics that may not have been anticipated (Patton, 1990).

Interviews were conducted with adult Native American distance learners until saturation was reached. Saturation is the "point of data collection where the information you get becomes redundant" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 69). Although I felt saturation was reached at the end of four interviews, I decided to continue interviewing, since the interviews were scheduled, the travel plans made, and the agreement to meet finalized. Even though I felt the general information gathered would just be a confirmation of what I had already collected, I knew each additional interview would increase the variation of study participants and each new participant would contribute insightful comments to the study's findings.

The interviews were conducted at locations chosen by participants, such as a home, an office, or a quiet restaurant. Each interview followed the same procedure. I thanked my participant for allowing me to interview them and gifted them with a small present. In most Native American communities, elders are the recipients of gifts and tobacco is the traditional gift offered. However, because I did not know the ages or backgrounds of my participants (whether or not they followed traditional ways), I offered a hand-made gift to each participant. Although Chief Luther Standing Bear (1999) explains, "children were taught that true politeness was to be defined by actions rather than words" (p. 14), for me, the gifting was not just manners, but a way of showing respect for the time and knowledge they would honor me with.

Bodgan and Bilken (2007) suggest starting the interviews with small talk. They believe "the purpose this 'chit chat' serves is to develop rapport" (p.103). In my case, small talk served a vital purpose. Even though an "introduction" had already been given on my behalf, I needed to *personally* establish my place within the larger Native American community and forge

connections with my participants. Hence, my chit-chat involved mutual friends and family until everyone could place themselves, and I was no longer an outsider. The ability to recite familial history is necessary in the Native American community. I knew that the chit-chat, or storytelling, would go on until "a story that transformed me from an outsider to insider" was told (Lowery, 2010, p. xiii). Being recognized and accepted as an insider is necessary because as Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) point out, "Sometimes researchers are "blocked" by participants who decide they are unworthy or not to be trusted with local "insider" information" (p. 163).

Following the introduction period, I heeded the advice of Bodgan and Bilken (2007) and then very briefly discussed my research project and reassured the participants of the security measures I would take to assure confidentiality and to protect their identity and interview tape. After making sure the consent sheet and demographics sheet were completed, I reminded participants that they could stop the interview at any time, and asked if they had any questions or needed clarification about any part of the interview process. After the digital tape recorder was turned on, I announced the date, pseudonym of the participant, and formally thanked them for agreeing to meet with me. On my interview protocol, I wrote down the time the interview began and commenced asking questions.

I was careful to conduct each interview following my Native American mother's advice that I sit quietly without fidgeting, that I "listen and show respect." I did not interrupt when a participant was talking, for I did not want my behavior to reflect poorly on my family, nor did I want to appear pushy or demanding. Holding my tongue as a participant was speaking was difficult because there were additional questions that I wanted to ask before I forgot. However, I attended to correct interview procedure by not interrupting or making obvious notes (Bodgan & Bilken, 2007; Patton, 2002; Shank, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The first part of the interviews seemed to be a bit slow and tentative, which I expected. I knew that it would take a little time to build the trust of my participants and to earn respect. Once that happened, the information was graciously given and gratefully received. I discovered that Schultz and Kroeger (n.d.) are right to assert that, "Once you develop trust with an individual or family then it is okay to ask questions" (p. 1).

Historically there have been many incidents for Native Americans in which researchers took words, twisted them, and misrepresented the participants' intentions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Spindler, et.al., 1990). Because I did not want to influence my participants' comments, yet I wanted to ensure complete transparency of my research project, after the interview was completed, I explained the five common threads of Indigenous Learning that I found during the literature search. I felt it a matter of respect to share the information. In addition, I offered the participants a copy of the transcribed interview to review for accuracy. This procedure, known as member checking, is part of a component of trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). After I requested permission to contact participants for further clarification or additional information, I also reminded them that if they had concerns or supplementary comments, they could contact me at any time.

Immediately following each interview, when I was alone and the information still fresh in my mind I completed the debriefing form and wrote a thank you note to the participant. As well, I reflected on my role as interviewer and the actual process of the interview. My observations, comments, and additional questions were recorded in my field book. The field book was updated daily and used to record ideas, thoughts, memos, and possible necessary changes to the research. My dissertation journal, which contains an overview of the dissertation process, rather than a "to-do" list, was updated every few days with observations of the process as a whole.

Data Analysis

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was stringently maintained during each step of the research process. I asked each participant to choose a pseudonym. Often these pseudonyms were reflective of the participants' real names so I assigned a letter/number combination to each participant. All paperwork and participants were identified by the letter/number code until the final writing of this study. At that time, I chose new pseudonyms to replace the letter/number combinations. Being uncomfortable[52] with assigning "English" names to Native American participants, I assigned the name of a flower to each participant. The list of code name/actual name was kept in a fire/waterproof safe of some sort at all times. Currently, the code list, all original paperwork, including the field book, and a thumb drive containing duplicate information reside in a bank safety deposit box. These items will remain in the safety deposit box for the legal recommended time dictated by SIUC HSC. After which, the information will be destroyed.

Data Processing

A dissertation is a fluid document that changes and morphs throughout the research and writing process; the data, subject matter, or process can change (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Ideas, comments, connections, and additional questions will pop into the researcher's head at any moment. I have found this to be true, and as a scientist have always kept a field book while in the field for field specific data, as well as a research/teaching journal for general information. As Michael Canfield (2011), an evolutionary biology professor at Harvard explains, "Taking time to

[52] I started to assign "English" names, realized that I was imitating the practice of the mission schools, and immediately stopped. I could not repeat that historical atrocity, and "use words of the oppressor" (Freire, 2000). Flower or bird names seemed appropriate.

write out an idea or observation forces us to pause and consider…encourages an honest assessment of…underlying goals and theory of the project" (p. 16). Additionally, Canfield (2011) tells us that "Since human memory is transitory and things that are not written down may slip away quickly, field documentation is critical" (p. 14). Therefore, when I commenced my doctoral studies, I began a dissertation journal which now contains notes, thoughts, and questions I have had throughout the years. In this journal, I also wrote my general observations of the dissertation process until my dissertation was completely written, defended, and submitted. In addition, I carried with me at all times a small hardcover geology field book in which I made notations about anything concerning my project that needed to be changed, researched, completed, or perhaps discarded. Reflections, random thoughts, ideas, suggested books and articles also found their place in my field book.

Each qualitative researcher will have their own method of analyzing data (Creswell, 2008). Mine is as follows. I first developed a pre-code chart (Appendix D) based on the general demographics; educational background and distance education courses taken. I included themes such as communication, interaction, and requirements of DL courses. However, after my first interviews, several other themes were added. By the time I ended coding, the themes once again changed. Refer to Appendix E for final coding.

To be as unobtrusive as possible and to maintain interview accuracy, I used a Sony ICD-MX20 digital audio recorder to record and store the interviews. As soon as an interview was complete, the audio file was downloaded to a laptop and a thumb drive. The audio file was then deleted from the recorder. After all the interviews were conducted, the thumb drive with the audio files was given to a professional transcriptionist. After she completed the transcription, the

thumb drive was put in the safety deposit box, and the audio files on the laptop deleted. I then began to analyze the audio tapes and typed transcriptions as follows:

1. I listened to the tape.

2. I listened to the tape a second time following along with the typed transcription, making general notes about the interview.

3. I listened to the tape and on the typed transcription I made corrections to spelling when necessary. I also noted pauses, laughs, puzzlement, and movements made by participant during the interview.

4. I listened again to ensure all corrections were made.

5. I typed the corrections into the original typed transcription.

6. I listened to the tapes again, comparing the audio version to the corrected typed transcription.

7. I had two other people read the typed transcriptions while listening to the audio tapes to verify accuracy.

Coding

To do the actual coding, I used many different colors of ink pens and highlighters to indicate the strength of importance or different themes, classifications, and categories. While coding, I kept a piece of blank paper next to me in order to write down words that were put into groups/clumps which stood alone, or were sometimes later incorporated into other groups/clumps. These larger groups often turned into themes or subthemes. My field book was nearby so I could write down fleeting thoughts related to the research that I would later expand upon. I noted words and/or phrases to remind me of other sources to be read or quotes to be used. The following outlines my coding procedure:

To refresh my memory, each transcribed interview was read without coding. Then I read through the interview a second time, jotting notes on the right or left hand margin depending upon the note. Codes were written in the right-hand margin and phrases or connections written in the left-hand margin. During the third reading of the typed transcript, I used different colored highlighters and indelible pens to highlight or underline specific words or phrases. The fourth reading was done to ensure that I had coded everything that could be coded. After finishing the coding, I put the time, date, and number of readings at the top of the transcription.[53] This process was followed for all transcriptions except for those in which a new theme was found. When that happened, I went back to the first transcript and read it and all subsequent ones until I reached the current transcript. The transcripts were always read in the same order to ensure that none were overlooked. This also helped me remember what words were in which interview. This process worked for me as a child's book works for a child. The more I read the transcript, the more familiar I became with it. Until, finally, I was able to read it without turning the pages.

Each clump of words or codes that fit in one group were written or taped together onto a piece of paper. I then developed categories that were written on orange index cards. In order to arrange the seemingly random codes into the most fitting categories, I used an eighteen inch wide and six foot long piece of paper made out of brown grocery bags and proceeded to tape the category labels in a row across the top of the large brown piece of paper. Then I arranged and rearranged the codes in columns under specific categories where they best fit. As a result of this process, I was able to reduce the categories by noting overlaps of the codes, and add two

[53] Every time I reread the typed transcriptions, I noted the date. As well, when quotes were used, I flagged the page and highlighted the actual words used for easy retrieval.

additional categories to the chart, thus rearranging the order of the codes into the most appropriate categories.

To ensure the logic of my coding, I had a Q-sorting party. Several academics and a few non-academics came together to play the academic version of "Pin the Tail on the Donkey." Categories were taped on the wall and members of the Q-sorting Party were given codes written on index cards and were asked to tape the codes under the most appropriate categories. As I had found, my guests discovered that two distinct categories could be merged to create a new one. During the coding process and when examining the categories and their relationships, I noticed several themes that presented.

In summary, I started with open coding, which developed the categories of information, and then I included axial coding, which connected the categories and subcategories and how they related to one another (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Shank, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

It was necessary to delimit the population interviewed due to the nature of this phenomenological study. Because I wanted to document the experiences of adult Native American distance learners, the participants were purposely-selected adult Native American distance learners who had taken DL courses, with at least one of these courses being a fully online course. The purposive sample (Bodgan & Biklen, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Patton, 2002; Schwandt, 2001) was selected to include a variance of age, educational background, and tribal affiliation. Participants were limited to those who received an education at an institution in the U.S. and had at least one degree in higher education. The participants were found via referral by using the snowball sampling technique.

Because all research has limitations, the boundaries must be acknowledged. The primary purpose of this study was to record the experiences and perceptions of the participants and to document the extent to which the five threads of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning were incorporated in a DL environment or face-to-face classroom. One limitation that exists in a study such as this is whether the information being shared by the participants is accurate. Time can change memory and sometimes "we remodel our house of memory…we have sealed up certain rooms, shifted a few doorways, and recast our experiences in a more pleasant hue" (Bray, 1997, p. 14). A second limitation of this study is that, although the interview questions are designed for clarity and were refined after the pilot study, misunderstanding could have occurred due to cultural or age differences. Sometimes "interviewing imposes particular certain Anglo-American norms on one's participants" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 93) which can significantly reduce the amount of useful information. This study's third limitation is that answers could have been unintentionally influenced by the interviewer's body language or appearance. Shank (2006) warns, "Nonverbal signals are very powerful and can often be misunderstood" (p. 45). As well, perceptions can also be influenced by the interviewer's bias.

Researcher Bias Statement

Interview bias exists. As Durant (1968) declared, "even the historian who thinks to rise above partiality….betrays his secret predilection in his choice of materials, and in the nuances of his adjectives" (pp. 10-11). Knowing this, I tried to make myself aware of my own biases when conducting the interviews, and not let my personal beliefs about the various DL platforms enter the conversations. My many years of experience in the DL environment, both as a student and as instructor, have certainly influenced my view of DL with respect to the different methods. For example, although I do teach blended and VTT courses, I have extreme bias against teaching

fully online courses because they do not allow me to fulfill the responsibility I feel an instructor should. In fact, I refuse to do so. Instead, I design in-the-room, and blended courses that are user friendly, easy to navigate, respectful to all, and, I believe, truly communal learning experiences.

My biases regarding fully online courses necessitated my awareness of my own judgments about good or bad students as I interviewed and listened to the experiences and perceptions the participants had concerning DL.

My interviewer biases also included the influence of my own Anglo education. I do not have experience with a BIA school or TCU. In addition, unlike many Native American children, throughout my education, I have had at my access to books, teachers, libraries, and other educational equipment and resources. Differences between my educational experiences and those of my participants exist; I had to remember that as I listened to their interpretations of their educational experiences.

Also necessary for any interviewer to consider when avoiding interviewer bias are the differences in interviewer/interviewee socioeconomic backgrounds. I was raised off reservation in a traditional two-parent household. My family's home was located in a small Midwestern town with a homogenous population. It is likely I was raised in a higher socioeconomic environment than were many of my participants. However, funding my own college education did cause me to experience educational "stop-outs" like many Native Americans. And, as an adult learner, my stop-outs were due to family obligations, similar to those faced by many other Native Americans.

Another interesting issue shaping my view as conductor of this study was my envy of my participants' connections to their Native American communities. I am Native American; however, I was not raised with knowledge of or ties to my heritage. My mother was removed

from the reservation as a young child and urged not to tell anyone about her *Indian blood*. Hence, I was not taught the language, traditions, or ceremonies of the Midwestern Tribe to which we belong. I did not discover my ancestry until the early 1980s. I did not visit the reservation until the mid-1990s when my mother took my two young children and me to the tribal office to register their lineage. I was thirty-four years old.

I have red hair, green eyes, and light skin. Therefore, I have always been perceived as Anglo and been afforded the privileges that often are often automatically bestowed when in the dominant culture. In contrast, my participants will more than likely have felt the sting of racism. Unless I am with my mother, aunties, or cousins when I visit the reservation, I am perceived and treated as an Anglo, by those I have not met. I feel the difference between my knowledge of myself as a Native American and my participants' connectedness to that same heritage. I feel the loss of the traditional knowledge that my participants have and, to be honest, I am envious of their more tangible connection to their ancestors' stories, traditions, and rituals. I am envious of those who can walk on a reservation and automatically be recognized as insiders. But I am grateful for their willingness to embrace me and share their experiences with me.

Maxwell (2005) tells us "*Any* view is a view *from some perspective*, and therefore is shaped by the location (social and theoretical) and 'lens' of the observer" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 39). My viewpoints are unique to me, shaped by my experiences, education, emotions, and thoughts. My awareness of the aspects of my life shaping my view (my education, my family heritage, my economic background) helped me minimize my own biases so that I could be a more objective observer in this study. Moreover, my scientific background added an imperative essential to both this study and the relationships I forged throughout it: the sharing of knowledge.

When it is time, I will return home to the reservation to complete the circle and contribute my knowledge. This I know.

Researcher Assumption Statement

Like the conductor of a study, participants of a study may have bias. In this case, an educational bias will exist because all the participants of this study have earned more than a high school education. This is a significant factor since the high school graduation rate of Native Americans is approximately 60%. In some areas of the country, the rate is less than 50% versus a national average of 75.2% (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010; NCES 2005). Because all participants have taken a DL class, there is a bias toward computers: all had computer access and a basic understanding of DL platforms.

Another possible participant bias in this study has to do with the socioeconomic background of the participants. None of the participants live on a reservation and all are employed full time. According to the U.S. census from 1990, 2000, and 2010 Native Americans have the highest poverty rate, lowest median income and highest rate of unemployment of all ethnic groups in the U.S. Many "American Indian communities remain isolated, chronically neglected places that benefit little form the nation's wealth….statistics on life expectancy, family income, and educational opportunities among Native Americans can parallel those of Third World countries" (Boyer, 1997, p. 2).

Bias may also be present in the participants of this study due the fact that all of them learned to navigate the Eurocentric educational world. They all received their K-12 education at Anglo schools and the majority attended TWIs for their higher education degrees. Only two of the participants actually left their home states for educational purposes, one for her undergraduate degree and one for her graduate degree.

Conclusion

Ultimately, I believe "validity in qualitative research is not the result of indifference, but of integrity" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 108). Therefore, throughout this chapter, I have meticulously recorded every step of this research project. First, I described the theoretical framework, the research design, and addressed the trustworthiness and the authenticity of the current study. Second, the methods used to select participants and conduct interviews was addressed. Then I presented my research procedure, which included the actual process of participant selection, a brief summary of each participant, and the interview process. Data analysis was addressed by a discussion of confidentiality and the coding process. Concluding the chapter, limitations of the study were discussed by disclosing researcher bias and researcher assumptions.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This life cannot be separated into nice neatly labeled boxes

-S. D. Barton

Introduction

This study has a two-fold purpose: 1) to add to the body of knowledge on adult Native American distance learners by using qualitative methods to explore the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners, and 2) to introduce a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and document if the five model threads are an important component of the participants' learning processes.

As an exploratory qualitative study and proposed model, the information gathered can serve four purposes: 1) contribute to the literature of adult Native American distance learners, 2) provide knowledge to help educators design curriculum that not only educates, but also helps Native American students to learn indigenously, 3) be used by TCUs to develop DL courses for a diverse (multi-tribe) adult learner population, and 4) provide a foundation for additional research of Native Americans and other populations.

A one hour, face-to-face reflexive interview, with a semi-structured interview protocol as outline, was conducted in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What were the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners in a distance learning environment?
2. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of place?

3. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of storytelling?
4. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of intergenerational interaction?
5. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of experience?
6. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of interconnectedness?
7. To what extent are the five threads of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning used by instructors in their DL or face-to-face classrooms.

The remainder of this chapter will review the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and themes that were found while coding the interviews. First, each thread of the proposed model will be discussed with supporting evidence provided by participants regarding the importance of each thread in their DL and classroom learning process. Second, themes that were found while coding will be introduced and discussed. Throughout these discussions, correlations between the findings and Vygotsky's theory will be included along with research literature that supports the threads, themes, and findings.

Standard Model of Indigenous Learning

1. Place

Place is an extremely important concept in the Native American community. It is the First Thread of the model because place involves and is influenced by the other four threads. For example, place is affected by stories (Thread 2), which are shared by the elders who have the

"esteemed role as cultural transmitters or Keepers of the Meaning" (Wallace, 2003, p. 187) and are part of the Third Thread: intergenerational interaction. Experience, the Fourth Thread, enriches our knowledge, helps to shape our worldview, and contributes to place. Some in the Anglo world call this our Johari Window.[54] However, place is more than just experience. Place is determined not only by understanding our connectedness (Thread 5) with one another and all that is seen and unseen, but also by respecting all others and those connections. Respect is the foundation. When we know our place relative to all others, we are better able to determine our behavior. Jasmine explains:

> Respect is something that is very important to me. It's something that with my kids and my grandkids that I always talk to them about it and that I try to instill in [them], and knowing your place in life and relations to who you are with…where *you are*. Knowing that (pause) when you are with friends, how you should behave and respect, and when you are with aunts and uncles and grandparents and parents and there is a certain level of respect….So, just knowing your place in relation to who you are with, respect. If that is instilled in you, in the *home*, with your family, you'll carry that with you in life with other people too. (personal communication, November, 23, 2012)[55]

The Native American concept of place is a difficult concept for many non-Native Americans to understand. For most Native Americans place does not have a concrete, firm definition. It is a somewhat ephemeral concept and has to do not only with ones' self, but also with where one is mentally, physically, and spiritually at any given moment, and moments change. So, place, although it changes, it is always a part of us. Although we may lose our place for periods of time,

[54] A cognitive psychology tool, the Johari window is a technique created by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in 1955 in the United States, used to help people better understand their relationship with self and others.
[55] Subsequent quotes will only contain participant's name.

we know deep down inside that it's still there, somewhere. It is what sustains us. And, likely, this sense of place is what has given many Native Americans the resilience to keep their dignity, presence, community, and culture throughout their many battles against assimilation. For example, Iris says that her grandmother's generation (late 1890s-early1900s) "still had their culture, those ties and spoke the language. Even though they were taken and put in boarding schools, they never lost *that* core piece, okay." When asked how she would describe that core or sense of place, she said,

> It's that whole self-efficacy, that core of knowing who you are. You know, I mean, that's key to that self-efficacy, that pride, that dignity, and that being who you are without being belligerent about it. Just being real comfortable with who and what you are. And from that there's a certain dignity. And it's almost like an essence, you know, it's tough, how do you qualify this. It's A and B and C and then it's a whole bunch of As in this situation and ABC over here. And it's just a presence, a real dignity and presence that's there. (personal communication, November 20, 2012)[56]

Place is not an easy concept to define, even for those Native Americans who have a strong sense of place such as Iris, Rose, and Mimosa because there are no Anglo words that describe the feeling of place. Self-confidence, self-efficacy, or self-respect, perhaps, are the closest words in the Anglo world. However, even these terms are inadequate; they do not take into account the connection of self and place in relation to everything else that is seen and unseen, that spiritual, physical, and mental awareness and connection to every other particle (Cajete, 2005; Deloria, 1999a; Joseph, 2005; Mankiller, 2004; Supernaw, 2010). Deloria and Wildcat (2001) state that,

[56] Subsequent quotes will only contain participant's name.

"the personal nature of the universe demands that each and every entity in it seek and sustain personal relationships" (p. 23).

Everything affects place; therefore, the relationship of education and learning to place are two specific topics that need to be closely examined. It is imperative to determine how Native Americans define, understand, and relate to the terms of education and learning in the DL and traditional classroom environments. Due to the historical legacy left by the Anglo educational system (detailed in Chapter 2), many in the Native American community view education with distrust and distain. Many of those who voluntarily left the reservation for higher educational purposes were looked at with suspicion. Iris, who is 67 and mandated to attend college, remembers:

> Oftentimes, in my generation, when you *left* your communities, or the reservation, and you went and were educated and you came *back*, you really had *no place to come back to* (she draws out this phrase), because you just didn't fit in. And you were looked at suspiciously and askance (pause) because there was a belief that in order to acquire that education you had to lose that core of Indian-ness, which fortunately we have found that *is not* true, that is *not* the case. Ah, but there was a period of time when that was. You paid a price, you paid a very heavy price for *being* educated, for walking that path, for leaving.[57] (Iris)

As the memory of the boarding school era is still vivid in the minds of many elders and their descendants, this view is still evident in some Native American communities (Adams, 1995; Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Lowery, 2010; Pember, 2007; Reyhner & Eder, 2006; Spring, 2007; Trafzer et al., 2006). As Rose explains,

[57] Even today, many Native Americans face this misconception in their communities.

> The elders, if they had a positive experience in their schooling or life experience, they may have shared it with their children and so that comes down. But, if they didn't have a positive experience it wasn't shared. Or what was shared was in bits and pieces, not really telling everything, because a lot of stuff was real shameful. (personal communication, November 17, 2012)[58]

After personally talking to a few elders about their experiences and reading about the boarding school era, my heart ached. Nevertheless, I was impressed by their sense of place. They just stated the facts, they were not angry, they did not blame, they survived to pass on their knowledge. They maintained their dignity; they kept their place. My perception is that they survived, as do many Native Americans in the educational system today, by considering Anglo education a challenge, a trial, a rite of passage, or just a job to get through. Waterman (2004), agrees, "I travelled two separate paths. I treated college like a job" (p. 4).[59]

Some Native Americans were mandated to or willingly attended Anglo educational institutions believing that education would help them survive in the dominant world. In 1873, Ohiyesa[60] was sent by his father "off to white schools with the admonition that 'it is the same as if I sent you on your first warpath. I shall expect you to conquer'" (Nerburn, 1993, p. xi). His father believed that education was necessary to understand the Anglos who were taking over their lands. Adam Fortunate Eagle (2010), said that at 12 years old, he realized "I must get an education to survive…I must get a good education and learn how to use the education I get" (p. 98). Sounding puzzled while recalling her insight, Mimosa says,

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[58] Subsequent quotes will only contain participant's name.
[59] Stephanie Waterman, a Haudenosaunee, received her Ph.D. from Syracuse University, a private TWI.
[60] He was 15 years old when his father, whom he had thought been murdered, returned and told him he needed to begin attending the mission school.

> It just came to me one day. I must have been in middle school? That I needed to know. I didn't know what, but I needed to learn. So I started really learning all sorts of things: shooting, bow, canoeing, tennis, canning, skiing, things I might not ever need, but if I ever did, I'd know how to do 'em. I wanted to know and experience everything, just in case. (she laughs) Sure made high school and college interesting. But by the time I got to high school, I knew I had to follow the education route, because once you know something, no one can take it away and I was good at it too. (personal communication, November 25, 2012)[61]

The participants with a strong sense of place displayed a strong sense of presence and confidence. These qualities were subtle, not overt as was the delightful sense of humor many possessed. Rose smiled when she said, "They always tease me…because I have so much confidence. I don't lose my place. I always know where I'm at. I don't worry about things, you know." Iris laughed and said, "As a matter of fact…on the phone yesterday, we were talking about my arrogance." This statement displays Iris's humor because she is not arrogant in the least. She is self-assured and embodies the characteristics of a highly respected elder. Mimosa explained,

> I don't worry about it [place]. Never have. I'm where I'm supposed to be for whatever reason, so I'm comfortable in any situation. If not, then I'd be somewhere else, (she laughs) you know. (pause) I'm here, *right now* (emphasizes), for some reason, to learn something. I don't know exactly what, but there *is* a reason and I try to be aware. I mean, it's all learning while we walk this path." (Mimosa)

[61] Subsequent quotes will only contain participant's name.

Mimosa's comment is reminiscent of what Cajete defines as the centering place. This, Cajete (2005) explains,

> Is where the soul and the intention of the vision is formed. This is the place where the 'soul of the dream is honored.' The intention is energized and guided by one's innermost conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings. In whatever we learn, and by whatever means we learn, we are always true to our own inherent nature and personality. *That is why in all that we endeavor to learn we always learn something about ourselves* [emphasis added]. (p. 150)

All education needs to support and strengthen a student's place because words, non-verbal expressions, and actions can all undermine place. As mentioned earlier, place is related to respect of self and for others, as well as the respect received from others. However, when self-esteem or self-respect is shaken, then place can be shaken.

Rose is an instructor so I was curious if she uses place with her students in her face-to-face classroom teaching. Rose told me, "I try to let them find it for themselves." She does relate a story of one student who lost her sense of place during the course of a semester. The student started out strong, but lost interest and motivation. It took strong direction from Rose and an older student mentor to help the young lady regain the sense of place she lost due to a physical change of location and being called a wrong name. Rose explained, "She lost her sense of place. She did. And she, it took her a while to find it, to get that confidence back, to say, I am a teacher."

Place can be reinforced or destroyed by experience. Lingering evidence of the destruction of place remains in the Native American community, often in the forms of substance abuse, poverty, unemployment, and educational under-achievement. However, it is important to

understand that poverty does not mean place is lost and not obtaining a formal education does not mean one doesn't have place. These aspects of life may be choice-related. What does impede place, however, are the barriers to self-growth formed by hateful words, actions, and accusations of ethnic inferiority that are self-internalized. Although the generation to which Iris's grandmother belonged retained their core piece, she recalls,

> My mother's generation, on the other hand, was *made to feel ashamed* (draws this phrase out slowly) of being who and what they were....I see a lot of people from that generation, Native American people, who completely walked away from being Native American because there was no capital in being Native American. They go off to war, they fight in World War II….feeling that they had to make a *decision* as to whether they were going to be Indian or not. And, more importantly, in a state like Great Plains, it didn't matter what decision you made as a Native American, you were still a god damned rotten Indian, rotten drunk Indian. So regardless of what you did, there was no escaping that label *that* was internalized. (Iris)

Iris's mother's experience was typical for that time and location. However, in many areas of the U.S. today, many Native Americans still experience being stereotyped.

Place is effected by experience; perhaps this is why the two younger participants seemed to have some difficulty in explaining place in relationship to the DL environment. Those over fifty, however, understood the meaning of the question, "How did the DL environment affect your sense of place?" And they were able to explain their experience without my asking a probing question. It is extremely interesting to note that all participants, whether full blood, low quantum, traditionally raised or not, and knew the concept of place. Perhaps, as Iris said, this sense of place "just might be genetics."

Place is anchored by respect, respect for all. Taiaiake Alfred (1999), a Native American professor, activist, and writer maintains, "Indigenous systems [are] founded on profound respect for balance. Without that respect, the system fails" (p. 44). All participants mentioned that place was involved in the face-to-face classrooms. The instructors were there, so the students could build respect with the instructor and other students. Lily says, "So, it's more like you have to give respect to get respect in college" because the instructors are not always older than the student, as is the case in lower grades. (personal communication, November 18, 2012)[62]

Because face-to-face interactions are so important for establishing respect, several TCUs with DL programs have put conditions on the type of DL environments permitted (Sanchez et al., 1998; Wetsit, 1999). At many TCUs, DL classes must utilize interactive video for the face-to-face interaction. Some require that the instructor conduct two on-site classes during the semester to build the face-to-face relationship with students. Others encourage instructors "to interact with students beyond the classroom using the telephone, email, or visiting in person" (Wetsit, 1999, p. 9).

However, not all respect is built with words; some is built by the non-verbal, which is difficult or impossible to see over the camera or the computer. Wetsit (1999) explains,

> Some authorities…in the field of communication believe that 60-70 percent of communication is nonverbal, coming in the form of proxemics, kinesics, paralanguage, and high-low communications. These are all involved in culturally-specific expectations of behavior, not all of which gets transmitted via distance learning technology. For example, instructors can miss some facial feedback that they would typically observe when teaching on-site. (p. 10)

[62] Subsequent quotes will only contain participant's name.

When asked if respect was in the DL environment, most participants didn't think so, particularly with the fully online classes. Jasmine explains the connection of respect and interaction which is also an important component of place.

> No. (she laughs)...there wasn't that connectedness. I couldn't tell if they agreed or didn't agree. You know, a person could have been replying [on the discussion board] and rolling their eyes and going, 'oh, this lady is way way out there'. So, no, I didn't feel that [respect] either way. (Jasmine)

In a VTT course, there is an instructor, sometimes in the room, sometimes at a distant site and questions can be asked. There may be a few classmates at the same site with the instructor, so respect could be there. Lily thinks that online instructors have to work harder to establish that respect. She said,

> I think the teachers who are doing online classes kind of put themselves out there more because they know that they are not interacting with the students face-to-face, so they kind of put themselves out there, trying to earn your respect…like in person you can do different things, to talk to people to gain respect, where I think online they kind of give that respect right away because they want you to give them respect right away. (Lily)

She is the only participant who felt as if one of her DL instructors was trying to build respect by being compassionate.[63] I found it interesting that although she mentioned the instructor had compassion, she did not specifically mention respect with that or other DL instructors. None of the other participants thought the instructors were trying to establish compassionate connections or respect. So very little communication took place in the DL course Poppy took that she felt her

[63] Lily is enrolled as a degree seeking student in an online/blended bachelor's degree program. Perhaps those instructors have received extensive training in conducting DL courses and creating a sense of community.

DL professor thought she could remove herself from the students since the course was online. Violet explains that her instructor seemed absent or voiceless,

> It [the DL environment] was very cold. There was nothing. Which was very sad, considering that the video was more warm than the online thing, which was supposed to have had a live person on the other side of it, but it was very cold. It was impersonal. It was very sterile. It was like a blank canvas. There was nothing there. Nothing to focus on. (personal communication, November 12, 2012)[64]

When asked about sense of self or self-respect when taking a DL class, most participants admitted that they did not feel connected. Instead, they felt rather alone and isolated.[65] Violet said, "For those two online classes, there was no self, it was just out in the abyss." The majority of participants would only take an online class because that was the only way offered. Daisy recalls,

> Like, it was the only way to take the class, so that's the way I did it...I don't think I got all that I could have got out of that class…I don't think I walked away with a huge, good, solid, strong knowledge of what I think I probably would have if it had been taught in class. (personal communication, November 23, 2012)[66]

Most participants felt that DL wasn't really learning. Although they learned facts, it wasn't true IL, which involves having relevancy to the information and being able to use it in a useful way either for self or for others. Violet believes,

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[64] Subsequent quotes will contain only the participant's name.
[65] Although Anglo students have reported similar feelings and the phrase "lack of presence" is often used to indicate such an environment (Brown, 2001; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Liu, 2008), I believe most Native American distance learners are more concerned more with the connection to others, including the instructor. Often this connection affects them and their place.
[66] Subsequent quotes will contain only participant's name.

> If you don't have that connection of how that is important to you, per se, then it's like (she sighs heavily) useless trivia pretty much. There's no reason. Why am I wasting my time, energy, and giving part of *my life* (emphasizes) to this institution or teacher or whatever to learn this when there's nothing of relevance to me? (Violet)

The theme of relevancy presented in the coding. All the students wanted a tie-in to the information, a usefulness, or a purpose that could then be shared. They wanted to *learn*, not just receive knowledge or an education. I determined that relevancy of information is connected to the thread of interconnectedness (#5), which is discussed later.

Although these students in a DL class felt as if it was not a rich and fulfilling learning experience, they make an effort to make it such. Jasmine said she tried to connect, but the responses were superficial:

> What I found, was that people were just posting to get the posting in. I didn't see a lot of meaningful [posts], like people were really getting it…sometimes I would post something that, you know, I put a lot of thought into and the replies would be very short, and I thought 'well, people are just trying to get their post in.' (Jasmine)

When I asked Rose if there was much student interaction, she replied,

> No. We didn't necessarily have to. They had a spot there, on the course where it said that the instructor was supposed to post things that we would be commenting on. But, I don't think there was one time that any [instructors] of them did, for us to be interacting that way. (Rose)

Although most participants received A's in their fully online courses, all seemed to feel that they hadn't done their best because they hadn't learned. Their inability to *fully interact* with another in order to construct useful knowledge prohibited them from setting their place relative to others.

I got the impression their worldview was not tested, changed, or validated. I believe it is similar to how Violet described the difference between using a text in the DL environment and using a text and having a teacher in the classroom. She clarified,

> When you read the text, it's in your voice, but then when you hear it in someone else's voice it kind of validates what you've learned and it's like, "Yeah, yeah yeah, that's what I got!" Or "Whoa, what are you doing?" (Violet)

The construction of useful knowledge and the reaffirmation of worldview and connection seem to be the underlying factors of learning for these participants. It is not just learning in the Anglo sense; it is IL.

When asked directly about place being incorporated in the DL environment, they all said it was not. When asked if it was important, they all said yes (Refer to Table 3).

Table 3

Summation of participants' experiences and beliefs with respect to the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning in DL and the classroom setting

	Violet	Rose	Lily	Iris	Daisy	Jasmine	Mimosa	Poppy	Total
Place Online	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y:0 N:8
Use in own classroom	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y:4 N:0
Should be included	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Storytelling online	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y:2 N:6
Storytelling classroom	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0

Use in own classroom	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y:4 N:0
Should be included	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Intergen. Online	Can't tell	Can't tell	Y	Can't tell	Y	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Y:2
Intergen. Classroom	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Uses in own classroom	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	N	N	Y:2 N:2
Should be included	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Experience online	VTT	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y:1 N:7
Experience classroom	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Uses in own classroom	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y:4 N:0
Should be included	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Interconnect. Online	N	N	Y/N	N	N	N	N	N	Y:1 N:7
Interconnect. Classroom	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Uses in own classroom	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y:4 N:0
Should be included	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Respect online	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y:1 N:7

Respect in classroom	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0
Uses in own classroom	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y:4 N:0
Should be included	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y:8 N:0

Place is instilled, in most Native Americans, from the time of birth, by the surrounding family, community, and experience. The concept of place is similar to Vygotksy's belief of human development. He wrote that a human child's learning is affected in large and small ways by the culture in which they are enmeshed and it is through culture that they acquire their content (knowledge) of their thinking and the processes or means of their thinking (the how)(Vygotsky, 1978).

2. Storytelling

Storytelling is a cross-cultural tradition which precedes the written word. When we are young we hear our parents, grandparents, and/or other family members tell stories about one another and their past experiences. We have all stood witness while someone recalled an event that happened during the day. Lily said, "I think people's opinions about how they perceive things is a storytelling too."

Stories can be told in many ways for different purposes. For some, stories are a way to entertain or convey history. For others, stories are a way to teach morals and life lessons. For Native Americans, stories are all that and much more. This is why storytelling is the second thread to the model. John Trudell, Native American poet, recording artist, and activist says,

> Remember, everybody on earth is a descendant of a tribe, even whites. If you go back far enough in their ancestral history, they come from tribes. But the way technologic civilization works is it erases the memory. The civilizing process is to erase the tribal memory or cultural memory." (Corbett, 2008, p. 9)

And, yet, as my participants made clear, memories and the stories that accompany them seem to have a will to survive. In turn, some of these stories can be an important part of qualitative research. According to qualitative researcher, Gary Shank (2006),

> It is almost impossible to do qualitative research without listening to, and often creating, stories…Stories often play a fundamental role in every sort of human interaction. So, of course they are important for qualitative research. Furthermore, stories are about meaning, and qualitative research is a systematic empirical inquiry into meaning. (p. 169)[67]

All participants were adamant that stories are an important part of learning. Several participants who are instructors described how they use and encourage stories or narratives in their own face-to-face classrooms. Rose revealed:

> In my classes, when I'm teaching and lecturing I always tell some story or something like that. And I always leave it where a student can do the same thing. Yeah, that's one thing, one component that is missing [in online classes]. (Rose)

Mimosa explained that she tells stories and learns from the stories of her students:

> Definitely. I always share stories and my experiences. I think it helps the students connect to the real world. And then they'll share their experiences and stories which I love to

[67] Brayboy (2013) believes that his stories are theory. Lomawaima explains "Our theories are our stories. Theories generate narrative of explanation, they generate stories about the world; what it is, how it is, why it is…one society's theory might be another society's fairy tale" (2012, p. 13).

> hear. I learn so much from them. They teach me, probably more, than I teach them, really. I tell 'em that the first day of class, but they don't believe me. (she laughs) They look at me like I'm crazy...we all teach one another. That's the purpose of my class, connect and learn. (Mimosa)

Iris, Lily, and Daisy, who represent three different generations, tribes, and blood quantum not only agree that storytelling is important, but all three also perceive stories as a way to enhance the classroom, personalize coursework, pass on lessons, knowledge, experience, and culture. Of storytelling in the classroom, Iris conveys, "I think it's very worthwhile. Because the storytellings offer insight into individual experience and the application of whatever topic you are reading about." Lily concurs, "I think it is important for, um, every culture to pass down stories to help teach and to make sure future generations can be better than what they were." And Daisy proclaims:

> I learn a lot from that [storytelling]. I think because it's more personable to someone than just reading a book…And, if you have a story to attach to it, I think it means a little bit more to you…. because isn't that how they [ancestral Native Americans] learned, sitting around storytelling? Early learning from storytelling? (Daisy)

Because of the interaction it provides, storytelling is extremely important to the classroom experience. I found this truism reflected again when I asked Violet about her motivation for taking an online class instead of a face-to-face class. She declared,

> I would do everything possible to take a class face-to-face in a classroom even though it's more of a pain in the butt, even though, you know it's more inconvenient. It doesn't matter. To get the eye-to-eye, to get the, I don't want to say the validation, but validation of the class. That I'm taking this class, and this is the person that is going to guide me

through that class. In other words, he is, or they are my storyteller who is going to take me through to the other side. (Violet)

Violet sees her instructor as the *guide* who will lead her on her journey of learning. Interestingly, during the interviews, Sunshine, Rose, and Mimosa all used the word guide when discussing their classroom experiences as students and as teachers. This concept turned into a theme and will be discussed later in the themes section of this chapter.

Storytelling often involves the intergenerational thread (#3) of the proposed model because in the Native American community elders are respected as wisdom keepers and teachers (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2007; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Sanchez et al., 1998; Wallace, 2003). In the following dialogue, Iris succinctly explains the connectedness of the three threads place, story, and intergenerational interaction:

S. Barton: I'm wondering if you think that this intergenerational work, where you have grandparents teaching their grandkids, or aunties and uncles, if that is contributing to that sense of place?

Iris: of place. (she completes my sentence at the same time). I think so. I think definitely that is something that our children need to hear. And they need to understand the struggles and they need to understand the process and a real process there that we've gone through as Native peoples, and are going though.

S. Barton: So the narratives?

Iris: They need the narratives. And they need the stories. And they need the tribal stories and the spiritual stories and the personal stories. This was my journey. And this is, well how did you do this Miss Iris? Well, this is how I did this, these are the reasons that I am the way I am. This is the learning.

For most participants, the DL environment often did not offer the chance to share stories. Violet did share that her VTT instructor told stories about his experience with VTT to help the students feel comfortable and not feel abandoned by being in a different location. She relayed,

> The teacher, um, was on the screen and he was saying, that 'Yes, this was kind of weird.' He kind of described…how he got into it and how the, I don't want to keep saying weird, but the newness of the situation was with *him* and how he combated some of the things that you, you know, have problems with…. And he said, 'You are not the only ones that feel kind of weird up there. But we are still here. But we might not see *all* the class at one time… and if someone has a question, we'll make sure the camera goes where that person is,' and stuff like that. He was saying that when developing the class, he wanted to make sure that everybody felt that it was one class and not just a class way off in left field somewhere and we were just listening in. So he was like, 'Yeah, I *made* this class to *do that* and I can't do that without you guys.' He was like, 'I know it's weird, because when I first did it, I was looking at a camera going what the heck is this? But you'll get used to it and you'll have patience and everyone is going to go up and we are not going to leave anyone out and stuff like that.' So, it was really nice. It was very nice. (Violet)

Violet's sense of inclusion in her VTT course was a direct result of her instructor's reliance upon story to create a connection with students. However, it seems storytelling is not a common tool in DL classroom environments. Lily is the only other participant who encountered stories in two of the twenty DL classes she had taken. One was a fully online Environmental Science course and the other was a blended class about storytelling. Lily believes storytelling is an important part of learning and is the way a culture is maintained. Since Lily had recently completed her

storytelling class, offered by a local TWI, she was an unexpected treasure of knowledge on the topic of storytelling. She explained:

> Well, my teacher is…Midwest Tribe 2, and he's…basically focusing on the Seneca Tribe but he kind of goes over First Nations people as a whole, not just on a tribe. And kind of like teaches about their culture and why they think they way they think and how they interpret things. That is my hybrid class and we just met yesterday. We talked about storytelling, like what it means. And, um, actually to me I think whether they are Native Americans or Irish or Mexican, I think each culture has a type of storytelling in their traditions. And they may not call it storytelling, but they have *stories* that they pass along to each generation that has a lesson or a meaning behind it, which, I think it's kind of necessary because that's how you keep that culture going. (Lily)

In Lily's fully online class, she experienced storytelling by an older Native American male, whom she perceived to be in his 40s or 50s. She recalled:

> There's a guy in there who is Midwest Tribe 2 and he brings up some cultural stories of his own that has to do with taking care of the earth and preserving resources and how the Midwest Tribe 2 see that. He kind of brings that up in his own way. (Lily)

Lily's experience with storytelling seems to be the exception to the rule. Furthermore, in these classes the instructor and many students were Native Americans. When asked if she noticed that only older students (elders) were sharing stories, Lily replied,

> It just depends on the student. In my indigenous storytelling class, there's a girl that was a few years older than me and she just loves to tell stories about her past experiences and she wasn't a lot of older than me, so I guess it just depends on the person's personality (smile, slight laugh). (Lily)

Although there are natural storytellers among us, we all have our own stories to tell. My participants not only told me their own personal stories, but they told me others' stories to make a point. Also interesting to note is that my storytelling interviews came during the early winter season, the "proper time for the learning of those traditions that have their roots in the past and lead back to the source of all things" (Ohiyesa, 1993, p.20).

3. Intergenerational Interaction

The young, the old, and those in between all belong to the generation in which they were raised. Each generation and each person has strengths and weaknesses. Each individual is a product of their generational age. Some are educated, some learned, some wise, but all have experiences and stories. In the Native American community, elders on the basis of age, are given respect because they have lived a longer life. It does not matter who they are, what they are, or what they do. They have lived longer, gathered experiences, gained knowledge, and have wisdom; their place is as a respected elder. Elders are necessary to the learning process. Ohiyesa wrote,

> The distinctive work of both grandparents is that of acquainting the youth with the national traditions and beliefs. It is reserved for them to repeat the time-hallowed tales with dignity and authority, so as to lead him into his inheritance in the stored-up wisdom and experience. (Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 11)

All participants agreed that elders have knowledge that is important to share with the younger generations. They also felt it beneficial to have intergenerational interaction in a learning environment. Iris emphatically states:

> Oh, I think there's definitely a benefit. If you can *provide* that feature I think there's some *huge* benefits from that. Simply because of the *variety* there and the *mindset* and the

direction of each generation, you know. How those generations play out, where they are coming from, why they are coming from that, what life experiences did they have to put them here and this younger generation here and you know, that kind of thing, Yeah, I think there's definitely some advantages to *that* exposure for all of us. (Iris)

When asked whether having different generations working together is an important part of learning, Lily replied, "I think so. I think that's what would make a culture better. A specific culture is learning from their past and then doing something different to change their future." Jasmine's reply to the same question and our dialogue is as follows:

Jasmine: I think it's awesome. I think it's very interesting, I think you get a lot of very different views, definitely. Definitely, from different generations, and you get what I think it is. I think it adds a lot more to the class. It makes the classroom discussions a lot more interesting…I like a group that the ages range, you know the different ages. I like listening to the different experiences.

S. Barton: Can you explain why?

Jasmine: Because you have the different views. When you have somebody younger share their perceptions or their view on something and then you have an older person that has a whole different and then I think that it actually kind of um (pause) helps where it closes the gap between the generations between the real young and then the older and that they learn to understand each other a little bit more. By being able to be so intimate for 16 weeks in a small classroom where you are, you know, meeting three hours, four hours a week, definitely, they are forced that that has to happen. Or it's going to grow into that direction. Yeah.

It surprised me when Daisy said that in her experience the elders learned from the younger students. I have always thought of the elders as the wisdom keepers who share the knowledge with the younger generation. When I asked Daisy to describe any mentoring she saw by the older students or intergenerational interaction she witnessed, she replied,

> There was interaction, but I don't know if they necessarily like played like the, um, mothering or adult role or whatever of it. I think that so many of those people [older] had been out of the classroom for such a long time and had been factory workers and now they're going into a profession, that it was kind of like that some of the younger ones were helping them get into the computer skill and things like that. Maybe the older people had more real-life experience and life experiences, but the younger people had more of the computer and studying skills and things like that. Whereas the people who had been out of [school, a long time] you know, had not. (Daisy)

The type of intergenerational interaction Daisy described is found in a model for successful aging proposed by Wallace (2003) in her study of Mohican elders. She clarified that Mohican aging is done the correct way with young and old people working together. It is a mutual relationship: the young keep the old young, and the questions the young ask help with the elders' memories, while the stories shared with the children, pass on the knowledge, traditions, and culture (Wallace, 2003).[68]

Jasmine mentioned that although the typical student body at the TCU she attended is between 25 and 40, "there are some 50 year olds and elders, just attending a class just because. Not seeking a degree, but they just *wanted* to keep their *mind* active." The presence of elders is, I

[68] "The Mohicans's high respect for the knowledge and wisdom that is acquired only with age distinguishes them from much of mainstream society, where the 'tyranny of the new' often leads to the view that the knowledge of the elderly is obsolete, or at best of little relevance to today's life and to anyone" (p. 178).

think, a reflection of the way Native American communities view living as learning and learning as living. When asked how she relates to learning, Violet said,

> Hmm. It is life. But it is not per se the subjects that you're learning. The subjects that you are learning are not, will not follow you all the way through, but how you, how that subject, (pause) how you, that subject relates to the world, it fills your world picture better. It puts more color on the palette (she laughs). (Violet)

Iris echoes Violet's words when she explains that a subject may not follow a person through life, but they will relate it to their life and their world. Iris's comment is detailed in the interconnectedness thread (#5), as her quote ties learning to life. The connection of life and learning is a theme that will be discussed in the themes section.

4. Experience

Experience is often thought to be a hands-on type activity. However, experience just means that a person has lived, witnessed, or been involved somehow with an event. The event may be active such as running a race or it may be passive such as observing. A person had an experience and it is now part of them forever, and cannot be undone. Our experience is our own and "while we may misunderstand, we do not misexperience" (Deloria, 1999b, p. xviii).

Experience is an essential part of learning or, as stated by Lee Cronbach (1963), an Anglo educational psychologist, "Learning is shown by a change in behavior as a result of experience" (p. 71). When asked if experience is a vital part of the learning experience, Rose pointed out,

> Yes it is. It is because, think about it: I went to… a workshop and this doctor, Martin Brokenleg [Native American psychologist, author, and professor], he said experiential learning is how everybody learns no matter who it is. And they said, you know, talk to me, I listen, show me, I see, but how did that go? Let me do it and I learn, or something

> like that. It was interesting, because a lot of things he talked about and when he used them in his counseling and his teaching was the hands-on, the experiential learning. (Rose)

My study did support that many Native Americans prefer an experiential learning environment (Bigknife, 2006; Cajete, 1994, 20005; Deloria, V., 1999a; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Schultz & Kroeger, n.d.) to validate the knowledge they read in books. Jasmine's story supports this. She conveys,

> I remember a college algebra class…there were a few individuals that just were not grasping the concept, and um, they had shared that they didn't think that they were ever gonna use algebra. *So*, the instructor decided to take us on a field trip out to the woods to show just how often you use math without even realizing you are using math. So he went through a series of different demonstrations as if you were logging. And he used that because up on the Woodlands reservation obviously logging in the forest is big. So, he used that and applied just some everyday tasks that you do and how *that* is math. And so he took the textbook and actually took real life and applied that so that it would make more sense so it wasn't just a textbook anymore. This was real life and how you applied this to everyday. (Jasmine)

Many Native Americans not only value, but they also develop acute visual discrimination (Lasley & Matczynski, 1997). Information processing is often through the use of the visual mode; Native American children are taught to learn through careful observation, by watching nonverbal expressions, weather changes, behavioral changes of animals, and ecological changes of the earth. Native American students usually approach learning visually, first by observation,

then by performance, and usually prefer to learn in their natural settings through experimentation (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Swisher & Deyhle, 1987). Daisy said of her anatomy class:

> [I] wished that we would have maybe had a little more props or whatever to learn some of those [anatomical parts]…I learn better visually I think, more so than just reading something. If somebody is up there writing it out or giving me a presentation on a PowerPoint or something, I visually see that and respond, and learn better that way than just reading a book…So, more hands-on would have made more sense to me, like you know, this is the femur here (points to her leg). (Daisy)

Many Native Americans excel at experiential learning. However, this ability was misconstrued by Anglos and this led them to believe that Native Americans were not as "learned" as Anglos and did not have the capability to learn the classical academics. The Anglos did not understand the richness of an oral tradition used for knowledge transfer. This misunderstanding formed the basis of many mission and boarding schools, the curricula of which focused on the trades or vocational skills. For instance, the curricula at Haskell, Carlisle, Hampton, concentrated heavily on teaching a "trade" to the Native American students so they could join the working or subservient class. Most Native Americans were neither taught, nor encouraged to pursue a classical education similar to that provided to Anglos (Adams, 1995; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Lowery, 2010; Reyhner & Eder, 2010). Professor of Native American history, Clifford Trafzer (2006) recounts,

> After 1900 this philosophy [Jeffersonian ideal of equality] gave way to a racist view held by many whites, including those managing Indian affairs, according to which Indians were not equal to whites but were lower beings who should be trained at boarding schools to be subservient, obedient and 'useful.' They felt that Indians did not have the

> ability to perform on an equal footing with whites and did not have the mental capabilities to master academics so some officials of the BIA encouraged trades and domestic sciences at the expense of academics. (pp. 21-22)

According to the participants of the current study, experience is an important part of learning However, it must be understood that a preference for experiential learning does not make Native Americans incapable of mastering classical studies. The Anglo world has classified many types of learner styles, including audio, kinetic (tactile), and visual (Lasley & Matczynski, 1997; Schunk, 2008). These classifications do not preclude an Anglo person from studying the classics. Perhaps, most Native Americans are just cognizant that experiential knowledge enriches the learning experience and both experiential and classical learning[69] are needed for true learning, or rather, for Indigenous Learning (IL) to take place. Violet asserts,

> You can't learn without experience. You know. And you are not going to have experience without learning. It's a hand-in-hand thing. It's, I mean, they are different, but they are the same. You know they might as well be Siamese twins. Without one, you are not going to have the other. And without the other you aren't going to have the one. (Violet)

Daisy explained that actual experience solidified the knowledge she had gained via an online training program that was composed of reading and selecting multiple choice answers. She said,

> My training was all online training. I mean I had my supervisor and he would come and [we would] do the questions together but all the reading and stuff was online. But 'til you are actually doing it for yourself, that's when it finally sinks in for me, when I'm actually hands on in it learning it that way. I look back now and just kind of laugh like in the

[69] Classical in this case meaning "book learning."

> beginning I remember when we were training and reading about it. And you think this is never going to make sense, and then you finally do it; it makes sense. (Daisy)

Agreeing that the reading or the verbal must be validated by experience, Rose said,

> I learn better by doing something. If I am reading instructions for something, I'm going to read it while I'm doing it, um, I can read the instructions, and say okay, but if I don't physically do it, then it's like I'm not really sure what I'm doing. On the other hand, verbally, I can hear what you're saying, but you'd better show me what you are doing so I can have that connection. (Rose)

The above comments clearly demonstrate the interaction of constructing experiences in a social environment. That is the backbone of Vygotsky's theory: learning is mediated by objects, language, and others in a social environment.

Although all participants state that experience should be incorporated into a learning environment, only Violet, when she took a VTT speech class, had exposure to experience in the DL environment. Violet recalls,

> I'll give you a for instance. One of my speeches was a how-to-do something speech. And I did juggling. And, at the time I had *no idea* how to juggle. But I learned to juggle and wrote a speech on it and at the end I actually had a demonstration and you know I *did not* do very well (she laughs). But, you know, not only did my classmates at the site I was at laugh, but the other people laughed and everyone clapped when they were done. And you know other people asked questions, from the other class. So it was a distance class, but it felt very much connected. (Violet)

This kind of connected experience in DL courses and in some face-to-face courses seems to be a missing component in the learning process today. Rose believes,

> It's that experience that we are missing now, a lot of times, with students because everything is on the television or it's games. We are missing that component and they are doing a lot of studies now, where children's play is very important, and I think it is. But yeah, it's just experiential learning. (Rose)

When Jasmine was asked if she thinks experience is an important part of learning, she nimbly tied knowledge to experience and learning and all of these elements to life by saying,

> Yes. I think it is easier to be able to grasp the concept of what it is you are learning when you can apply it to something, experience, someone else's experience, your experience, and then you can find the connection between, between that, what it is you are learning and how you are going to apply it to real life. (Jasmine)

Jasmine's statement not only connects learning to experience, but also implies that it can also be tied to someone else's experience transmitted by story. She goes on to state that this phenomenon must be incorporated into real life--it must be relevant. The necessity of relevancy was voiced by several participants.

For Schultz and Kroeger (n.d.), "Experiential learning and living is an integral part of a traditional Native American up bringing [sic]" (p. 2). Although those researchers say that experiential learning is a traditional Native American characteristic, many of the participants did not have what many Native Americans would consider a traditional background. Perhaps, the *importance* of experiential learning to the participants is more than just upbringing.

5. Interconnectedness

The interconnectedness of everything is a fact. All things are connected and a change in one thing can affect another. It is often easy to see the cause and effect relationship of certain physical actions; however, for many Native Americans, this interconnectedness is much deeper

and permeates all aspects of their life: physical, emotional, spiritual. This also includes learning and the purpose of learning. According to Jackie Yellow Tail, a Crow woman,

> The Indian way of thinking is that there is this same circle, Mother Earth, and around her are the rocks, the trees, the grass, the mountains, the birds, the four-legged, and man. Man is the same as all those other things, no greater, no less. I mean, it's all so simple; people make it hard…each one of us has the ability within us to grow spiritually, we're connected with the Creator from the top of our head, our feet walk on Mother Earth. (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p.14)

Many Native Americans are natural systems thinkers, with global processing skills who easily see the interrelatedness of topics. Researchers and educators often suggest that when teaching Native Americans, who typically have a multidimensional view rather than a linear view, the instructor should first show the total view or the whole purpose of the lesson. Then the instructor should break the topic into smaller pieces to build the whole again (Bergstrom et al., 2003; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Lasley & Matczynski, 1997; Schultz & Kroeger, n.d.).

Therefore, to understand the total view or the whole purpose of learning and education for Native Americans, I asked the participants to describe or explain their idea of the purpose of learning. Iris's answer thoroughly explains the interconnectedness of all. She ponders,

> The purpose of learning? Hmm. I think that (pause) yeah if you get into that spiritual piece I think that there is, learning is that process, it's a process. It's an evolving process for self-realization, for understanding the larger things in life. And, *definitely* trying to search out and understand the interconnectedness. And I think definitely that, what does that spirit road look like, what *is* over on the other side when we walk that spirit road. I

> think that all of that, I think that learning is a process and we move toward those different[ly] and those paths will be different for each of us. But I think that learning is very associated to our own internalized goals and where (pause) we find our self at any given point. And I think some learning, you know, as I'm travelling this road I'm sure I was on this path of certain type of learning and, you know, oops and drop that, and go somewhere else. And you know at some point I may go back there, but I think it's a real woven path that we reach. And I think it guides us, you know. In our culture there is, you know, what is good and what is bad? Where should we be, what should we be? So to me, that is all a process of learning. And to me we learn constantly. There's things interacting, you know, visual, emotional, smelling, hearing, all of our senses, touch, feel, these are all modes of taking in that learning, sponging up on that learning (she laughs) you know. That kind of thing. (Iris)

Learning in Iris's view has a spiritual aspect. This is important to understand because most Native Americans do not see themselves as a separate entity from everything else; we are part of it and it is part of us. "Indians hold to a contemplative rather than utilitarian philosophy. Religious aspects are introduced into all areas of one's life…religion is an integral part of each day; it is a way of life" (Schultz & Kroeger, n.d., p. 2). Learning is part of this interconnectedness and the interconnectedness needs to be in the learning.

Because of this interconnectedness, all IL needs to incorporate or show the interconnectedness of everything. Questions frequently asked, consciously or unconsciously, about the interconnectedness would be: How do I fit within this picture? How is the knowledge I'm gathering going to be useful? How does it fit my worldview? How am I responsible for this knowledge? How do I share it? How does it affect my place? How will my use of this knowledge

affect previous generations and the future generations? This learning is not only for me, but also for all. W. Richard West, Jr. (2005), Native American and founding director of the National Museum of the American Indian explains,

> Faith in the ongoing power and actual presence of our ancestors is a strongly held belief among many Indian peoples….a deep conviction that those who came before are very much still with us. To listen to our ancestors is to open our spirits to knowledge not taught in school or learned in books. (p. 7)

I believe it is the participants' conscious or unconscious questions and thoughts that caused the theme of relevancy to emerge so strongly and why it is so important. In all honesty, this theme was a complete surprise. I have always thought I was the only one who had the need to know all the ins and outs of a piece of knowledge. For example, I remember my own experience studying with an engineer friend. He would just want to know which multiple choice answers were correct. But I wanted to know why all the other ones were incorrect; I needed to know *all* of it.

All of the participants in this study wanted to know the *why* of knowledge, even if it was for a class outside of their major. Why is the knowledge important? How does it fit? What is the practical use? What is the purpose of the knowledge? How can it be used? Can it be shared? The connection must be made. If not, it is useless trivia and not worth wasting time on. Just as Violet said earlier, Deloria (1999) observed,

> While an increasing number of Indian students are mastering the language and theoretical frameworks of western knowledge, there remains the feeling of incompleteness and inadequacy of what has been learned.

> More important, whatever information is obtained in higher education must, in the Indian context, have some direct bearing on human individual and communal experience. (p. 147)

Violet echoes this comment when she asserts,

> Learning is how you are going to use that knowledge. *How* you can use the knowledge. Not just, 'Oh I know how to do calculus. Well, *whoop-dee-doo'* (she laughs). What are you going to *do* with that knowledge? How is that going to help you? We're coming back to, hey, what's it gonna do for me? You know. But how you are going to use it, and [not] just for you, for everyone, how does it relate to everything? You have a basic understanding of how that, whatever you learned, affects (pause) your world. (Violet)

Although all of the participants believed relevancy was prevalent in face-to-face classrooms, they felt as if the DL environment did not support relevancy. About face-to-face learning, Daisy explains, "I think it just makes it easier to comprehend, and, um, make sense like 'this is why it's done this way.' This is what is relevant to this. Yeah." But about DL courses, Daisy says, "Online they can just feed you, feed you, feed you, but you don't really get to see how it relates to other things sometimes." When I asked her if having relevancy helped her in the learning process, she replied,

> It does. Because I think if I don't think it's relevant, then I don't really pay attention or care as much where if I know it's relevant and it's going to make a difference, I think I tune in a little bit more. (Daisy)

Several other participants agreed. I was moved to conclude that the relevancy of course material as conveyed through a course's format is one of the primary reasons many Native Americans do not sign up for DL courses. They do not find relevancy provided in the DL course format.

The difference between a surface or deep approach to learning is that in the deep learning approach, the material studied is "embraced and digested in the search for meaning" whereas surface learning "employs the least amount of effort toward realizing the minimum outcome" (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005, p. 137). Obviously, the Native American participants want deep learning and employ that method by making connections through interactions with one another, the instructor, and the course content.

Relevancy is necessary for IL to occur. The interconnectedness is what ties place to relevancy and relevancy to place. When I asked Rose, who is an instructor at a TCU how she brought relevancy into her classroom, she explained,

> I allow them at least one aspect of my class…something that they're interested in, it can be hunting, or fishing. It can be decorating their home. It can be tutoring students. Photography. Some paint, some crochet, some like to work on cars. Whatever it is, I allow them to bring that into the class in some way. (Rose)

The students then make their own relevancy link between the assignment and their life; this is the learning that is beneficial to that student and they, in turn, can share this with friends, family, or community. In her own teaching at a TWI, Mimosa believes relevancy is imperative:

> They need the connection. To hold their interest you gotta be able to relate it to something that is important to *them* and they *understand*. Everyone is different, so rather than assign a topic, I tell 'em to write about something that interests them…a hobby, a piece of equipment for their job, it doesn't matter… Just find something that intrigues you because then you're gonna wanna read the article and write the paper. Besides, then I get to learn something new. Well, sometimes. (Mimosa)

The strategies used by Rose and Mimosa combat the issue that "some difficulties experienced by Native American students can be traced to a curriculum that does not use examples or contexts that are relevant and meaningful to American Indian learners" (Cole & Denzine, 2001, p. 4). In both cases, these Native American instructors use relevancy in their classrooms to engage the students, even though one teaches at a TCU and the other at a TWI.

Themes

The Native American community is community even if those of the community are spread across the globe and even if each community has a different language and individual tribal practices. Kenneth Johnson, Native American metalsmith and runner, asserts, "I like the idea of Native Community. We have a sense of identity that is not restricted by geography. There's a lot of journey involved in Native culture" (Ault, 2012, p. 77). In other words, although we are members of different tribes, a sense of shared identity exists, and subsequently we share some similarities.

In the current research project, the similarities among Native American people presented as seven themes which not only involve the relationships between self, community, education, learning, and respect, but also involve the purpose of education and learning.

1. Education and Learning are Two Separate Entities: Education is a Tool, Learning is Life

Education and learning are closely related; however, the participants in this study consider these to be two completely different topics. For those who are educators and conversant with the subtleties of terminology, the terms differentiate by design. However, half of the participants in this study are not involved in an educational field, so I will use their definitions to validate the point that the Native Americans in this study see a definitive separation between

learning and education. They are not the same thing. Violet succinctly states, “Learning is not just knowledge.” And Daisy gave an even more thorough explanation,

> How do you define learning without actually using learn? (she laughs) Hmm. I just said that the other day. I feel like I just learn something every day. When you get knowledge of something that you didn’t have before. I think education, to me, means more of that it’s being provided to you by like a system. So a school is educating you; your teachers are educating you. I guess your job could be educating you. I guess you can educate yourself by reading books and by asking questions. Hmm. Sometimes I don’t mean to learn things, but I just learn them. (laugh together) It just happens. To me, I almost think that education is something that like you seek out, not that you don’t set out to learn, because you do set out to learn, too…but to me, education always kind of associates with a school setting or whatever or institution type setting. Whereas learning is more just a part of my life. (Daisy)

For Malcolm Knowles (1998), an Anglo adult educator, “Education is an activity undertaken or initiated by one or more agents that is designed to affect changes in the knowledge, skill, and attitudes of individuals, groups, or communities” (p. 10). Knowles also wrote, “The term *learning*, by contrast, emphasizes the person in whom the change occurs or is expected to occur” (p.11). And although he provides definitions by other Anglo authors, none of them include the learner’s place and the interconnectedness of all in their definitions of learning.

In contrast, Cajete (2005), a Native American professor wrote, “Education is an art of process, participation, and making connection. Learning is a ‘growth and life process’… and Life and Nature are always Relationships in process and at ‘play’” (p. 21). When asked what learning

means to her, Iris replied, “growth, growth, expanding.” When asked the difference between education and learning, Iris succinctly stated,

> Ah, well, I think you can be highly educated and have *learned* nothing (draws out nothing as two words). And you can be, (pause) can have no education and be extremely learned. And I believe in that, very much. Um. I think education is a *means*, is a vehicle that is necessary in our society to accomplish various goals that one may have. But I don’t think that that, necessarily I mean you can be highly educated and be a complete idiot (she laughs)…we have all met those types of people. And I think that also, it’s very very consistent with certainly with Great Plains Tribe thinking. And I think that based on my experience with other Native groups, I think that that’s also very true. Is that, education in and of itself is *not* going to offer you that. You need a blend (she laughs) a blend. (Iris)

For the participants in this study, learning is the more than just gathering knowledge. The information received must have relevancy to their lives and it must be transferrable to another or used purposely. Iris says, “The application of that growth [learning], that you individually acquire, can then be utilized or put to practice within a community, yes. Definitely.” Jasmine agrees,

> The knowledge you have, that you are able to even pass on….I know how to do this and then you show someone else and you see that they now know how to do it, and it’s just a sense of fulfillment, for me….You share it. And that’s what I get from other people, too. They have knowledge. I learn from them. So, they are sharing with me. (Jasmine)

Within Native American communities, sharing is a valued characteristic. The more a person gives away, the more highly they are held in esteem by the rest of the community. As La Donna Harris, Native American stateswoman and national leader explains,

> We do not accumulate things for ourselves, we accumulate so we can do good for others. In the old way, our people redistributed their material wealth by giveaways…In contemporary times, we continue that tradition by giving away knowledge, ideas, information and resources. (Mankiller, 2004, p. 45)

If the information is not relevant, useful, or able to be shared, then it is considered to be "useless trivia" as Violet says.

2. Relationships Exist in Indigenous Learning

Relationships exist in the learning process and are primarily established by connection, communication, interaction, and respect. Education is usually not about relationships because education can occur by reading a textbook and being completely alone in a DL environment. However, IL involves relationships of the student to the material, themselves, the instructor, others, the community, the world both seen and unseen, and, ultimately, their place. When asked if learning and relevancy helps with her sense of place, Violet said, "Yes. Yes." When asked to describe how, she elaborated,

> Because the better you understand the world around you, the better you understand yourself because you are a part of that world. So, that's why I like learning because…you not only understand things around you, and what's going on, and with that you understand why you are doing certain things. (Violet)

Like Violet, all of the participants want to have the connection or relevancy of how the knowledge relates to them and their world.

All of the participants also want the connection to their instructor. When information was not available, several participants would search for pictures, resumes, articles, etc. about the instructor. Daisy "humanized" her DL instructor by Googling him to find out his credentials. She said,

> I knew he was an attorney. [I] just Googled him and looked him up that way. I was curious what did he look like, what [did] he practice, and just to put a face to who was actually behind what I was studying. (Daisy)

Mimosa admits,

> I first go to the school's website to see if they have a webpage. I try to get some sense of who they are, you know? If they don't have a website, I generally Google (she laughs) and if I wanna be real nosy, you know, I use Google scholar. (Mimosa)

When I first started teaching a blended format, it was suggested to me that I put a picture and a short audio clip on my class website so the students could make a connection and thus perform better.[70]

For the participants of this study, relationships which forge connections are important to learning. The participants said that when the relationship is made, learning is easier, respect is developed, a sense of community is established, and isolation or the feeling of aloneness is lessened. As well, participants felt that when a connection is forged in learning, they feel as though the instructor cares and students are engaged, that something is being accomplished. When Poppy was asked about feedback from her online instructors she said there wasn't much at all:

[70] I was told the students would perform approximately 10 percent better in the DL class if they could make a connection with the instructor by seeing a picture or video-clip, or hearing an audio-clip of the instructor. Whether that number is true, I do not know. I have not researched that specific data.

> I don't know if it was just that professor or, like I don't know if that's the way that professor would have approached it in the classroom or if she felt like because I was online so she could remove herself from having to give as much feedback, you know. It's, there's, um, I'm going with the thought that there's a level of responsibility when you are face-to-face with somebody than when you are just across the computer. (personal communication, November 14, 2012)[71]

3. Respect and Learning

Respect is an important cultural value in Native American communities, and, I believe, the foundation of place and interconnection. Alfred (1999) asserts:

> Native people respect others to the degree that they [the others] demonstrate respect. There is no need, as in the Western tradition, to create political or legal uniformity to guarantee respect. There is no imperial, totalizing, or assimilative impulse….the Native demands nothing but respect. (p. 140)

The idea of respect carries into the educational arena for most Native Americans. "For the Native American student, teachers are not always considered leaders simply because of their position or authority. An individual in the Native American culture is a leader when others choose that individual because of his or her perceived abilities and /or knowledge.[72] Therefore, with the cultural belief that all are equal, "the teacher must learn to earn the student's respect before a student will follow and obey the instructions" (Lasley & Matczynski, 1997, p. 34).

[71] Subsequent quotations will only contain participant's name.

[72] In accordance with the value of humility, most Native Americans will not "self-promote" themselves for a position; they will serve when asked. To behave otherwise would be considered rude, pushy, and unacceptable.

Respect presented as an important part of learning for all of the participants, was more prevalent in the classroom environment, and was usually constructed by interaction with others. Daisy said that:

> Personally, for me, I probably would respect somebody more that I've met and spoke with and see fact-to-face, versus an online person that virtually exists…I don't think you build, you don't have a chance to build that respect with somebody if it's online. (Daisy)

Daisy mentioned that her instructor answered all her questions and was very nice when she called him about an assignment. When asked if she felt that had helped her build some sort of respect, she said, "Yes, because there was human contact."

When asked about respect in the DL environment, none of the participants felt respect was present. Daisy did mention that the students were disrespectful in the VTT because "they spoke over their instructor." Poppy mentioned the DL discussion board comments were rude, ignorant, and just inappropriate, more suitable for a blog. She explains:

> I think with the internet at times it becomes something that you can remove yourself from so if students were to throw up something on a discussion board I think part of them would feel safe in doing that because it wouldn't be matched to them. If you saw them on the street you would have no idea who they were you couldn't judge them for the information or what thoughts they put up on a discussion board. When you're in a classroom, you have to take *ownership* of what you're stating and what you're saying, um, and your kind of participation and understanding in the subject. I *don't* think that is something that can be transferred over to an online course. (Poppy)

Iris agrees:

> I think it's more difficult to be disrespectful face-to-face…there's something we call forth from our inner selves that makes it not as easy to be flippant, or rude, or what have you or just to you know give a real cursory sort of thing rather than a depth kind of thing…online allows you to say 'oh well, let's see, the professor wants this, this is what I'm going to give him…now I'm done, that's wonderful.' (she makes clickity click typing sounds with fingernails). So yeah, I think that there's a big respect difference *if* you don't have that internalized sense of respect of what you're doing and why you're doing it. And, I think that it's easy, it is easier to fall off that path. (Iris)

Iris' statement neatly ties together the issues of respect, relevancy, place, and interconnectedness of Indigenous Learning.

The participants other comments concerning respect include the ideas that people must "talk to get respect" and that a person gives "respect to get respect" because "respect is built" and that "you will learn better if you respect one another."

Three of the instructors specifically mentioned that they include respect in their syllabus or discuss it in the class. Mimosa believes,

> Respect is everything, so I address that in my syllabus. Respect for each and everyone one of us and our unique characteristics. I tell [the students] the first day of class that respect is earned, and I will do my best to earn their respect. I also tell them that I respect them for taking the time out of their schedule to be in the classroom with me. And I respect the fact they are working on a degree. I think that shocks them (she laughs), but it's true. They could have chosen another instructor. (Mimosa)

And Poppy asserts,

> I know that in my syllabus that, you know, you need to respect the opinions and thoughts even if you disagree with them, you know, your classmates and professor. Everyone will be treated with respect. If not, you will be asked to leave the class. (Poppy)

Likewise, Rose articulates,

> Respect for people that are different…when there is any type of presentation, even with the college students, they have to know that they have to respect what other people are saying. They have to show it. You may not like what somebody is saying and you may be bored out of your mind but you just set [sic] there and listen…so, if you don't respect that person, you don't respect yourself as a learner. (Rose)

Respect is something all people deserve because we are all the same, no one is more, no one is less than anyone else or anything else that is seen or unseen. As Yellow Tail conveys, "People are a little Mother Earth, they deserve to be treated with respect. They, in turn, need to treat us with respect" (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p. 14). Needless to say, respect is an extremely important theme in the IL process. Vygotsky does not address respect.

4. Interaction and Learning

The theme of interaction and learning was not unexpected. DL research studies by many scholars have determined that interaction is essential to a productive and positive learning experience (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Moore, 1997; Wetsit,1999). More specifically, several studies have indicated that the instructor plays a vital role in the amount of interaction that will occur in the DL environment (Brown, 2001; Liu, 2008; Strang, 2004). Moreover, according to Cajete (1999), "Native American learners tend to base much of their motivation for learning on the affective relationship with the teacher" (pp. 143-144). Poppy supports this statement when she asserts,

> I do think the professor plays a role in that. If you set up an environment as soon as you walk in that classroom where the students understand that it's okay to be open, but it needs to be approached with respect, I think you're more likely to get students discussing and putting forth their best. (Poppy)

Clearly, for the participants in this study, instructor presence and interaction with students is extremely important so connection and respect can be built. According to Daisy:

> I think that because you build that rapport with a live person, that it's easier to approach them if you're struggling. You know I took an accounting class and accounting is not for me. Um. You know just having that teacher there, and having that teacher come and talk to me, and shedding tears, you know. And just telling me that he'd be there for me if I needed tutoring to get through that class. You could see that he wanted me to succeed. Whereas when you are in an online class, you don't have any of that kind of connection with the teacher whatsoever. (Daisy)

Violet's statement about her preference for the classroom environment was unexpected and a learning moment for me. She proclaimed,

> In a classroom, you know, you can see the body language, the teacher can see your body language, and say, 'Heeeeey, you didn't understand that, did you?' And even if *I* didn't realize that I didn't understand that at the time, they could look at you and say 'Yeah, I know that stare.' (Violet)

For those students like Lily who don't like drawing attention to themselves by asking questions in the classroom, this is one advantage of face-to-face classroom. Many Native Americans share the characteristic of not wanting to call attention to themselves (Deloria, 1999; Schultz & Kroeger, n.d.). But in a face-to-face class, as Violet made clear, the instructor can see the body

language (blank stares) of the students and offer additional clarification of a topic or concept; the student does not have to call attention to themselves. I have used that technique many times in my classes when younger, ESL, or female students have been hesitant about speaking when surrounded by peers they feel apprehensive around.

VTT is a DL format that some feel avoids the traps of fully online courses. However, my ten years of experience teaching via VTT indicates otherwise. Although the monitors have become larger and the clarity of the picture better, I still do not see all the sites or students at once. Moreover, I cannot read the body language of students attending via remote sites. I must rely on their verbal signals, and often the students at distant sites are hesitant to *break* into an ongoing lecture. For curiosity's sake, I often ask my face-to-face students about their experiences with VTT, so I can improve my own delivery in VTT courses. A common reply is that they will not take VTT unless absolutely necessary because they feel disconnected from the instructor and classmates located at remote sites. Apparently, instructors and students alike feel the VTT disconnect.

Violet had a good experience in her VTT speech course, and spoke earlier about how her instructor really tried to make a connection with the class by telling his own experiences. However, Violet took her VTT class in the late 1990s when this was a relatively new and rarely-used technology for many instructors, so many did take the time to explain the process and reassure the students. Today, VTT is a common platform in the DL environment. The novelty has worn off and it seems instructors have become less amenable to it. In 2007, Daisy was enrolled in a VTT course. She expressed her dissatisfaction by saying:

> I did not care for that either. We had one instructor based in Midwest City, so we could see them and they could see us…I felt like the instructor didn't have control over his

> classroom. And they would be rude, and they would butt in…they spoke over the instructor and I just felt like they were very disrespectful. (Daisy)

Mimosa was enrolled in a VTT course in 2010 and her experience seems even more disconnected:

> We could see the instructor. He couldn't see us and we had to push a button to talk. He never took roll, never called us by name. It was weird. I don't think we existed for him…during class we would check our text messages, emails, chat, clean out our school bags, sometimes grade papers. We were all teachers and it was grad class. One girl would knit because she taped the lectures (she laughs). He couldn't see us, so we really didn't need to pay attention so much, you know? It like watching a TV show….In a classroom, I'd never ever think of checking text or chatting to another student, uh uh (shakes head no), that is just *rude* But, since he couldn't see us, it didn't really matter (she shrugs). (Mimosa)

Mimosa makes an important point when she compares the VTT course to "watching a TV show." Obviously, social interaction is not necessary for the acquisition of knowledge, because a person can listen to a radio program, watch a TV show, or read a book. However, face-to-face social interaction is necessary for true IL. For Jasmine,

> I like the interaction, the face-to-face, the interactions with not just the professor, but with the other classmates, too. Because I just think there are a lot of interesting points and a lot of questions that would have been answered in a classroom, whereas just reading and watching videos [online], you just don't get that. (Jasmine)

All of the participants agreed that interaction was important to establish connections. For Daisy,

> I am the kind of person that needs to see somebody, see their face…you don't really get somebody's personality through the written answer. I prefer, you know, the body language. (long pause) The more personable feeling to connect with people, I guess…I just think you really *do* miss out on so much of that human interaction and the extra knowledge that other people bring, when you have an online course. Because I don't think you have as much discussion in an online class like you do in person. (Daisy)

True IL involves all of the senses and must also involve place, relevancy, experience, interaction, and respect. The respect that comes from the face-to-face interaction. Horace Axtell, a Nez Perce elder (1997), explains,

> All the things that they [elders] taught me, there's nothing written down. I experienced this….You want them to know you talk with your heart. When you talk from your heart it goes up out of your eyes, into the other's eyes, and comes back down into their heart. That's the way these stories and instructions were told to me….It goes from one heart to another heart and it keeps going around like that. That's the way our old people did it. (p.204)

IL is not authoritative; it is a process of exploration and discovery, which can be guided by another person who is more learned about the topic. New knowledge is often built by those involved. In such situations, experience is then added to the learner's sense of place, therefore, IL is never static.

5. Teacher or Student, We are Guides or Want to be Guided

The participants want learning to be a joint cooperative process, in which everyone learns. I believe the reason for this is twofold: 1) In the Native American community, <u>everyone is equal</u>, so there is a balance between the participants when building and sharing knowledge. 2)

Most Native Americans do not want to be told information per se via a traditional Anglo method of teaching. By being told, we don't truly learn. Most Native Americans want to experience, explore, make the connections, and determine the relevancy so that the learning is internalized. It is then ours and is part of us. It can then be shared with others. This is IL.

Violet clarifies the function of the instructor and the information gained by the student when she explains, "So the teacher is there to guide you through, but it all comes down to, "How does this affect me? How is it going to relevant to my life?" (Violet) Although Vygotsky states the necessity not only of hearing the information, but also of internalizing that information, he does not address the subsequent purpose of that information as being useful and shared.

As instructors, Poppy and Mimosa both used the word *guide* when discussing their work. When comparing DL interaction to her classroom interaction, Poppy felt as if DL did not allow enough spontaneity among students. She said the classroom:

> Not only allows the professor an opportunity to answer those questions as you know that would come up in a classroom, but allows other students to kinda chime in, 'oh yeah, I had the same question or I had the same thought' and I mean I as a professor I really just try to be a guide and take myself out as much as possible and not only let the students learn from the material but from each other. (Poppy)

Mimosa concurs,

> I teach so I learn. Simple as that. I learn from my students while I'm guiding them along the path of learning. I prompt, suggest, and sorta steer them in the direction I want them to explore. (she laughs) I try to gently and sometimes not so gently guide them into the direction that they need to go to find the information that makes them go, 'Ah-ha! Soooo! That's the connection and why I need to know it.' (Mimosa)

Cajete (1999) supports the concept of guidance: "Native Americans tend to express field-sensitive behaviors as opposed to field-independent behavioral characteristics…the most important implications…Native Americans learners will respond more readily to personalized encouragement coupled with guidance and demonstration from the teacher" (p. 143). This philosophy of learning is employed at TCUs by the instructors who according to Iris Heavy Runner (2009) do not view teaching as just the

> Transmission of knowledge from enlightened to unenlightened; tribal college teachers do not take the role of the 'sage on stage'. Rather teachers act as 'guides on the side' who provide students with opportunities to test the adequacy of their current expectations." (pp. 144-145)

6. Learning is Life

Indigenous Learning is life. Everything that is experienced, physically, emotionally, and spiritually is part of life and learning. They are intertwined and, once internalized, cannot be separated from a person. For Jasmine:

> I think everything affects learning. I think *everything* does. And how you are able to learn. And what you *can* learn. And what your mind is open to learning and what it, where it's just not going to happen, it's just not going to have as good of an understanding. It's so hard for me to narrow it, because I just see it as like everything, every aspect of a person's life. Everything is learning. (Jasmine)

The purpose of indigenous education according to Cajete (2005) "is to 'teach a way of life'" (p. 20). For Mimosa,

> Learning is my life. It is me. I want to know. I have to know. I mean everything we do is learning. It's the only way to grow. Every new encounter is helping you walk the path

you're meant to be on, if you take the lesson. If not, well…see you round." (she laughs) (Mimosa)

Daisy believes, "It's a lifelong journey. I don't think you ever stop learning. I really don't…I think that if I didn't learn, I would be like shriveled up. I think you know that it helps a person to grow." Deloria (1999) reminds us, "Life is a unity, and the foundation for learning must be the unified experience of being a human being…remembering…the primacy of personality growth as the goal of life" (p. 142).

Vygotsky does not specifically state that learning is life; he believed that you cannot separate thinking from life, nor the needs and interests of the thinking from life (DiPardo, 2003).

7. Indigenous Learning Has a Purpose: Sharing and Survival

The purpose of learning for most Native Americans is not just for the acquisition of knowledge or information. It is not solely for getting a better job. It is not for prestige. The purpose of IL is for a higher purpose. It is to learn the lessons needed to become more aware of your place, your responsibilities, and your interconnectedness. It is about sharing your learning with others. It is for the survival of self, family, tribe, community, nation, and universe. It is for all seen and unseen, those who came before and those who will be here in the future.

In the book, *Walking in the Sacred Manner,* St. Pierre and Long Soldier (1995) point out the controversy over sharing the stories with non-natives. However, they claim that many of the people "feel that the time is right, that the knowledge they still possess is critical to the very survival of our society and their own" (p. 14). So, the knowledge is to be shared for the survival of all, not just for the survival of those in Indian Country. Still, specific knowledge relating to tribal history, ceremonies, and medicines do need protection by staying in individual tribal communities.

Education for most Native Americans is just a means to learn how to navigate and hopefully survive the dominant culture's world as explained by Iris and Lily who are more than 40 years apart in age. They see their education as something they can share with others. The conversation Iris and I had highlights this:

S. Barton: And you had mentioned that it was growth. So growth as, um for yourself? Would you also describe that perhaps as for the community?

Iris: I think the application of that growth, that you individually acquire, can then be utilized or put to practice within a community, yes. Definitely. I think you know one of the reasons that I do what I do, as an educator, is because of a mandate from my grandparents when I was a child.

S. Barton: Oh.

Iris: Yeah.

S. Barton: What was that, if you don't mind my asking?

Iris: The mandate was that you need to be educated. You need to go out and get an education. Um, so that you can learn how to speak English and you can learn how to speak English well. So that you can be a positive influence and you can *help* your people. Without those skills you cannot be a positive influence.

Lily, who is more than forty years younger and just beginning her higher educational journey, also sees her education as something not solely for her. She says her education is also for her community because she understands that her generation will one day be the leaders of the tribe.

Another purpose of learning, besides sharing, is a bit more crucial as the following dialogue shows:

Jasmine: The purpose of learning? Survival. (she chuckles)

S. Barton: Can you explain?

Jasmine: Survival, so that the life skills that you need and um, just the knowledge that you need to know about certain things, how they operate. Um, what do you need to do to get them to operate? Um, and just to survive, just to know, so you can live, so you can make it in this world. Umhum"

Jasmine's words are reminiscent of Cajete (1994) who stresses that learning "is a key to our ability to survive in the environments that we create and that create us" (p. xi). Lily believes that "everything is always going to change so you always have to continue to learn something" in order to keep up with the change. Daisy agrees:

> I think you can't stop learning because the world is ever-changing. And there is so much new technology. And new things that are happening and that it's just, and if you want to stay in the realm of things, you have to learn and have to grow, I guess. (Daisy)

Mimosa is a bit more succinct in her view of the purpose of learning,

> To live. If you don't learn, you die. Simple as that. Darwin's adapt or die theory, you know? You better be observant, you'd better think, and you better connect those dots. You need to see the whole picture, if not (she shrugs) it's all over. This world does not sit still. It changes, so must we. We are just one very small part of the whole. We have to learn and adapt or we die. And, *and* we *must* take care of our mother [Earth] for our own survival. It's all wrapped together.

Perceptions

The overall perception of DL courses is that they are not the most advantageous learning environment. All participants felt as if the classroom environment was the best for learning and only enrolled in DL classes for convenience or out of necessity. Daisy said:

> My decision to take the class was made for me. The class was only offered online…I prefer traditional in-the-classroom learning. I learn better with somebody up there teaching and watching their motions and the interaction and the body language versus being told to read chapters in the book and take quizzes. (Daisy)

Many felt as if they did not truly learn and were not able to make connections or have interactions with others, although attempts were made. Jasmine, for instance tried to connect with posting, but replies were superficial and Rose's instructors never posted the discussion boards as promised in the syllabus. Overall, the participants strongly felt that their various DL experiences were lonely, alienating, limited-learning experiences.

Frustration was also part of the DL experience. While some participants expressed some frustration with the operation of the technology itself (computers) and/or not understanding the various DL platforms, others expressed frustration with the equipment (VTT and computers) breaking down and disconnecting during class time. In fact, Rose and her classmates became so frustrated with the VTT shutting down, they began driving the 1 ½ hours (one way) to the campus to attend the course. Several participants felt frustration with the instructors' lack of feedback or inadequate communication and two were upset by misunderstandings caused by imprecise instructions.

DL is perceived to be more of a *tool* to get the necessary education out of the way. Poppy enrolled in a fully online course because she could not test-out of a college class she had completed as an honors high school student. She had a tight academic schedule and needed

something she could finish easily and fast. She said, "I figured I could just jump in, do my work, turn it all in early, and be done with it. It was a ten week class that I finished in four." For classes she felt were important, however, Poppy said, "I made a point to clear my schedule to take those. Courses that I felt were just kinda like going through the motions…then I was more apt to take online."

For Rose, who works full time and is a doctoral student, the convenience outweighs everything at this point in her life. She says "I've traveled for all of my, I have a bachelors and two masters and, I just don't want to travel anymore… just give me what I need to do and I'll do it." Still, Rose admits the drawback is waiting to get feedback from instructors. Lily would prefer to be in the classroom, but with a full time job and a young child, the fully online and blended are the most convenient methods to her education right now.

Mimosa, Poppy, Jasmine, Iris, Violet, and Daisy all claim they would only take the major classes in the classroom or in a blended format since online does not, to them, provide the same level of learning. They want the interaction, the experience, and the stories of others to increase their level of knowledge in their respective fields. Jasmine said, "If it was a class that I knew I *really* needed to get a lot out of it, I, *I* would not take it online. I wouldn't." Jasmine also said, "If I'm a nurse, I wanna have hands on for everything and learn every nuance there is." According to Mimosa

> Some things cannot be taught from the book. Okay, so the density is between 1.8 and 2.3. You don't *know* until you feel that weight in your hand over and over and over again. I knew some biologists who could tell you the weight, in grams, of a bird they picked up just from all the practice. And smells, don't get me going there. How do you describe the

various smells of flowers or different waters? You can't send smell through a computer, yet. (Mimosa)

In many fields of study, some things are more intuitive and in those situations, the instructor and classmates can help a student learn about the unspoken or non-verbal information. For example, in the medical field there are always exceptions to the rules and it's those other students and experienced professors who can teach those unexpected or unusual cases.

Conclusion

This chapter began with a brief introduction of the research project and research questions, followed by a review of each thread of the proposed SMIL and the themes that were found during coding. Throughout those discussions, the correlations between the findings of this study and Vygotsky's theory were included along with research literature that supported the threads, themes, findings, and participant statements. The chapter closed with the participants' perceptions regarding the DL environment.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

You are always *an Indian, first, last, and always. You may have a degree in anthropology, law, or nuclear engineering, but that is your* profession*, that is how you make a living, it is not you!! Your first responsibility is to be a human being, an Indian. Once you accept that fact and use it as a positive factor, you can then do whatever professional tasks are required of you, but you will know when to draw the line between professional responsibilities and the much greater responsibility to be a person*

--Vine Deloria, 1999, p. 143

Introduction

Since the arrival of Europeans to the North American continent, Native Americans have been subjected to Eurocentric educational practices, with little to no voice (Adams, 1995; Alfred, 1999; Campbell, 1991; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Heavy Runner, 2009; Hoxie, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Nabokov, 1999; Raymond, 2004; Reyhner, 1992; Reyhner & Eder, 2006, Spring, 2007). According to Reyhner (1992),

> The attempts to replace Indian identity with a dominant cultural identity can confuse and repel Indian students and force them to make a choice between their Indian values or their school's values…Indian students need to attend schools that reinforce rather than ignore or depreciate Indian cultural values. (p. 12)

It is fortunate for Native Americans that as individual tribes began to address their higher education needs, TCUs were established. The early proponents and leaders believed that by mixing traditional ways with Anglo education their people could gain some control of their lives. As James Hill (1994), author of Trib*al Colleges: A success story*, clarifies, "They reasoned they

had at least one resource left that wasn't stolen from them—their brains" (1994, p. 3). TCUs allow Native American educators and students to attend higher education institutions that respect, support, value, and incorporate tribal identity, world views, and cultural understanding (AIEHC, 1999; Boyer, 1991, 1997, 2002; Hill, 1994; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Pember, 2002; Raymond, 2004).

However, because higher education institutions want to be financially solvent and they wish to reach a larger population of potential students, many universities are being pushed to implement extensive DL programs. Subsequently, the indiscriminate, widespread implementation of DL programs at TCUs and non-TCUs will threaten Native American cultural values if the distinction between education and learning is not understood and the curriculum fails to incorporate the foundations of traditional Native American learning. As Alan Peshkin (1997), qualitative researcher, professor and author argues, "Assimilation, however gently stated and seemingly enlightened its rationale, leads to cultural disappearance" (p. 71).

This study has a two-fold purpose: 1) to add to the body of knowledge on adult Native American distance learners by using qualitative methods to explore the experiences and perceptions of those learners, and 2) to introduce a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning and document if the five model threads are an important component of the participants' learning processes. The following questions formed the foundation of my research:

1. What were the experiences and perceptions of adult Native Americans distance learners in a distance learning environment?
2. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of place?

3. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of storytelling?
4. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of intergenerational interaction?
5. Did the students' experiences in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of experience?
6. Did the students' experience in the distance learning environment incorporate the concept of interconnectedness?
7. To what extent are the five threads of the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning used by instructors in their DL or face-to-face classrooms?

A reflexive interview technique with a semi-structured interview protocol as an outline was used to gather the answers to the research questions. Eight female participants were purposely selected using the snowball sampling method. Age, place of residence, educational background, tribal affiliation, and blood quantum varied among the participants. Each participant had completed between three and twenty DL classes via various DL platforms, with at least one being a fully online course. All participants are employed full time with four of the participants currently working as educators. By coding their recorded interviews, I was able to make conclusions which form the foundation of this chapter.

This chapter provides a summary of my findings concerning the individual threads of the proposed SMIL in the DL environment, as well as the themes discovered during coding. How those findings relate to pertinent literature in the field and the theoretical framework also will be covered. In addition, I will present the conclusions of my findings, address the implications of this research, offer recommendations for future research, and conclude with my final remarks

Summary of Findings

The primary focus of research question one and this study was to document the experiences and perceptions of adult Native American distance learners. While individual experiences and perceptions varied, the majority of the participants did not have a positive experience. Overall, the participants strongly felt that their various DL experiences were lonely, alienating, limited-learning experiences. Moreover, the wish for more interaction and a deeper sense of connection in the DL environments was expressed.

Violet solemnly described online as being "alone out in the abyss." Furthermore, she revealed that her videotaped lectures were more personable than an instructor-lead fully online class. Although discussion boards were used, the participants did not feel a connection with classmates or instructor. The participants often perceived the classmates' answers as superficial, repetitive, and perhaps less than truthful. Contributing to that perception was the lack of face-to-face interactions, the inability to *listen* to spoken words and observe facial expressions and other non-verbal gestures in the DL environment.

The instructors' participation level in courses varied with the DL platform used. Those instructors in fully online courses were often perceived to be absent. Poppy's perception was, "the instructor felt she could remove herself." Those participants in blended DL courses experienced higher levels of interaction, connection, and feedback. Furthermore, respect was felt with the face-to-face interaction in blended courses. In contrast, the participants neither felt respect, nor believed respect could be created in the fully online and VTT courses.

Several participants utilized DL only for non-major coursework and if a fully online course was taken, often another one was not. When Violet was asked to describe her decision to take an additional online class after the first one, she very quickly and emphatically stated "Oh! I

am not ever going to do that again. I am done with online classes (laughs).” Although the lack of interaction contributes to DL’s lack of appeal, it was not a major deterrent; several participants willingly sacrificed interactions and connections to complete their degree.

Frustration was a common experience with students in fully online and VTT courses. While some participants expressed some frustration with the operation of the technology itself (computers) and/or not understanding the various DL platforms, others expressed frustration with the equipment (VTT and computers) breaking down and disconnecting during class time. Several participants felt frustration with the instructors’ lack of feedback or inadequate communication and two were upset by misunderstandings caused by imprecise instructions. While frustration was prevalent in some DL courses, technological frustration was not the primary reason DL was avoided. The lack of appeal goes deeper and I believe involves a cultural value.

The study participants felt they had not learned as much in DL courses as they had in the face-to-face courses. According to the participants, they learned more if personal communication with classmates and the instructor occurred. Although most fully online instructors do not encourage personal contact by telephone, for those participants who telephoned, they perceived the instructor as being more personable and caring; they felt a sense of connection. The perception of superficial learning in a DL class was a major concern of the participants and an important factor for not enrolling in fully online courses.

Furthermore, all participants perceived a lack of relevancy in fully online courses. Most instructors, in their experiences, did not make connections between the learning material and the real world; relevancy was not involved. Even though some instructors in face-to-face classrooms did not stress relevancy, the student could readily ask for examples or clarification. In contrast,

the participants found online instructors slow to reply, if they replied at all. All participants believe relevancy is an important part of the learning experience.

Most participants perceived the DL courses as not being *valid* or as important as face-to-face courses. Completely online and VTT DL environments were treated as, and considered to be tools in order to accomplish an educational goal. They were not viewed as true interactive learning environments, as were the face-to-face and blended courses. Again, the face-to-face component in learning environments is important for most Native Americans due to the cultural value of respect. Respect that is built by face-to-face interaction using the whole body, not just the ears and eyes, to absorb the non-verbal. I believe the lack of communication, lack of interaction, lack of connection, lack of relevancy, and the lack of respect combines to deter many Native Americans from enrolling in DL courses.

Several students had no choice but to take a DL course. That may have clouded their perception, but not their experience. The participants still tried to connect on the discussion boards, tried to contact the instructor, and tried to learn as much as they could on their own. However, feelings of being disconnected prevailed due to lack of participation from classmates and instructor. The perception that DL is a cold, sterile, uncaring environment was shared by all students, particularly those who had experienced fully online courses.

Ergo, based on prior experiences, when asked which type of learning environment they preferred if no extenuating circumstances such as family or employment obligations shaped the decision, all participants chose face-to-face. Blended classes were second choice, and this was followed by VTT courses. Completely online courses were the last choice and were only taken if no other options were available.

Interestingly, although all of the participants have learned to successfully navigate the Eurocentric educational system, most consider it, too, to be a tool or a means to an end. The Anglo education is often perceived as a necessary process to achieve the ultimate goal of helping their community as many Anglo institutions have regulations and rules for employment. As Lily articulates, "My learning is for my community too, I mean, it's my generation that will be the future either councilman, or directors, or managers for our tribe, so." Subsequently, many Native Americans have learned to use the Eurocentric educational system to their benefit, and for the benefit of their community. However, what price have they paid by facing prejudice, barriers, and cultural conflict?

Summary of Findings: Relationships

While some scholars have noted differences between Eurocentric-based and indigenous-based education and learning, many of conceptual differences have not been fully articulated. However, several subtle differences between the concepts were highlighted by themes found in this study.

The participants' experiences revealed that a relationship exists between interaction and learning (Theme Four). A person can learn by interacting with course content. However, that tends to be "surface learning" (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005, p. 137) or what I call the temporary acquisition of knowledge for meeting an established standard of learning. With a deep learning approach, students embrace the material and look for meaning (Garrison and Cleveland-Innes, 2005). However, even that approach to learning does not delve into the importance of interaction in the learning process for most Native Americans. Violet explains:

> Communication, you know, it's more than just words. It's how, it's facial expressions. It's how you move your body. It's the whole thing, the whole package, if you will. So, without that, without seeing that, then it's (pauses) it becomes awkward. You know that whole learning thing becomes a little awkward.

All participants experienced more interaction and, thus, learning in a face-to-face classroom than in a DL environment. The proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) addresses interaction within the threads of place, storytelling, and intergenerational interaction.

Furthermore, according to the participants relationships exist in learning (Theme Two). The relationships are not only between self, others, materials, and platforms used, but relationships also involve other components such as experience, respect, place, interconnectedness, relevancy, and the ability to share the learning. When, through interaction and respect, strong relationships existed between instructors and students and student and students, the participants felt as if they had experienced an in-depth learning environment. This enabled them to learn more, and at a deeper level. For the participants, relationships between the content, self, place, family, tribe, community, universe and all that is seen and unseen are an important part of the learning process. Moreover, there must be relevancy to the knowledge that is transmitted and the knowledge must then be transferrable to another. DL environments were lacking in supporting the relationship connections and providing relevancy. The model threads of place, storytelling, intergenerational interaction, and interconnectedness address the necessity of interaction, maintaining proper relationships, the connections of all, and respect.

Besides experiencing a lack of relationships in DL environments the participants did not feel respect in the DL environments, excluding blended courses which have a face-to-face component. Respect is an important aspect of the learning process for the participants, and is not

only traditionally overlooked, but it is also rarely addressed in Eurocentric educational literature. This may be because Eurocentric education often operates from a position of power, which is automatically given to the instructor, who then confuses the meanings of respect and power. In Native American educational literature, respect within a classroom and among learners is typically mentioned. Respect is important to build not only between students but between the student and teacher. The underlying foundation of the SMIL is respect.

Clearly articulated by the participants, was the perception that a relationship exists between respect and learning (Theme Three). Respect is a cultural foundation for most Native Americans, is an important part of the learning process, and created by face-to-face interaction. Respect needs to be part of the learning environment if the educational institution and instructors are serious about true learning, learning that has purpose, learning that truly supports a person's growth. This type of learning I call Indigenous Learning(IL).

Wayne Johnson's dissertation[73] (2009) supports the necessity of relationships and respect. Dr. Hart, a Native American educator leader, Johnson's case study individual, says, "Instructors must build relationships with students that involve trust and respect…students will come to school or class if there is a foundation of respect and trust" (p. 166).

All participants in the study believe respect is necessary. They did not feel respect in the DL environment, although they reported that in traditional face-to-face classrooms, respect is built by presence and interaction, both verbal and non-verbal. Respect is the foundation of everything. If that is lost, then the foundation of Native American communities is lost.

The participants clearly perceived education and learning to be separate concepts (Theme One). Education is a regimented, structured form of knowledge transfer mediated by an

[73] *Leadership experiences of an American Indian education leader serving Indian students in an Indian community* (2009).

educational or employment institution. whereas learning is something that is done for self. Hence, IL is an ongoing process that is needed to survive in the ever changing world.

During the IL process, the knowledge is acquired, then understood contextually with the connectedness to all, and tempered with experience to become a part of the person's place. IL has relevancy to real life situations and this learning one is able to pass on to another. This in turn contributes to and helps create the community of knowledge which resides in the specific Native American tribe or community. Fortunate Eagle (2010) articulates this when he describes the view he and several other classmates shared about their culture while ensconced at Pipestone, a boarding school. He writes, "It's a strong message for us Indian students to carry on the traditions, culture, and spirituality of our people, so we can pass it on to future generations" (p. 147).

Although the definitions that Knowles et al. and other Anglo educators use for education and learning are very similar, these theorists do not incorporate the concepts of place and interconnectedness in their definitions. Native American IL, however, understands that all knowledge is ultimately to enrich one's place. IL is about attaining the highest level of interconnectedness with all seen and unseen while walking the good road. For Cajete (1994) "what we call education today was, for American Indians, a journey for learning to be fully human" (p. 43). Western education, on the other hand, is typically goal oriented and "teaches you to argue…to insist on upon the rightness of your perspective" (Mankiller, 2004, pp.60-61). The distinction between education and learning, in addition to Indigenous and Eurocentric worldviews must be considered when implementing DL curriculum for adult Native American learners.

The theme of being a guide or being guided while learning was an unexpected theme that highlights the difference between Eurocentric-based learning, and IL which is based on respect. DL and Eurocentric-based education is often a one-way dispersion of information and can rely on authoritative methods. Neither are conducive to IL. As Deloria (1999) asserts, "Education in a traditional [indigenous] setting occurs by example, not as a process of indoctrination" (p. 140). Just as the stories and both conscious and unconscious thoughts constantly guide the actions of most Native Americans, we want our learning to be guided. As instructors, the participants in this study use guidance in their teaching. It is not authoritative in nature because there is no respect in telling or ordering someone to do something. Respect is earned.

In summary, results of the current study clearly indicated the DL environments were not as conducive to building relationships as most face-to-face classrooms. Interactions were not common, connections were difficult to make, and the participants did not feel respect in most DL courses. As a result, the participants felt they had not learned as much in the DL environment, as in the face-to-face classroom. Consequently, most participants in the DL courses had negative experiences with DL and subsequently actively avoided the DL environment.

Summary of findings: Standard Model of Indigenous Learning

The secondary purpose of this study was to introduce the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) and document if the five model threads were important to the participants' learning process. Hence, research questions two through six asked whether the participants' experiences in the DL environment incorporated the concept of a specific model thread. Question seven investigated to what extent the five threads were used by instructors in their DL and face-to-face classrooms.

1. Place

The concept of place was not incorporated into any of the DL environments experienced by the participants. All participants agreed that it is an important concept that needs to be included in a learning environment, whether DL or face-to-face. All four of the instructors in the study include some sense of place in their own face-to-face classes. Place is an essential component for the model. Place is what guides us at all times. Cajete (2000) summarizes the essentialness of place when he explains,

> The meaning of the Lakota aphorism, "mitakuye oyasin" (we are all related), is shared by all Indigenous people. Its shared meaning stems from the fact that it is a guiding principle of the 'spiritual ecology' held by every tribe in its perception of nature. Guided by this metaphysical principle, people understood that all entities of nature...embodied relationships that must be honored. In short, Native cultures understood and reflected in profound and elegant ways that we are all related. (p. 178)

Even this definition may not be understood by everyone. I would say, we are all one and everything we do, say, experience, feel, and think affects everything else, seen or unseen. And, everything else, seen and unseen affects us so we must respect and honor those connections. It is understood, by most Native Americans that everything is imbued with Spirit and that all things are in constant motion, so one's place constantly changes to the new reality. To truly understand place, one must reject the "relatively one-dimensional Newtonian-Cartesian view of nature and accepts that multiple realities exist and that "the reality experienced by our five senses" is only one of the many possibilities" (Cajete, 2000, p.178).

Vygotsky's theory discusses the internalization of knowledge, but it does not incorporate what Native Americans call place since he does not discuss the interconnectedness, connections,

or spiritual aspect of learning. It is vital that place be the First Thread in the model for in the Native American view, place and respect form the foundation of everything and are necessary for IL.

2. Storytelling

Storytelling, the Second Thread of the SMIL, is an important component of the learning process. Storytelling was used sparingly in the DL environments. Only two participants experienced storytelling in their DL classes, but those DL classes were not fully online; they were blended and VTT courses. All participants acknowledged that stories are an integral part of their face-to-face classroom learning experiences. All of the participants believe storytelling to be an essential part of the learning process and the four instructors incorporate this method of learning in their own face-to-face classrooms. All agree that incorporating storytelling the DL environment would be beneficial to the learning process.

Many Native American and non-Native American scholars believe stories are important for all ages, are a necessary vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and culture, and can be a powerful tool (Bergstrom, et al., 2003; Brayboy, 2005a, 2013; Cajete, 1994; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). The Anglo world is recognizing that oral tradition is important to learning and "has been 'over looked' in the field of adult education research and the practice of life long [sic] learning" (Atleo & James, 2000, p. 1).

Although Vygotsky does not specifically address storytelling, he does imply that spontaneous information is gathered daily from a person's interactions with others (1978). I believe it is this type of type of information that is retold to others as stories. Each person involved has a different perspective of the event and the listener will hear and absorb a different

facet of the event when told. These stories, which are transmitted through the Native American community, along with elder wisdom, ceremonies, and historical events are what contribute to the tribal or community knowledge. Communities carry this knowledge (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), which is sometimes referred to as IK (Brayboy & Castagno, 2008; Cajete, 1994, 2000; Deloria, 1999a; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Pember, 2008a). The IK is what creates the culture of that unique population. Without storytelling, the culture will not endure because according to Brayboy (1999), "one learns culture; it is passed from generation to generation" (p. 82). Storytelling is an essential component of the SMIL.

3. Intergenerational Interaction

Intergenerational interaction, the Third Thread of the SMIL was not prevalent in the DL environment and was difficult to ascertain. Although many DL courses allowed students to post a short introduction or picture, the majority of the students, including the participants of this study, did not participate unless it was a specific requirement of the course.[74] In VTT or blended classes, the students did see others and several participants did have the opportunity to participate in an intergenerational class. It was established that the transfer of knowledge was not just from the elders to the younger students, but from the younger to the elder students as well.

All participants agreed that having intergenerational interaction strengthens the learning process and should be incorporated in a learning environment. For many Native Americans, traditional "education involves a constant flow of information and is multigenerational and cross-generational: young teach old; old teach young; sister teaches younger sister; brother

[74] Several participants implied that the information on the "Introduce Yourself" discussion boards did not always reflect the truth about the person posting. In addition, many of the participants felt the discussion boards were busy work and that the posted comments were often repetitive, adding nothing of value to the discussion.

teaches younger brother; aunts, grandmas and grandpas teach children" (Cajete, 2000, p. 101). In the Anglo world, Vygotsky (1978) determined,

> An essential feature of learning is that it creates a zone of proximal development; that is learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. (p. 90)

Intergenerational interaction is a necessary thread to the model because the elders are vital to the community as Keepers of the Meaning. It is they who enrich the learning environment with their wisdom and pass on the knowledge necessary to keep the tribal identity intact. We would do well to heed the advice of the sign Wallace saw on the Mohican reservation, which said: "Knowledge is power—Visit Our Elders" (2003, p. 178).

4.Experience

Experience, the Fourth Thread, was not incorporated very often in the DL environments, particularly in the fully online courses. Only one participant acknowledged experiential work in her VTT course, although all participants mentioned experiential work occurred in the majority of their face-to-face classrooms. All participants agreed that experience is part of the learning process and should be incorporated in all learning environments. Many of the participants stated that the book learning was one dimensional and sometimes not easy to comprehend, but when the academic concepts were applied to work or everyday situations (experience), the knowledge became complete.

Vygotsky (1994) supports the integration of knowledge with experience. He explained that there is a difference between everyday concepts which originate in a child's life experience

and academic concepts which are learned at school as a part of a systematic process. However, the two merged "into a single system of concepts formed during the course of the child's mental development" (p. 365).

Experience solidifies the reality of the moment (knowledge), and integrates that knowledge with one's prior knowledge and place. Thus, a new reality or place is created. This is growth. This is living. This is being. This is a process to help "open us up to the illumination of Centering place, the place where our soul and spirit reside, 'that place Indian people talk about'" (Cajete, 2005, p. 153). This thread is essential to the SMIL.

5. Interconnectedness

The Fifth Thread, interconnectedness, which incorporates the concept of connection and relevancy, was rarely used in the DL environment. I believe the lack of connection and relevancy is the primary reason many participants did not enroll in DL courses unless absolutely necessary. Finding participants for this study was difficult and the comment I heard most often was, "I won't take online courses."

The connection and relevancy of a course is extremely important to the participants, no matter the topic being studied. They want to know the topic and how it relates to them, others, and the world. Cajete (2005) asserts, "Indigenous wisdom, at its core, is wisdom drawn from intimate relationships with the natural world" (p.73).

The participants want to learn, incorporate, use, and share the knowledge for themselves, their community, and their world. This is the foundation of IL. It is important for the information to have connection and relevancy because the participants view learning as a life process which never stops. They understand that IL is an important part of the collective tribal knowledge, ensuring survival of themselves, others, and the earth. Cajete (2000) posits,

> Beginning with the most basic skills, children learned to live respectfully in their environment, in ways that would guarantee its sustainability…Native children learned the nature of the sources of their food, community, and life relationship. They learned that everything in life was a matter of kinship with all nature. (p.101)

Vygotsky (1981) believes that learning is influenced by external stimuli, that emotions are involved in the process, and that "it is through others that we develop into ourselves" (p.161). However, he does not address the interconnectedness of everything in the spiritual sense as Native Americans do. In contrast, Cajate (2005) believes, "In traditional Native American perspectives, learning begins and ends with spirit" (p. 149). The thread of interconnectedness must be included in the SMIL.

In summary, all five threads of the SMIL were supported by the participants through their interviews. Although all presented strongly in the interviews, the threads were primarily found in the face-to-face classroom experiences, not in the DL. Only three threads presented as being in a DL environment and the classes in which these threads presented were not fully online courses; they were blended or VTT. Furthermore, the instructors in the DL courses typically did not use any of the threads, whereas many of the instructors in face-to-face classrooms used several, particularly if they were Native American or taught at a TCU.

The SMIL can be used in DL and classroom environments. However, Violet believes a DL "instructor would have to be clever, very clever because they are going to have to connect a class that will never see each other…the teacher will have to be incredibly clever.

Discussion

The participants overwhelmingly felt a sense of isolation, lack of presence, and a disconnection in their DL environments. Although some Anglo students have reported a sense of disconnect in DL environments, for the participants the experience was different; the *disconnect* was disconcerting. "Social presence," a phrase often used in DL describes a sense of connection created within the course. However, *presence* for many Native Americans, inherently involves the seen and unseen. Presence is felt with all the senses, not just the eyes or ears, and is more than posted words meant to create a sense of connection.

Further contributing to the deeper sense of disconnect for the participants was the lack of face-to-face interaction. Also missing was the sense of community and respect which typify most Native American communities and IL. IL is the integration and then immersion of new knowledge and experience with place in regards to self, family, tribe, community, nation, and universe. This knowledge/experience combination can then be transferred to another. Consequently, the conclusion can be made that the lack of interaction, lack of connection, the lack of respect, the lack of relevancy, and the lack of face-to-face interactions found in most DL environments not only contributed to a sense of aloneness, disconnect, and lack of social *presence*, but hindered true IL.

Face-to-Face Interaction

All participants were adamant that DL courses were the last choice, and only taken if no other options were available. So, the questions remain: Why does DL not appeal to most Native Americans, or What is lacking in the DL courses that cause an unsatisfactory learning experience? And, Is this a cultural phenomenon?

Undoubtedly, the participants' experiences revealed that DL environments, with the exception of blended courses, lack many components necessary for IL. However, face-to-face interaction was the crucial component missing from many DL environments. Furthermore, all other components of IL are either part of, or grounded in the face-to-face interactions. Most importantly, the face-to-face interaction allowed respect to be built and shared. The conclusion can thus be made that face-to-face interaction drives IL. In addition, respect which is the foundation of Native American culture cannot be built without face-to-face interaction. Subsequently, if the foundation of respect is lost, the implication is that the foundation of Native American culture will be lost. It is no wonder that many DL platforms are such unappealing learning environments for most adult Native Americans. Based on the perceptions and experiences of the participants, the conclusion can be made that the lack of face-to-face interaction made DL an uninviting educational platform. And, yes, I believe the active avoidance of DL by many Native Americans is a cultural phenomenon.

Presence

The importance of face-to-face interaction cannot be overstated. As mentioned by Waterman (2004), the practice of witnessing or experiencing an event lends *truth* to the event. Therefore, with online postings perhaps the words are not really true because the other person was not seen, the intent was not sensed, and the connection was not made to give respect; *presence* was not felt. Even though VTT allowed visual contact, presence was not felt by the participants; all of the senses were not engaged. Recently, I visited a distant VTT site and the students were surprised at my appearance. They said, "You have green eyes, and your hair is red. We couldn't see that. You look completely different in person." They too, appeared different to

me. I could see their eyes, their faces, and read their non-verbal gestures. A sense of connection to each individual was felt, presence was felt, and the cohesiveness of the group increased.

By removing face-to-face interaction, how will truth be known, the unknown sensed, the unspoken understood, and the presence felt? According to the participants, with face-to-face interaction presence was felt, and all the senses were used to earn and give respect. Therefore the conclusion can be made that the lack of social presence does not have the same meaning in the Anglo culture and as in the Native American culture. Based on the participants' experiences, face-to-face interaction was an important component of their learning process. Furthermore, the conclusion that face-to-face interaction is necessary for IL can be made.

Native American Culture, Eurocentric-based Education, and SMIL

There exist several reverberations from the interaction of Native American culture and Eurocentric-based education. Therefore, the following statements need to be examined: 1) the lack of educational achievement is usually considered to be a Native American problem, rather than an issue with Eurocentric-based content, curriculum, and delivery methods, 2) the literature, models, and theories that exist and are applied to Native American learners are Eurocentric-based or viewed through a Eurocentric lens, 3) forcing the diametrically different Eurocentric-based educational system onto Native American communities has contributed to the misconception that many Native Americans are unfit to attend higher educational institutions, 4) the severe lack of indigenous literature, learning models, and theories has often allowed the Eurocentric worldview, with its assimilationist agenda, to spread into Native American educational systems, and 5) DL is Eurocentric-based.

First, Anglo and Native American worldviews are different. Therefore, their respective *traditional* educational systems are different, and the meaning of learning is inherently different.

For example, Eurocentric-based learning is typically goal-oriented acquisition of knowledge, whereas indigenous-based learning is based on the journey of learning while striving to become fully aware of oneself and place. In addition, the Anglo worldview, education, and learning have been studied for more than 100 years, whereas the Native American worldview, education, and learning are just being revealed to outside communities. Subsequently, Eurocentric-based curriculum is prevalent throughout many educational systems.

However, an interesting paradox exists: if the problem in learning is a Native American one, then why are Anglos adopting/claiming the methods used by Native Americans in Indigenous Learning as their own? Examples of this would be the mentoring, the storytelling, the collaborative work, the peer mentoring, the problem-based learning, and the teamwork being advocated in educational and employment systems. Although many would say these practices are based on Vygotsky's theory, they had their roots in Native American life and culture. Vygotsky simply put to words what Native Americans already knew and had been living for thousands of years.

The proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning presented in this study includes the foundational cultural values of IL. The threads include place, storytelling, experiential learning, intergenerational interaction, interconnectedness, and the the cultural foundations of relevancy and respect. Although designed to be used as the foundation of curriculum for Native Americans, some of the model threads and concepts could be incorporated into the current Eurocentric curriculum.

Second, a plethora of articles, books, lists, and charts detailing techniques, methods, and best practices for teaching Native Americans exist. In addition, culturally responsive/culturally appropriate indigenous-based curriculum has been developed. While some practices and

materials are based on some cultural traditions, most fail to include the overarching cultural foundations. To include information about Native Americans, lifestyle, or culture into the curriculum and call it indigenous-based to meet regulatory standards does not create true indigenous learning. Some even refer to this as indigenous education, particularly if storytelling or experiential learning has been included. Even so, most Eurocentric material does not include the true foundation of Native American cultural values. These materials often overlook the interconnectedness, the interactions, the spirituality, the respect, and the sense of place. Therefore the learning is not true IL. The real issue is being deflected: curriculum being delivered to Native Americans is not founded on true IL but rather on the perceived learning preferences, methods, or techniques of Native Americans. In addition, the fact also remains that Eurocentric-based models and theories serve as the foundation for the curriculum developers and the instructional designers of DL courses. Implementing the SMIL is a step towards creating indigenous-based curriculum for Native American learners. Moreover, other Native Americans can utilize the SMIL as the foundation for curriculum development, additional models, and learning theories.

Third, the forced implementation of Anglo education and its Eurocentric-based curriculum has provided substandard educational practices for most Native Americans. Moreover, the Eurocentric-based curriculum, models, and theories have been pushed on Indian Country for over 350 years with the underlying purpose of assimilation. As a result, many Native Americans were acculturated and then became assimilated into the Anglo world. Hence, many Native Americans equate *education* with the loss of culture. This view often causes a reluctance to pursue higher education.

Each thread of the SMIL encompasses a cultural foundation of Indian Country. Hence, the education is not just education, but it is indigenous learning: the journey of discovery while walking the good path in search of one's place. The implication of applying the threads of the SMIL to curriculum being developed and delivered to Native Americans could change the perception that education causes a loss of culture.

Fourth, the severe lack of IL models and learning theories contribute to the prevalence of Eurocentric-based curriculum in DL. With a worldview different than most Native Americans, developing indigenous models and theories is challenging for most Anglos. Some Eurocentric curriculum can contain some Native American cultural values but often the culturally based values of IL are either misunderstood, or are unknown outside of Indian Country.

Contributing to the confusion of developing appropriate models and theory is the difficulty in articulating the unspoken foundations that are inherently understood by most Native Americans. For example, many Native Americans easily understand the interconnectedness of *everything*; however the concept is often troublesome for Anglos to understand because of the unspoken spiritual aspect given to all objects, whether animate or inanimate. Place completely confounds most Anglos because they are not *of* this *place*; Indian Country is not their *homeland*. The SMIL contains the foundational cultural values of Indian Country. The threads have been clearly articulated and the meaning of IL defined. Although many Anglos will inherently not understand some concepts, most Native Americans will understand all. The implication is that indigenous curriculum, models, and theories could become prevalent in Indian Country by replacing those that are Eurocentric-based.

Fifth, DL is Eurocentric-based. Campbell (1991) pointed out, there is a "basic incompatibility between values and beliefs underlying traditional [Native American] education,

and the unquestioned assumptions underlying the modern [Eurocentric] educational system" (p. 101). DL is unquestioned. The unintended consequences of DL are unknown. As well, the cultural effects from the lack of face-to-face interactions combined with the Eurocentric based curriculum of DL are unknown. What will the effects be on those communities whose cultural belief system of respect is shown through the verbal and the non-verbal in a face-to-face interchange?

The participants validated that respect was built by face-to-face interaction. Consequently, the lack of face-to-face interactions in DL environments could erode students' attitudes toward traditional respect building. The change of attitude, behavior, and mannerisms can be extremely subtle. For example, in the paper *Online Learning and the Oral Tradition* Vogel (2009) explained:

> initial online discussions replicated formal Indian public speaking patterns…with each participant posting an essay….it was only *after* [emphasis added] a group face-to-face meeting where it was stressed that the discussions were to be dialogues….that the online discussion interactions started to be actual discussions. (2011, p.18)

Very subtle, but it is a move to change thinking and speaking patterns. Additional studies to address DL's effect on cultural values within Native American communities are not just needed, but necessary. Information needs to be gathered to determine whether DL will be the panacea that many institutional systems experts promise, or whether it be the educational delivery method that completely erodes Native American cultural values, ensuring complete cultural assimilation Therefore, until the effect of DL on cultural values is addressed and longitudinal studies are completed, it would behoove TCUs and other educational institutions to proceed with caution.

The implication is that DL will slowly erode the cultural foundations of Indian Country and DL is just another method of assimilation.

Indigenous Learning

Another cultural foundation for many Native American communities confirmed by the study participants is that learning is life, and life is learning. More importantly, learning never stops as Axell (1997) reflects, "I'm still learning. I always tell my younger people, 'I'll keep learning until I close my eyes for the last time.' That's the way I look at life" (p.270).

IL is lifelong journey in search of one's self and is influenced by all interactions, seen and unseen. Therefore, while we may become educated we are still learning, because we know that learning is survival. The participants verified that learning is for survival and for sharing the knowledge. The implication is that IL is the method whereby the Native American culture has been kept alive throughout the many years of assimilation and subjugation.

The participants stated that knowledge was not just for personal gain, but was to share with others. To share knowledge allows the community to survive because culture is transmitted through the sharing of knowledge. Unlike many Anglo communities, in most Native American communities, knowledge was not owned, should not be hoarded; it is meant to be shared for the good of all. Hoarding knowledge is a power issue which creates barriers, of which many Native Americans are very aware. A student reveals,

> The reason they teach it [Anglo curriculum] is that we have to have it to live with the dominant race. If we don't have it, people will just run right over us. If we don't know what they are talking about, we won't be able to defend ourselves. (Peshkin, 1997, p. 73)

Knowledge is often used as a power issue in the Anglo world. Native Americans, typically do not intentionally search for *power* as power is defined in the Anglo world; therefore, there is no

reason to withhold knowledge. Knowing more than someone else brings neither power, nor respect.

Because the study participants agreed that knowledge gained was not for just for them, but was gained to share with others, I concluded that the definition of IL should include, "knowledge learned so it can then be shared with others." The implication can be made that individual Native American communities survived by gathering knowledge and sharing that knowledge to empower all, rather than hoarding it to create power for oneself and create barriers for others.

Standard Model of Indigenous Learning

The participants substantiated the proposed model and confirmed that each thread was important to the learning process. The conclusion was made that the model threads were important to each participant's learning, no matter the individual's age, tribe, educational level, or blood quantum. The implication is that this is a cultural phenomenon. The SMIL was further substantiated by the fact that these five threads are present in various forms in academic/educational publications (Cajete, 1994, 2000, 2005; Deloria, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Cleary & Peacock, 1998) as well as biographical and autobiographical accounts of Native Americans (Axell, 1997; Deloria, E., 1988; Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Ohiyesa, 1993; Qoyawayma, 1964; Supernaw, 2010). Because these concepts of what comprises IL cross these *boundaries*, the SMIL could be used throughout Indian Country.

Educational barriers exist in the form of Eurocentric curriculum, models, and theories which results in unsatisfactory learning environments for most Native American students. By applying the SMIL to curriculum for Native American learners, they will no longer be subjected to Eurocentric-based curriculum which has the underlying agenda of assimilation. Another

conclusion can be made that the curriculum developed with the proposed model would engage most Native American learners on all levels because it is based on cultural foundations. Moreover, another conclusion can be made that until the SMIL is used to develop curriculum most Native American learners not be fully engaged, the learning will not be true IL, and many Native Americans will continue to view education as a tool to survive in the dominant culture, and unimportant to their lives.

Vygotsky as a Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study. His theory, although Eurocentric, insists on the necessity of establishing strong social presence for learning to occur. Within most Native American communities face-to-face social interactions are extremely important. Therefore, as I began to develop the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning, I believed his theory to be suitable. However, the further I delved into the literature and refined the proposed model, Vygotsky's theory became less attractive. After interviewing the participants I realized that Vygotsky's theory was no longer applicable. The SMIL is very different from Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of learning. Indigenous Learning is much more encompassing.

For example, although Vygotsky stated that human learning is affected by interactions with others and objects, he did not mention the unseen. In contrast, the unseen is an important part of IL because of the interconnectedness of all. Even though Vygotsky discussed internal learning, he did not address the ultimate purpose of that type of learning in connection with everything else, seen and unseen. However, in Native American IL, place encompasses internal and external knowledge and the spiritualness of knowing your connectedness and responsibility to all, seen and unseen.

Storytelling is the second thread in the SMIL. Although Vygotsky mentioned storytelling, it is not a prominent component of his theory. In contrast, storytelling in most Native American communities is one of the important cultural foundations. The oral tradition is strong and the stories have both meaning and purpose often beyond what is stated.

The third thread of the model is intergenerational interaction. Vygotsky did not specifically address the interaction with elders. He did specify that scaffolding involves a person with a higher degree of knowledge who guides another person. However, age was not a factor. In contrast, elders within Native American communities are highly respected wisdom keepers who perform an essential role. Without them, the stories, traditions, language, and culture would not be transmitted. They are an essential part the communities' survival and the SMIL.

Experience is the fourth thread and Vygotsky did assert that experience is an important learning mechanism. In fact, he believed that learning is mediated by experience with others and objects. Therefore this thread did fit well with the socio-cultural theory.

Interconnectedness is the fifth thread. Vygotsky did explore the interaction of objects, social interaction, and experience. However, he did not explore the spiritualness and respect of social interactions, nor the interconnectedness of all. Furthermore, he did not discuss the purpose of learning as being a life journey, nor did he address the concept that learning is life, and life is learning. Both concepts are cultural foundations in most Native American communities. The SMIL is a unique model; therefore Vygotsky's theory did not work well as a theoretical framework for this study.

Conclusions and Implications of study

Based on the experiences and perceptions of the participants, several conclusions can be made. The first conclusion is that DL will not be a true Indigenous Learning experience for most Native Americans. Unless there is a face-to-face component, DL will not be an interactive experience in which Native American students can forge connections and respect. Although the DL environment may incorporate the five model threads to stay in line with cultural beliefs, for true IL to take place, face-to-face interaction must occur. All the senses must be engaged to feel the presence of another. Therefore, one can be educated. One can learn. But it will not be IL.

As Iris told me:

> **Iris**: "I don't, I don't see online learning having that, I *just don't* think you can go there with it. I still think that one-on-one or
>
> **S. Barton**: That face-to-face
>
> **Iris**: The face-to-face, the eye movements, the hand movements, the you know, the sense, the feel that you get from other learners, you know**,** *that* is not there [in DL].
>
> **S. Barton**: So the intangible.
>
> **Iris**: So no, that piece, I just don't think that's there.

Cajete (2000) tells us that "Native science[75] may be said to be based on perceptual phenomenology. In its core experience, Native science is based on the perception gained by using the *entire body of our senses* [emphasis added] in direct participation with the natural world" (p. 2)., will be lacking.

The participants purposely avoided DL courses or degree programs. Moreover, to find participants for the study was difficult because many Native Americans refuse to take DL

[75] For Cajete, (2005), "the terms 'knowledge' and 'science' are used interchangeably." (p.4)

courses. Therefore the conclusion can be made that DL is an unattractive educational option for most adult Native Americans, and its avoidance a cultural phenomenon.

Therefore, with the higher education push for online courses and programs, many Native Americans are at a disadvantage, or their choices are limited when considering advanced degrees. For example, Jasmine, who lives in a small Midwest town and holds B.A. and M.A. degrees, is reviewing doctoral programs. The local TWI located an hour away does not offer a doctoral program in which she is interested. The major TWI offering a program is about four hours away, too far away for her to attend due to job and family responsibilities. Jasmine can find online programs, but she said

> I would not take that class online at all or any program rather, online at all. No. No. And, a lot of the programs that I see, there's a lot of online…it just seems to be what colleges are doing today.

Jasmine is now considering a second M.A. in a slightly different field because she can take courses completely face-to-face or in the blended format. The implication of widespread DL is that DL will limit the educational choices for Native Americans. Those adult Native American learners who want to continue their education may be forced to choose between continuing their education in a field they really don't care to be in and stopping their educational career completely. Hence, the widespread implementation of DL will present another educational barrier for adult Native Americans.

Several facts support the conclusion that the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) can be used inter-tribally. First, the model was developed from reoccurring themes found in the scholarly works of Native Americans and members of the First Nations. Second, the participants who represent different tribes substantiated the five model threads as important

components in the learning process. Third, evidence gathered from biographical and autobiographical accounts of Native Americans also supported the model threads as components of IL. Fourth, from the interviews and the examples given in the interviews it is clear that the participants, who were instructors, instinctively incorporated the threads in their own classrooms. The processes just were not specifically articulated. Fifth, from the interviews and the examples given in the interview it is clear that some Native American instructors (not study participants) instinctively used some of the threads in face-to-face classes at TCUs and TWIs. The concepts were just not articulated as such. Sixth, many TCUs incorporate some of the threads of the SMIL although the processes are not specifically articulated.

Not only is the SMIL an IL model that can traverse the many different Native American communities, the conclusion can be made that the model threads are inherently part of IL; each thread encompasses a cultural foundation. Moreover, the implication is that the model threads, the SMIL, and IL are culturally-based.

Most Native American higher education students have to balance their lives by living in two worlds with respect to education. Peshkin (1997) calls this phenomenon "the dual world character of the student's life—the one, their traditional, tribal, Indian, reservation world, the other, the mainstream American, dominant Anglo, non-Indian world" (p. 5).

However, being cognizant of the proposed model and judiciously incorporating the five threads into developing and implementing curriculum can help to bridge the gap between the traditional Native American educational components and the Eurocentric models. Cajete (2000) points out, "What all of us need at this time is a mutually beneficial bridge and dialog [sic] between Indigenous and Western scientists and communities" (p. 7).

In agreement, Alfred, Cajete, Deloria, and Peacock among other Native American scholars advocate the necessity of reorganizing the current Eurocentric educational system to which most Native Americans are exposed. Most advocate a melding of the traditional Native American education with the Western education. However, no general models that can be applied inter-tribally or theories of indigenous learning have been developed. Alfred (1999) urges that "Leaders must promote Native education both in the conventional Western sense and in terms of re-rooting young people within their traditional cultures" (p. 133). That the SMIL could serve as the bridge to that end can be concluded.

In addition, the SMIL can serve as a solid foundation for the development of IL curriculum for the DL or the face-to-face classroom, at both TCUs and TWIs. The implication is the SMIL could transform the current educational system. However, it must be understood that if DL does not have a face-to-face component, it will not be IL. Furthermore, some concepts of the SMIL may not be easily understood or even grasped by Anglos. As John Trudell (2006) mentioned, they are far removed from their tribal history.

The participants' belief that learning is life is the basis of the fifth conclusion and implication. For the participants everything is connected, their place is affected by learning, and they will never stop learning because the world and life keeps changing. Therefore, in order to survive the changes and personally grow as they walk the good path in this world, they need to continually learn. IL is never static. Cajete (1994) poetically says "Education [Indigenous Learning] for Indian people has been, and continues to be, a grand story, a search for meaning, and essential food for the soul" (p. 28). The conclusion can be made that the current Eurocentric-based curricula will never adequately satisfy the educational needs of most Native

Americans because most Eurocentric curricula does not contain the spiritual aspects of interconnectedness and place. And, very rarely does it incorporate intergenerational work.

Because learning is life, and life is learning, for many Native Americans, it can be implied that the SMIL could function as the foundation of an Indigenous Learning Theory and an Indigenous philosophy. According to Cajate (1994),

> Whether one views traditional Iroquois, Sioux, Pueblos, Navajo, or Huichol ways of knowing and learning, the pattern is the same: unity through diversity. Indian people are all related. Tribal ways reflect a natural diversity of expression of basic principles and foundations. Regardless of Tribal culture, Indians of the Americas share common metaphors of Indigenous knowledge and education. It is because of such shared metaphors that the development of a contemporary Indigenous philosophy of Indian Education is possible. (pp. 35-36)

It has been concluded that DL without a face-to-face component does not meet the conditions for true IL and implied that DL could contribute to the erosion of Native American cultural values. Therefore, that adult Native Americans distance learners new to the higher education system should not enroll in fully online courses but instead enroll in face-to-face courses, can be concluded. However, once comfortable navigating the collegiate atmosphere without losing their cultural identity, those students could then enroll in DL. The implication is that higher levels academic achievement in the Eurocentric sense would occur.

Typically, Native Americans do not intentionally search for *power* as power is defined in the Anglo world. Knowing more than someone else does not bring power or respect. therefore, there is no reason to withhold knowledge. The implication is that IL and the SMIL, if used in the

Anglo world, may change education from being an issue of power, to a true cooperative learning experience.

The conclusion was made that the definition of indigenous learning has not been thoroughly or adequately developed. The term varies depending upon who is using it. Through my literature search and the current study I have defined indigenous learning as the integration and then immersion of new knowledge and experience with regards to self, family, tribe, community, nation, and universe. This knowledge/experience can then be transferred to another. Moreover, the conclusion was made that true IL involves all the senses and must also include place, relevancy, experience, interactions, and respect. All these conditions are met with the proposed Standard Model of Indigenous Learning.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this exploratory study consisting of eight female adult Native American distance learners has added to the general knowledge of adult Native American distance learners, additional research is recommended. Conducting the same study with adult male Native American distance learners of different ages, tribal affiliations, higher education levels, and blood quantum is the first recommendation.

The second recommendation is to conduct a study with TCUs to determine if DL and face-to-face classes incorporate the five threads of the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning (SMIL) and to what extent. TCUs are important educational institutions for many Native and non-Native Americans, and often their curriculum involves storytelling, intergenerational interaction, and experiential learning.

Conducting a study with Native American instructors, both DL and face-to-face instructors who teach at the higher educational level would be the third recommendation. The study would determine if these instructors use the five threads of the SMIL in their classrooms and to what extent.

The fourth recommendation is to conduct the study with Native American instructors of the primary educational level to see if the five threads of the SMIL are utilized in their classrooms and to what extent.

To determine if the SMIL can be generalized to other populations, it is recommended that studies be conducted with indigenous people of other countries. It is then recommended that a study be conducted with other ethnic groups, including Anglos, to determine if the proposed SMIL can be generalized to those populations.

As a final recommendation, studies should be conducted with younger (non-adult) Native Americans and other ethnic groups to determine if the model can be generalized to a younger population.

Final Remarks

The SMIL contains five threads which should be woven together to create a strong fabric for true IL. It is important that all the threads are used to understand the interconnectedness of everything seen and unseen inhabiting this place called Earth.

Education and learning should not just be for self, but they should be for all. Educational models used in learning processes need to incorporate our responsibility to all. In that way, we truly are learning while walking the good path to be the best we can be, to live a good life. IL is truly transformational and not just words memorized to satisfy a standard in the Anglo world.

What I have spent pages trying to academically justify, Iris eloquently summarizes when she says,

> I have a *real* tie to *land*, to here. This is, and I speak in a collective, a collective tone, when I talk about America. *This. Is. Our. Land.* [speaks slowly and separates each word] Uh. We have been here forever and ever and ever and ever. And, hopefully we will remain here forever and ever so we have (draws deep breath) not only an incredible tie and a fantastic gift in that we have this land, but with that also comes a responsibility of tending to that. So education, learning, is very tied. And primarily so we can appreciate and also so we can steward, if you will, take care of, you know, fulfill the responsibilities that we have. And that I speak for all, you know, this country, this land. Our spirituality is very interconnected. Yeah. Very very interconnected. Yeah, our creation stories, I mean, our beliefs, our creation, our spirituality, are all very very tied to everything. There's no separating them out, you mess this up in nature, then it's got a domino effect. Yes I believe in that yes, very much so. (Iris)

This is so. And, now I will offer my final remarks.

Adult Native American distance learners are walking in two worlds, and this "living in two worlds frames the issue of cultural survival" (Peshkin, 1997, p. 73). The cultural survival of Native American communities depends on learning. However, it is not dependent on the Anglo education or way of learning. The survival of Indian Country depends on true IL. The Standard Model of Indigenous Learning encompasses Indigenous Learning with its five threads of place, storytelling, intergenerational interaction, experience, and interconnectedness. These five threads are woven into the fabric of our existence because for many Native Americans, living is learning

and learning is life. These five threads define us, our family, our tribe, our community, our world, our place.

I do not see the Eurocentric educational models miraculously changing or vanishing overnight, but components of the SMIL can be incorporated into current educational systems. For TCUs it would be extremely easy to begin using the model as a foundation for curriculum as they already incorporate these practices although in an way that may not capitalize on their worth to each student.

Cajete, Deloria, and many other Native American scholars maintain that Native American learners need to be able to use both the Western and Traditional methods of education in their process of learning. The Western is needed in order to navigate the dominant culture and global economy, and the traditional is needed in order to keep tribal culture and identity in place and alive. I believe the Standard Model of Indigenous Learning offers the ability to bridge that gap. Adult Native American distance learners must be skilled web walkers. They will need to walk the web when necessary to gather the information, internalize what is needed to help secure their place, and then share with the community. They will be able to safely walk the world of DL and the web without being trapped because they will be anchored by the five threads: place, storytelling, experience, intergenerational interaction, and interconnectedness. They will be able to walk in two worlds without danger of losing their place, identity, and cultural traditions.

Trafzer et al. (2006) noted that many Native American students who survived the boarding school era "turned the power"[76] (p. 1) and, so, it is up to us to continue turning the power on our journey forward. The Seventh Generation is here. Deloria (1999), in his

[76] "'Turning the power' is a Native American phrase meaning to send negative power back to its source, using the same power to effectuate a positive outcome for Indian people. In this case, over time, American Indian students, parents, and community leaders learned from the boarding school experience and used their knowledge to the benefit of their people" (Trafzer et al., 2006, p. 29).

immeasurable wisdom, wrote that although the educational "system has pulled Indians into the Western worldview" some are breaking through safely to the other side and they are establishing the path for others to follow through the Western worldview (p. 153). In other words, they have made it through, they understand, and they pass the knowledge to others. In this way, all can walk through the Western worldview and still retain their core piece, as Iris identified it. Deloria (1999) wrote that it is imperative that we do this to break the culture shock: "When we leave the culture shock behind we will be masters of our own fate again and able to determine for ourselves what kind of lives we lead" (p. 153). This thing, we need to do…for all our relations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

My name is SanDee Barton and I am a graduate student at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. I am asking you to participate in my research study. The purpose of my study is to collect information concerning experiences of adult Native American distance learners.

Participation is voluntary. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. You will be asked to answer questions about your experiences with online courses.

All your responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you so much for taking the time to assist me in this research.

I _____, agree to participate in this research project conducted by Sandra Barton, Workforce Education Training and Development Department.

I understand the purpose of this study is to discuss experiences of online learning.

I understand my participation is strictly voluntary and may refuse to answer any question without penalty. I am also informed that my participation will last 60 minutes.

I understand that my responses to the questions will be audio taped, and that these tapes will be transcribed/stored and kept for 3 years in a locked file cabinet. Afterward, these tapes will be destroyed.

I understand questions or concerns about this study are to be directed to (SanDee Barton, 757-353-9351, sd_barton@yahoo.com) or her advisor, Dr. Keith Waugh.

I have read the information above and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity and know my responses will be tape recorded. I understand a copy of this form will be made available to me for the relevant information and phone numbers.

"I agree _____ I disagree _____to have my responses recorded on audio tape."

"I agree_____ I disagree _____ that Sandra Barton may quote me in her research"

Participant signature and date

This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office of Sponsored Projects Administration, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709. Phone (618) 453-4533. E-mail siuhsc@siu.edu

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questions (08-17-2012)

Name (code)

Age

Tribal affiliation

Schools attended **location** **years**

- Elementary
- Middle
- High
- Colleges

Location born
Location of childhood
Current location
Current occupation
Previous occupations

Distance education courses—enrolled in as a student Undergrad/Grad

- Delivery method of course (blended, complete online, VTT)
- Type of course (Humanities, education, sciences, etc.)
- Platform of course (WebCT, Blackboard, other)
- Number of courses

Distance education courses—taught/designed

- Delivery method of course (blended, complete online, VTT)
- Type of course (Humanities, education, sciences, etc.)
- Platform of course (WebCT, Blackboard, other)
- Number of courses

APPENDIX C

Demographic Questions (11-15-2012)

Code Name_____ Age_____ Tribal affiliation _____

Location born_____ Childhood location if different_____

Current location if different _____ Do you live on Tribal Land? _____

Current occupation _____ Do you work for a Tribal organization? _____

Email: _____Address:_____

Schools attended: location years degrees

Elementary

Middle

High School

College(s)

Distance education classes taken as a student

Number of courses Undergrad/Grad

Delivery method of course (blended/hybrid, complete online, video-teleconference, other)

Type of course(s) (humanities, education, sciences, other)

Was/were the course(s) in your field of study?

Platform or software used for the course (WebCT, Blackboard, ecollege, D2L, other)

APPENDIX D

PRE-CODE LIST (08-17-2012)

Educational Experiences

EI	Educational Institutions
ECTAKE	Educational Classes Taken
ECTAU	Educational Classes Taught
ETUSST	Educational Tools used as student learner
ETUSI	Educational Tools used as Instructor

Distance Learning

DLTAU	Distance learning taught
DLTAK	Distance learning taken
DLPLATIN	Distance learning platforms used as instructor
DLPLATST	Distance learning platforms used as student

Requirements in Learning Environments

REQONDISS	Online discussion boards
REQONEM	Online email system
REQONP	Online Posting
REQONWWK	Online webwork (searches)
REQONPWK	Online paperwork (research papers, summaries, journals, blogs)
REQONM	Online media (powerpoint, videos, u-tube)
REQCDIS	Classroom discussion
REQCATT	Classroom Attendance
REQCRPWK	Classroom paperwork (rearch papers, summaries, etc.)
REQCM	Classroom media (powerpoint, slide projectors, overheads, videos)

Communications

COMMIION	Communication between instructors online
COMMIIC	Communication between instructors classroom
COMMISON	Communication between instructor-student online
COMMISC	Communication between instructor-student classroom
COMMSSON	Communication between students online
COMMISSC	Communication between students classroom
COMMININON	Communication initiated by instructor online
COMMSINON	Communication initiated by student online

Threads

THPLACE	Place
THSTORY	Story
THGEN	Generation

THEXPER	Experience "doing"
THCONNECT	Interconnectedness
THUSED	Threads used in teaching

Applications of threads

APPLACE	Applied place in teaching
APPSTORY	Applied story in teaching
APPGEN	Applied intergeneration in teaching
APPEXPER	Applied experience in teaching
APPCONNECT	Applied interconnectedness in teaching

Perceptions of Participants

PCSV	Perception of class from student view
PCIV	Perception of class from instructor view
PONSV	Perception of online class from student view
PONIV	Perception of online class from instructor view
PCESV	Perception of class environment from student view
PCEIV	Perception of class environment from instructor view
PONESV	Perception of online environment from student view
PONIV	Perception of online environment from instructor view
SPONS	Self-perception of online student
SPOCS	Self-perception of classroom student
SPONI	Self-perception of online instructor
SPOCI	Self-perception of classroom instructor

APPENDIX E

CODING LIST (2-11-2013)

EDUCATION

EIATECH	Educational Institutions Attended: Technical College
EIATRI	Educational Institutions Attended: Tribal College
EIATWI	Educational Institutions Attended: Traditionally White Institution
ECTASCL	Educational Classes Taken: Associates (classroom)
ECTASDL	Educational Classes Taken: Associates (distance learning)
ECTBSCL	Educational Classes Taken: Bachelors (classroom)
ECTBSDL	Educational Classes Taken: Bachelors (distance learning)
ECTMSCL	Educational Classes Taken: Masters (classroom)
ECTMSDL	Educational Classes Taken: Masters (distance learning)
ECTDOCCL	Educational Classes Taken: Doctoral (classroom)
ECTDOCL	Educational Classes Taken: Doctoral (distance learning)
EATAU	Educational Classes Taught
EDEF	Definition of education
EPUR	Purpose of education
EATT	Attitude towards education

DISTANCE LARNING

DLPLATST	Distance learning platform used as student
DLPLATT	Distance learning platform used as teacher
DLFULL	Distance learning: full online
DLBLEN	Distance learning: blended/hybrid
DLVTT	Distance learning: videoteleconferencing
DVIOLETORR	Distance learning: correspondence
DLTAPE	Distance learning: taped videos/CDs
DLIDEAL	Distance learning: ideal environment/components
DLEXPOS	Distance learning: experience positive
DLEXNEG	Distance learning: experience negative
DLEXMIX	Distance learning: experience mixed
DVIOLETRNON	Distance learning: course in non-major field of study
DVIOLETRMAJ	Distance learning: course in major field of study
DLREACON	Distance learning: reason to take-convenience
DLREAFAM	Distance learning: reason to take-family commitments
DLREANO	Distance learning: reason to take-no other option available
DLREAINT	Distance learning: reason to take-interest
DLTECH	Difficulties in DL environment due to equipment malfunctions

COMMUNICATION

COMCLTST	Communication in classroom between teacher and student

COMCLSTST	Communication in classroom between student and student
COMCLVER	Communication in classroom-verbal
COMCLNONVER	Communication in classroom-nonverbal
COMCLVIS	Communication in classroom-visual
COMCLBODY	Communication in classroom-body
COMDLTST	Communication online between teacher and student
COMDLSTST	Communication online between student and student
COMDLWR	Communication online-written
COMDLVER	Communication online-verbal
COMDLVIS	Communication online-visual
COMDLBODY	Communication online-body
COMDLAUD	Communication online-audio only
COMDLTIN	Communication online-teacher initiated
COMDLSIN	Communication online-student initiated
COMDLREQST	Communication online required between students
COMDLOPTST	Communication online optional between students
COMDIFFTECH	Communication difficulties due to equipment malfunctions
COMDIFFDL	Communication difficulties in DL between student and teacher

THREADS

THPL	Thread: Place
THSTO	Thread: Story
THGEN	Thread: Intergeneration
THEXP	Thread: Experience
THCON	Thread: Interconnectedness
THPLUSE	Used place in own classroom teaching
THSTOUSE	Used story in own classroom teaching
THGENUSE	Used intergeneration in own classroom teaching
THEXPUSE	Used experience in own classroom teaching
THCONUSE	Used interconnectedness in own classroom teaching
THCLAPPL	Classroom applied place in teaching
THCLAPSTO	Classroom applied story in teaching
THCLAPGEN	Classroom applied intergeneration in teaching
THCLAPEXP	Classroom applied experience in teaching
THCLAPCN	Classroom applied interconnectedness in teaching
THDLAPSTO	Distance learning applied story in teaching
THDLAPEX	Distance learning applied experience in teaching
THSTPRE	Story preferred in classrooms (DL and seated)
THGENPRE	Intergenerational work preferred in classrooms (DL and seated)
THEXPRE	Experience/ ‘hands-on’ work preferred in classrooms (DL and seated)

THCONPRE	Interconnectedness between students AND the connection to outside 'world' preferred in classrooms (DL and seated)
THPLIM	Importance of place to learning (DL and seated)
THSTIM	Importance of storytelling to learning (DL and seated)
THGENIM	Importance of intergenerational input to learning (DL and seated)
THEXIM	Importance of experience to learning (DL and seated)
THCONIM	Importance of interconnectedness to learning (DL and seated)
THPURPL	Purpose of place
THPURST	Purpose of story
THPURGEN	Purpose of intergeneration
THPUREX	Purpose of experience
THPURCON	Purpose of interconnectedness

RELATIONSHIPS

RETSTCL	Relationship between teacher and student in classroom
RETSTDL	Relationship between teacher and student in DL environment
RESTSTCL	Relationship between student and student in classroom
RESTSTDL	Relationship between teacher and student in DL environment
REEDLEARN	Relationship between education and learning
RESELFLEARN	Relationship between self and learning
RESELFED	Relationship between self and education
RESELFPVIOLETL	Relationship between self and place in classroom
RESELFPLDL	Relationship between self and place in DL environment
RESELFSTOCL	Relationship between self and storytelling in classroom
RESELFSTODL	Relationship between self and storytelling in DL environment
RESELFGENCL	Relationship between self and intergeneration in classroom
RESELFGENDL	Relationship between self and intergeneration in DL environment
RESELFEXCL	Relationship between self and experience in classroom
RESELFEXDL	Relationship between self and experience in DL environment
RESELFCONCL	Relationship between self and interconnectedness in classroom
RESELFCONDL	Relationship between self and interconnectedness in DL environment
RERESPLEARNCL	Relationship between respect and learning in classroom
RERESPLEARNDL	Relationship between respect and learning in DL environment

INTERACTION

INTCL	Interaction in classroom
INTDLFULL	Interaction in full online class
INTDLBL	Interaction in blended online class
INTDLVTT	Interaction in videoteleconferencing class
INTOUTCLST	Interaction outside classroom with other students
INTOUTCLT	Interaction outside classroom with teacher

LEARNING

LEARGUIDECL	Guides to learning in classroom
LEARGUIDEDL	Guides to learning in DL environment
LEARDEF	Definition of learning
LEARPUR	Purpose of learning
LEARATTCL	Attitudes towards learning in classroom
LEARATTDL	Attitudes towards learning in DL environment
LEARRELPL	Learning and relationship to place
LEARRELST	Learning and relationship to storytelling
LEARRELGEN	Learning and relationship to intergenerational work
LEARRELEX	Learning and relationship to experience
LEARREVIOLETON	Learning and relationship to interconnectedness

EMOTIONS

EMDLFULL	Emotions experienced during full online courses
EMDLBL	Emotions experienced during blended online courses
EMDLVTT	Emotions experienced during videoteleconferencing courses
EMDVIOLETOR	Emotions experienced during correspondence/videotaped courses
EMCL	Emotions experienced during classroom

PERCEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

PERSELFDL	Perception of self in online class
PERCRWKDL	Perception of coursework importance of online class
PERTDL	Perception of teacher role in online class
PERCLMTDL	Perception of classmates in online class
PERRESDL	Perception of respect in online class
PERSELFCL	Perception of self in classroom
PERCRWKCL	Perception of coursework importance in classroom
PERTCL	Perception of instructor role in classroom
PERCLMTCL	Perception of classmates in classroom
PERRESCL	Perception of respect in classroom
PERENVL	Perception of online environment
PERENCL	Perception of classroom environment
PERTXDL	Perception of textbook in online class
PERTXCL	Perception of textbook in classroom
PERCONDLFULL	Perception of connection in full DL environment
PERCONDLBL	Perception of connection in blended DL environment
PERCONLVTT	Perception of connection in videoteleconferencing DL environment
PERCONCOR	Perception of connection in correspondence DL environment
PERCONCL	Perception of connection in classroom

RESPECT

RESDL	Respect in distance learning environment

RESCL	Respect in classroom
RESDEF	Definition of respect
RESIMP	Importance of respect
RESLEARN	Relationship of respect to learning
RESSELF	Relationship of respect to self
RESCOMMU	Relationship of respect to community (others)
RESPL	Relationship of respect to place

APPENDIX F

Student Interview Protocol (08-17-2012)

Project: Web Walkers: A Phenomenological Study of Adult Native American Distance Learning Experiences, Toward a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning

Date: *Time start:*

Interviewer: SanDee Barton *Time end:*

Interviewee:

The purpose of my study is to collect information about the experiences of adult Native American distance learners. Participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, it will take approximately one (1) hour of your time. You will be asked to answer questions about your experiences with online courses. All your responses will be kept confidential. Only those directly involved with this project will have access to the data.

Notes: Check for completed consent form; Turn on tape

1. Please tell me a story about your online learning experience.
2. Please tell me a story about how you got involved in online learning.
3. Please describe your decision to take an online class.
    a. perceptions you had of an online class
    b. assumptions you had of an online class
    c. decision to enroll in *additional* online courses?
4. If you have taken more than one online class, please describe which was the best and the worst.
    a. Probe: please explain why
    b. Probe: social presence/communication

    c. Probe: structure of the online class

5. Describe the interactions you had with the instructor.
    a. Who initiated contact?
6. Describe the interactions you had with classmates.
    a. Who initiated contact?
    b. Was interaction a requirement?
7. Describe the impact that distance learning has had on you.
    a. Probe: education
    b. Probe: work
8. Describe your feelings about online classes.
    a. Probe: connection (with Prof/students)
9. Describe how the distance education environment affected your feeling of self?
    a. Probe: as a student (real class or fake class)
10. Describe your feeling of connection with others in the distance learning class.
    a. Probe: was interaction a requirement
11. Please describe the distance learning environment.
12. Were personal experiences shared in the class?
    a. Probe: by whom?
    b. Probe: Was it part of an assignment?
13. Explain how narratives were used by either instructors or other students.
14. Were the viewpoints expressed were by different generations or age groups.
15. Describe any experiences of being aware of connection with other students/instructor.

16. Describe your perception of holistic learning or your idealistic learning environment.
17. Describe relevancy of the coursework to your life.
18. Describe relevancy of the coursework to the world in general.
19. Describe relevancy of the coursework to others.
    a. Probe: relevant to others outside class or future

APPENDIX G

Student Interview Protocol (11-15-2012)

Project: Web Walkers: A Phenomenological Study of Adult Native American Distance Learning Experiences; Toward a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning

Date: *Time start:*

Interviewer: SanDee Barton *Time end:*

Interviewee:

The purpose of my study is to collect information about the experiences of adult Native American distance learners. Participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, it will take approximately one (1) hour of your time. You will be asked to answer questions about your experiences with online courses. All your responses will be kept confidential. Only those directly involved with this project will have access to the data.

Notes: Check for completed consent form; Turn on tape

1. Please tell me a story about your online learning experience.
2. Please tell me a story about how you got involved in online learning.
3. Please describe your decision to take an online class.
    a. perceptions you had of an online class
    b. assumptions you had of an online class
    c. decision to enroll in *additional* online courses?
4. If you have taken more than one online class, please describe which was the best and the worst.
    a. Probe: please explain why

b. Probe: social presence/communication

c. Probe: structure of the online class

5. Describe your sense of connection with others in the distance learning class.
    a. Probe: was interaction a requirement?
6. Please tell me a story about the connection.
7. Describe the interactions you had with the instructor.
    a. Who initiated contact?
8. Describe the interactions you had with classmates.
    a. Who initiated contact?
    b. Was interaction a requirement?
9. Describe your feelings about online classes.
10. Please describe how the distance education environment affected your feeling of self.
    a. Probe: please describe your sense of being a student (real class or fake class)
    b. Alone or connected?
11. Please describe what learning means to you.
12. Please describe what the purpose of learning is to you.
    a. Probe: can you explain the difference between education and learning?
13. Please describe what education means to you.
14. Please describe what the purpose of education is to you.
15. Were personal experiences shared in the class?

a. Probe: by whom?

b. Probe: Was it part of an assignment?

16. Please explain or describe if/how narratives or stories were used by either instructors or other students.
17. Were the viewpoints expressed were by different generations or age groups.
18. Please describe how you would define respect in a learning environment.
    a. Online
    b. In the classroom
19. Describe the impact that distance learning has had on you.
    a. Probe: education
    b. Probe: work
    c. Help you with a sense of place
20. Describe relevancy of the coursework to your life, or your world.
21. Describe relevancy of the coursework to others.
    a. Probe: relevant to others outside class or future.
22. Describe your perception of holistic learning.
23. Please describe the distance learning environment.
24. Please describe your ideal learning environment.
    a. Please describe any specific components you would include.

Notes: Remember to restate confidentiality, and ask about further contact.

APPENDIX H

Debriefing Interview Summary Form (08-17-2012)

Participant #: Date:
Location of Interview:
What were the main themes or patterns that emerged from the interview?

Summary for the information collected on each interview question:

Response Summary	Codes	Research Question Informed
Bkgd information: types of classes (D.L.)		
How do participants describe experiences/feeling of D.L. class?		
How did 5 threads present in interview wrt D.L.classes?		
How did participants access? Amount & type of interaction?		

NOTES:

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Sandra D. Weiterman Barton

Sd_barton@yahoo.com

University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Bachelor of Science, Geology, May 1983

Florida State University
Master of Science, Geology, April 1989

Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Bachelor of Science, Workforce Education & Development, 2000

Dissertation Title:
Web Walkers, A Phenomenological Study of Adult Native American Distance Learning Experiences: Toward a Standard Model of Indigenous Learning

Major Professors: Dr. Jennifer Calvin
Dr. C. Keith Waugh

Publications:

1. Thesis: Neogene Calcareous Nannofossil Biostratigraphy of the Cabonate Ramp Florida Slope, Northeast Gulf of Mexico, 1989.

2. Garduski, A.F. & Gowen, M.H. & Milsark, A. & Weiterman, S.D. & Wise, S.W. &Mullins, H.T.(1991). Evolution of a deep-water carbonate platform: Upper Cretaceous to Pleistocene sedimentary environments on the west Florida margin. *Marine Geology*, Vol. 1011, p.163-179.

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