

5-2014

# Native American Identity Formation in Relation to Educational Experiences

Amber Reid  
*Pacific University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://commons.pacificu.edu/cassoc>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Reid, Amber, "Native American Identity Formation in Relation to Educational Experiences" (2014). *Social Sciences Capstone Projects*. Paper 28.

This Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts and Sciences at CommonKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Social Sciences Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of CommonKnowledge. For more information, please contact [CommonKnowledge@pacificu.edu](mailto:CommonKnowledge@pacificu.edu).

---

# Native American Identity Formation in Relation to Educational Experiences

## **Abstract**

Previous research in the fields of Critical Race Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory, education, and identity formation suggests that one's educational experiences influence the construction and formation of a Native American identity. An examination of this literature leads to the question: how do educational experiences influence the construction and formation of Native American Identity? I propose that scholastic influences of peers, teachers and curriculum can have positive and negative influences on one's identity formation. Using snowball sampling I conducted seven semi-structured qualitative interviews with individuals aged 18-65 to examine the relationship between educational experiences and identity formation. Preliminary analyses indicate that familial socialization has a strong effect on identity formation. Individuals who attended non-reservation public schools, reservation schools and off-reservation boarding schools all explain that the interplay between family and education is a primary factor in enabling their positive attitudes towards Native American identity formation. Those who expressed negative feelings towards their identity developed this perspective through negative interactions within the classroom setting. Participants spoke of the negative light that Native American history is cast under in a scholastic setting, and ignorant or rude comments made by their peers. The results support the theory that the interplay between educational experiences and familial influence shape the construction and formation of Native American identity.

## **Document Type**

Capstone Project

## **Degree Name**

Bachelor of Arts

## **Department**

Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Public Health

## **First Advisor**

Daniel B. Eisen

## **Second Advisor**

John Reid-Hresko

## **Subject Categories**

Social and Behavioral Sciences

## **Rights**

[Terms of use for work posted in CommonKnowledge.](#)

---

**Comments**

**Honorable Mention, 2014 CommonKnowledge Senior Project Writing Award**

NATIVE AMERICAN IDENTITY FORMATION IN RELATION TO EDUCATIONAL  
EXPERIENCES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF PACIFIC  
UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF ARTS

IN

SOCIOLOGY

MAY 2014

By

Amber Reid

Thesis Advisors:

Daniel B. Eisen  
John Reid-Hresko

Keywords: Identity, Critical Race Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory, Native American,  
Education

## DEDICATION/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all the people who have helped me throughout this journey. I would like to say thank you to all of my professors, especially Daniel Eisen, that gave me advice, helped me brainstorm, and encouraged me to go beyond my comfort zone to make this project better than I ever thought it could be. I would like to thank my mother for her unwavering emotional support and for believing in me throughout this project. To my father, thank you for helping me calm down and compartmentalize the project when I was getting overwhelmed. Lastly, I would like to say thank you to my roommates and friends, you all have been the greatest support system I could have asked for.

## ABSTRACT

**Native American Identity Formation in Relation to Educational Experiences**

Previous research in the fields of Critical Race Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory, education, and identity formation suggests that one's educational experiences influence the construction and formation of a Native American identity. An examination of this literature leads to the question: how do educational experiences influence the construction and formation of Native American Identity? I propose that scholastic influences of peers, teachers and curriculum can have positive and negative influences on one's identity formation. Using snowball sampling I conducted seven semi-structured qualitative interviews with individuals aged 18-65 to examine the relationship between educational experiences and identity formation. Preliminary analyses indicate that familial socialization has a strong effect on identity formation. Individuals who attended non-reservation public schools, reservation schools and off-reservation boarding schools all explain that the interplay between family and education is a primary factor in enabling their positive attitudes towards Native American identity formation. Those who expressed negative feelings towards their identity developed this perspective through negative interactions within the classroom setting. Participants spoke of the negative light that Native American history is cast under in a scholastic setting, and ignorant or rude comments made by their peers. The results support the theory that the interplay between educational experiences and familial influence shape the construction and formation of Native American identity.

## REFLEXIVE RESEARCH STATEMENT

I chose to study Native American identity and its relation to educational experiences for many reasons. When I was ten, I decided that I wanted to be an educator. Teaching is a passion of mine and it is what I plan to do after graduation. My experiences in education, both as a teacher and as a student, have allowed me to realize the inequalities that exist within the classroom. These inequalities can be as black and white as socioeconomic stratification, but can also be subtler. Identity is something that individuals construct for themselves, but a school is the setting where many students grapple with this notion.

From the first day that individuals enter school, they are socialized to believe certain things to be right or wrong, and learn that some things are good while others are bad. The entire American public education system is constructed in a way that speaks to the white, European experience. History textbooks largely ignore the histories of native peoples, Asian Americans, African Americans among other racial and ethnic groups. Instead, most information in a textbook is presented from the Eurocentric experience. If a student is socialized in an environment where their “identity” is not acknowledged or appreciated, they will have a harder time developing and appreciating their identity.

As I mentioned earlier, identity construction is an individualized process. Everyone experiences his or her identity differently. Although I may identify with being “white,” that does not mean my “white” experience is similar to anyone else’s. However, I am privileged over many other individuals in my identity construction because of my race. I am white, and I have seen an abundance of white history, culture and experience throughout my academic career.

This became incredibly apparent to me during the winter term of my freshman year at Pacific University. I went on a trip entitled “Navajo Service Learning” where I spent three weeks with ten other Pacific students chopping wood for Navajo elders and volunteering at a local elementary school. While volunteering in the classroom, I noticed the lack of Native material being taught – even at a school on the Navajo reservation. This school catered to predominantly Native American students and teachers. Students were only being taught material that was on the all-state standardized test – material that had little to nothing about Native American culture.

If schools are not helping students foster positive identity development, then what is? This question is what prompted me to really delve into this research and choose this project to fulfill my senior thesis requirement. I hope to learn about identity development outside of what I currently know, and that my research will be useful in assisting school districts to implement more culturally aware and multicultural curricula.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Abstract .....	1
II.	Dedication and Acknowledgments .....	2
III.	Researcher's Reflexive Statement.....	3
IV.	Introduction.....	6
V.	Literature Review.....	7
	a. History of Colonization.....	7
	b. Critical Race Theory.....	10
	c. Tribal Critical Race Theory.....	13
	d. Identity .....	16
	e. Education .....	18
VI.	Methodology .....	21
VII.	Results .....	30
VIII.	Discussion .....	46
IX.	Conclusions .....	50
X.	Directions for Future Research .....	51
XI.	Literature Cited.....	52
XII.	Appendix A: Consent Form.....	56
XIII.	Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	60
IXV.	Appendix C: MEIM-R.....	61
XV.	Appendix D: Pacific University IRB Approval of Research Study.....	62

## INTRODUCTION

Identity. This is a term that evokes strong pride or embarrassment. Identity formation and negotiation helps individuals make sense of themselves in relation to the world they live in. For Native American individuals, this has been a tumultuous road. Indigenous peoples of the United States were subjected to the pressures and totalitarianism of colonization, which moved their status from a dominant group to a minority and oppressed group. This unique status in society has made identity formation and negotiation an interesting topic. The narrative of colonization is explained in current societal discourse through Critical Race Theory (Du Bois 1903, Eisen 2011, Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Davis 1989) and Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy 2006). These are applied to works on native identity and conversations about education. This literature is then applied to a qualitative methodology utilizing the MEIM-R as a screening tool and semi-structured interviews.

These semi-structured interviews with a variety of Native American individuals ages 18-80 informed this project with a plethora of experiences associated with identity formation and negotiation. Questions asked in the interviews centered around topics of (a) educational experiences, (b) identity formation, (c) what it means to be a Native American, (d) similarities and differences in educational experiences within their families. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the participants to share their life histories with the researcher, in line with the application of Critical Race Theory. The results of these interviews provided the researcher with a holistic view of Native American identity formation in relation to educational experiences.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to lay an appropriate foundational framework for the research at hand, works from historical sources on Native American colonization (Faragher 2004, Guyatt 2009, and Wolfe 2006) will be examined to explain the past legacy to the continuing subordination of native peoples. This literature intersects with Critical Race Theory (Davis 1989, Du Bois 1903, Eisen 2011, Solorzano and Yosso 2002), which sheds light on current beliefs and tenets of how racism functions and appropriates itself in more modern times. Tribal Critical Race Theory, an adaptation of Critical Race Theory (Brayboy 2006) seeks to provide an understanding of the current Native American experience in relation to societal pressures, functions and dysfunctions. Works on identity (Du Bois 1903, Mead 1934) will situate the research in its context of exploring both historical and current concepts of native identity and their shaping forces. Lastly, scholars on Native American Education (Case 1971, Kaomea 2009, Roessel 1999) will help provide a culmination of literary work that connects the tenets of the aforementioned topics to link into a cohesive narrative of identity in relation to educational experiences.

### *History of Colonization*

Issues in contemporary Native American society cannot be addressed without first looking at the historical context of colonization. Drawing on scholars such as John Mack Faragher (2004) and Nicholas Guyatt (2009) among others, helps to weave a chronological and historical narrative to enlighten the reader on the history of Native peoples in what is now known as the United States. By starting broad and utilizing the resources of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the reader can begin to understand the injustices and complexities of westward

expansion and white colonization of native peoples. In *Encyclopedia Britannica* under the entry “Native American” it is recounted

At the dawn of the 16th century, as the European conquest of the Americas began, indigenous peoples resided throughout the Western Hemisphere. They were soon decimated by the effects of epidemic disease, military conquest, and enslavement, and, as with other colonized peoples, they were subject to discriminatory political and legal policies well into the 20th, and even the 21st, century. (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013).

The history of Native American colonization has become mainstream and accepted to the point that it appears in online encyclopedias, which are used in many classroom settings.

However, many individuals are still unaware of the chronological specifics in the history of Native American colonization. This timeline will be outlined below to set the stage for the analysis using Critical Race Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory and work on identity.

John Mack Faragher (2004) explains how westward expansion by White settlers disrupted the current existence of Native Americans. Faragher (2004) goes on to illuminate that westward expansion and Indian relocation happened under the guise of expanding farming. He writes “to make way for railroads, towns, and farms, army officers and government agents squeezed Indian communities onto small portions of their former homelands and forced them into godforsaken corners of Indian Territory” (Faragher 2004:452). However, the homesteaders that attempted to settle on Indian land soon realized that this land was inappropriate for the typical definition of western farming. Faragher (2004) summarizes “there was a terrible irony at work here, for much of the land taken from the plains Indians turned out to be totally inappropriate for family farming” (Faragher 2004:452).

After this failed attempt, government officials decided to teach Native Americans their traditions of farming in hopes of making the ‘Indians’ into more productive members of society (Guyatt 2009). In the 1830s, the federal government decreed, “white Americans

would soon be able to welcome Indians as full citizens of the Republic” (Guyatt 2009:990) if they adopted the skills and techniques of husbandry and agriculture. Although white Americans planned to welcome Indians as full citizens, due to citizen backlash they created the compromise that “blacks and Indians could be both equal to whites and separate from them” (Guyatt 2009:991). This was the beginning of the ‘separate but equal’ debate that has reigned throughout American society since its inception in the 1830s.

Indian colonization achieved momentum on a national spectrum after the War of 1812. The white American agenda still consisted of wanting to ‘improve’ the Indians, but Indian farming would be a barricade to white expansion. Their solution to this predicament was to “persuade [them] to sell their supposedly excess lands – which were used for hunting and other communal purposes – to the federal government or the states. They would use the money from the land sales to improve their communities and to develop agriculture” (Guyatt 2009:994). When the government received backlash over the colonization of the native people, jurist Abel Upsher told the Virginia legislature that “the history of mankind proved that man was civilized by colonies” (Guyatt 2009:998) and therefore part of the natural course of history. This mentality was then internalized and aided in the formation of the 1830 Indian Removal Act and the infamous Trail of Tears in 1836. The Indian Removal Act gave the federal government the authority to exchange Native-held land in the east for land in the “Indian colonization zone” in the west (Encyclopedia Britannica 2012). The Trail of Tears was a subset of the Indian removal process and forced 15,000 Cherokee to leave their land and travel by foot more than 1200 miles to their new “Indian Territory” (Encyclopedia Britannica 2012). Many Native Americans died due to the Trail of Tears and the Indian Removal Act, yet the federal government believed they were acting appropriately.

General Phillip Sheridan coined the maxim “The only good Indian is a dead Indian” (Wolfe 2006:397). This phrase shows the permeation of colonial discourse and its justification. Wolfe (2006) cites that in a paper for the 1892 Charities and Correction Conference, Captain Richard Pratt, a founder of the Carlisle boarding school for Indian youth sanctioned General Sheridan’s maxim and added “but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him and save the man” (Wolfe 2006:397).

This history of colonization and oppression has led into modern society. As of 2010 census data, there are approximately 3 million indigenous people residing in the United States (United States Census Bureau 2010). Incomes of Native Americans are lower than most of the country, and unemployment rates are high. For example, on the Blackfoot Reservation in Montana the unemployment rate is at 69 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). Since federal involvement in Native affairs began, tribes have lost their autonomy. For example, because of the Western Oregon Indian Termination Act of 1954, 61 tribes were federally terminated, meaning that they no longer received federal services or land set aside for reservations (*Western Oregon Termination Act of 1954*). This affected healthcare, education and the economy. These effects continue to permeate Native American life. The idea behind termination acts was to restore complete sovereignty to the United States government, and to assimilate Native Americans to the dominant culture and ideology. This all leads to the discussion of the assimilationist theories regarding native identity and its salience in contemporary society.

### *Critical Race Theory*

Critical Race Theory, or CRT, pioneered by W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), sheds light on structural and institutionalized racism as they are entrenched in the minds of individuals, as well as

social practices and institutions. The way these structures function influences the construction of identities. CRT will help to explain how Native Americans are viewed in society, and what pressures and influencing forces exist in the process of internalizing Native American culture and how that influences the process in which native identity is formed. Du Bois (1903) contributed as a pioneer to Critical Race Theory by introducing the idea that race has real meaning, even if it is difficult to define.

Although the agreement of the existence of central tenets in critical race theory is contested, three main tenets emerge in the literature. They are “(a) racism is a normal occurrence in American society, (b) reality is socially constructed and alternative realities can be constructed through the practice of storytelling, and (c) a commitment to social justice and challenging the dominant ideology” (Delgado and Stefancic 2000, 2001; Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Yosso 2005 as cited by Eisen 2011).

These three tenets influence individuals and institutions in society, and help provide an explanatory framework for racism in educational experiences. Critical Race Theory began as Critical Legal Studies, which started as an analysis of racism against Blacks in the legal system. Davis (1989) illustrates this by stating that contemporary society views Black as incompetent, especially in the legal system. Eisen (2011) gives the example that if “an attorney was raised in the United States, he or she was most likely exposed to the prevalent negative stereotypes about Blacks from a very young age and would have assimilated these stereotypes into their world view” (25). These stereotypes permeate into the subconscious of this attorney and will influence their decisions (Davis 1989). This results in differential treatment based on the race of the defendant the attorney is representing.

Delgado and Stefancic (2000) posit that CRT begins with a number of basic understandings. One is that racism is “normal, not aberrant, in American society” (Delgado and Stefancic 2000:xvi). Racism is an embedded feature of current society, so it looks normal and natural to individuals in the culture. The first tenet of CRT is that “racism is a natural and normal occurrence in society” (Delgado and Stefancic 2000:xvi). This affects not only those whom racism oppresses, but also those who are oppressors. The way that CRT is constructed affects the way that all individuals in society understand themselves.

This subconscious internalization of racial differences highlights the second tenet of CRT, that “reality is socially constructed” (Delgado and Stefancic 2000, 2001; Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Yosso 2005 as cited by Eisen 2011). Social construction infers human interaction, which Lopez (1994) argues is the construction of race. Torres and Milun (1990) exemplified this in their analysis of the Mashpee Indian’s land claim suit *Mashpee Tribe v. Town of Mashpee*. For the Mashpee Indians to win this suit, they had to prove that they possessed the qualifications of a tribe. The legal system decreed that these qualifications were “racial purity, authoritarian leadership, and consistent territorial occupancy” (Torres and Milun 1990:634). Those in power socially constructed these tenets of ‘being a tribe’, which is hardly ever a member of a minority race. Those in power decreed that the Mashpee Indians did not qualify as a tribe, and therefore they lost their lawsuit. This lawsuit illuminates the social construction of race, as it is constantly changing. The legal system has the power to categorize racial groups and qualifications due to the current social climate.

Using the second tenet of CRT, storytelling can change the concepts of race and associated stereotypes (Bell 1988; Delgado 1989; Torres and Milun 1990). Storytelling enables the variance in the understanding of realities throughout individuals (Eisen 2011).

Storytelling permeates popular discourse and becomes central to society. Examples of these stories comprise of the “American Dream, meritocracy, colorblindness, and other stories that promote a neutral, unbiased approach to assessing various objects, events or individuals” (Eisen 2011:30). These stories enable individuals in society to internalize and accept the meanings of these stories as social facts.

### *Tribal Critical Race Theory*

Scholars in the field of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) will also help center in the research in a Native American setting. Brayboy (2006) outlines the basis of Tribal Critical Race Theory, which is a subset to Critical Race Theory. This theoretical framework “provides a way to address the complicated relationship between American Indians and the United States federal government” (Brayboy 2006:425). This framework is comprised of seven tenets:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups (Brayboy 2006:429)

These tenets and framework provide insight into the relationship that Native Americans have with the federal government, which has played a large role in the development of educational

systems catered to Native students. The primary tenet of TribalCrit is that “colonization is endemic to society” (Brayboy 2006:429). Brayboy (2006) defined colonization as European American thought, power structures and knowledge. Eurocentric thinkers dismissed Indigenous intelligence and have spent their lives attempting to colonize or civilize Native Americans to fit in line with the current ideology of power and success. For example, Smith (1999) discusses that governments rather than tribes or individuals have regulated Native identities. She writes,

Legislated identities which regulated who was an Indian and who was not...who had the correct fraction of blood quantum, who lived in the regulated spaces of reserves and communities, were all working out arbitrarily (but systematically), to serve the interests of the colonizing society (Smith 1999:22).

This illuminates the lack of control that Indigenous peoples had over the construction of their own identities. The second tenet of TribalCrit recognizes that the policies of the United States toward American Indians are rooted in “imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain” (Brayboy 2006:431). Brayboy (2006) believes that these procedures were fashioned in order allow White settlers to justify and legitimize their choices to steal lands from the Indigenous peoples who already occupied them, also known as “Manifest Destiny.” The next tenet explains that although Native Americans are both racialized and political/legal beings, they are rarely treated this way. The fourth tenet defines tribal autonomy as “the ability of communities and tribal nations to have control over existing land bases, natural resources, and tribal national boundaries” (Brayboy 2006:433). Brayboy (2006) defines self-determination as the power to define what happens with independence, rather than being required to ask approval from the United States. Lastly, self-identification is defined as the capability and validity for groups to describe themselves and to craft what it means to be Native American. These three terms are very important in TribalCrit because without

autonomy, native peoples are not in control of their lives and decisions made surrounding them.

The fifth tenet of Brayboy's (2006) TribalCrit centers on understanding concepts through an indigenous lens. This allows TribalCrit to move away from Eurocentric notions of knowledge, power and culture and toward indigenous ideas that have existed for thousands of years. Recognition that governmental and educational policies towards Native peoples have been "oriented toward a problematic goal of assimilation" (Brayboy 2006:436) is the sixth tenet. Historically, treaties emphasized that education "appropriate" for Indian students was to be provided. This outlines the dominant view that Native Americans were lesser humans and possessed a weaker intellect. Lastly, the seventh tenet emphasizes that a foundation in knowledge, power and culture, "beliefs, thoughts, philosophies, customs and tradition" (Brayboy 2006:437) of Native American communities and individuals allow the analysis of self-education, teaching practices and experiences of native peoples.

While CRT focuses on the fact that racism is a part of the societal fabric, TribalCrit argues that colonization is pervasive in society while also recognizing the part played by racism. TribalCrit also acts as a lens to acknowledge and tackle concerns facing Native communities currently. Some of these issues include "language shift and language loss, ... the lack of students graduating from colleges and universities, the overrepresentation of American Indians in special education, and power struggles between federal, state, and tribal governments" (Brayboy 2006:430). Tribal Critical Race Theory is designed to help understand the issues facing Indigenous Peoples in structural systems and institutions, especially in the instances of education, and figure out which strategies to implement to continue to improve these situations.

Jeanette Haynes Writer's (2008) "Unmasking, Exposing, and Confronting: Critical Race Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory and Multicultural Education" explains how colonization has manifested itself in the educational institutions on reservations. Haynes Writer (2008) argues that Tribal Critical Race Theory as an extension of Critical Race Theory offer the "possibility of unmasking, exposing, and confronting continued colonization within educational contexts and societal structures, thus transforming those contexts and structures for Indigenous Peoples" (Haynes Writer 2008:2). The transformation of these contexts serves as the backdrop to improving structural and educational experiences for indigenous peoples, thereby reducing covert and overt racism and structural forms of oppression.

Haynes Writer (2008) also helps to explain Multicultural Education, or MCE as a continuum, and the benefits it has for Native American Education. Haynes Writer helps weave a narrative of cultural curriculum and how native language and culture should be integrated into school systems in order to preserve native identity. Cultural inclusion eliminates the current trend of mainstream educational institutions where diversity is displayed as simply "a few festivals that celebrate the food, clothing, or dance of minorities" (Haynes Writer 2008:4). Cultural inclusion treats Indigenous Peoples as more than just a historical context or a chapter in a textbook, but as a thriving race that exists in contemporary society.

### *Identity*

Identity, branching off of Critical Race Theory and Tribal Critical Race Theory focuses on individual perceptions. Mead (1934) writes about the concepts of the self and the body, and how they are distinguished from each other. He explains that the body is a vehicle for the self

to develop and flourish. Mead (1934) argues that the existence of the self is “something which has a development; it is not initially there at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity” (Mead 1934:135). This connects back to the tenets of Critical Race Theory, and further illuminates that the self and its creation are a social experience and socially constructed (Eisen 2011). Mead’s (1934) argument and ideas bring the macro level concepts of CRT and TribalCrit to an individual level of identity, which is something that is influenced and internalized throughout an individual’s educational experiences.

W.E.B Du Bois (1903) adds to identity with his idea of double consciousness. Double consciousness is the ability for one to look at one’s self through the eyes of society, as well as those of other people. He argues that one places values on one’s self based on the view of others, and that people divide themselves into two souls. These souls operate in two different ways: one soul is the way which one views one’s self, and the other soul is the way that others view oneself. Du Bois (1903) states that “he simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face” (2-3). The bulk of Du Bois’ work centers on the Negro and African American experience, but his ideas can be applied outside of this category. Any race or ethnic group that is considered a minority experiences the idea of the double consciousness. The understanding of this concept can lead an acute awareness of the self and the unique prejudices and social responsibilities that non-whites experience.

Mark Lysne and Gary D. Levy (1997) focus on the lived experience of double conscious (Du Bois 1903) through their work on ethnic identity development. They explain that Native American adolescents living on a reservation and immersed in their culture are

forced to make harsh decisions: either continuing to maintain their traditional cultural practices or “pursuing more mainstream and modern cultural activities (e.g. attending college and leaving the reservation)” (Lysne and Levy 1997:374). To explore this decision making process, Lysne and Levy (1997) studied Native American adolescents attending schools with large Native American student bodies and Native American adolescents attending schools with large White student bodies. What they found was that students who attended schools with large Native American student populations were significantly more likely to engage in identity exploration and commitment than Native American adolescents attending predominantly White schools. This illuminates the idea that identity construction is influenced by school context, as well as the cultural upbringing of the individual. Identity is central to lived experiences, and education provides one of the most crucial molding experiences for students. It is in the education system that many individuals explore, negotiate and create their identities.

### *Education*

To explore the theme of decolonizing schools, Haynes Writer (2008) places emphasis on the importance of Multicultural education in teacher preparation programs to limit the stereotypes and inaccuracies taught in many classrooms throughout the United States. These findings will be used to examine a historical perspective of the education systems catered to Native American students. Julie Kaomea (2009) draws on examples of schools catered to Indigenous Peoples and the struggles and opposition they face. She explains that

Non-indigenous individuals backed by anti-affirmative action organizations are mobilizing civil rights legislation to demand equal access to, and ultimately dismantle, both federally and privately funded indigenous education programs and scholarships designed to reverse the negative effects of colonization and protect the

sovereignty, self-determination and culture of America's aboriginal people. (Kaomea 2009:111).

The struggles that these programs face further perpetuate the educational inequalities that exist for Native Americans and other Indigenous Peoples. Themes of colonization, such as "Indian culture [is] something to eradicate, not something to value" (Case 1971:130) still permeate mainstream classrooms, furthering subjecting Indigenous Peoples to ideas of a dissatisfactory identity. Roessel (1999) capitalized on this and mentions, "we [educational systems] have educated him [Native Americans] but have destroyed his soul in the process. Education can be a shattering experience when one is taught nothing but negative things about himself for 12 years" (Roessel 1999:1). This idea largely connects to the construction of identity. If mainstream educational experiences lead to a development of a marginalized identity, how does this effect one's perception of their "self"?

According to Brayboy's (2006) TribalCrit, education could provide a positive learning opportunity for Native American students to learn how to connect "Indigenous notions of culture, knowledge, and power with western/European conceptions in order to actively engage in survivance, self-determination, and tribal autonomy" (437). This would give Native Americans insight into the dominant white ideology while still keeping in line with their Native identity, culture and heritage.

The history of Native American colonization points to the long-standing history of oppression and repression of Indigenous Peoples. Colonization and its following discourses led to the creation of Critical Race Theory and Tribal Critical Race Theory. These theories draw on everyday lived experiences of marginalized people to help highlight inequalities and provide solutions to fix disparities. Identity is at the core of each individual person and it is highly influenced by individuals' surroundings and environment. The education system can

perpetuate inequalities and injustices, which can negatively shape the identities of the individuals involved in these systems. The disparity between an individual's ethnic identity based on the student body make up leads to the question of how Native American individuals' identity formation and negotiation is affected by educational experiences.

## METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative analysis was implemented. These methods illuminated the experiences that the participants had in the various educational systems they attended, and then gradually moved on to identity construction and formation. The topics discussed illuminated which educational experiences best fostered a sense of native identity, and how Native American languages and cultures were portrayed in different school systems. Ethnic identity is not static, so it is difficult to measure using a survey based methodology. I used a lens of Critical Race Theory through the use of semi-structured interviews with members of Native American tribes throughout the United States, preceded by a brief survey using a scale that measures ethnic identity, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R). Critical Race Theory illuminates life histories and elucidates patterns of daily behavior (Silverman and Marvasti 2008). Semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to explore their histories, identities and their emotional intricacies through reflection (Kvale and Brinkman 2009).

### *Sampling*

The investigator interviewed seven Native American adults who had attended school either on or off a reservation. These broad criteria aided in gaining an understanding of experiences from individuals throughout the history of the Native Americans in the education system. These individuals were recruited for the study because they will be able to look retrospectively at their educational experiences.

In addition to having educational experiences, participants were also required to be between the ages of 18 and 80. This broad age range helped the researcher understand the

educational experiences of Native American individuals throughout the course of history, therefore lending itself to a more broad and in-depth project.

The sample was recruited using snowball sampling, which is a method that enables the researcher to access stigmatized populations through referrals and social networks (Beirnacki and Waldorf 1981). Recruitment began with the researcher's personal and professional contacts. When some of these initial contacts did not agree to participate in the study, they were asked to recommend other persons, who might be willing to participate in the study. The researcher then recruited those recommended individuals for the study.

Data collection included seven semi-structured interviews. These interviews took place between February 2014 and March 2014. The participants were comprised of three male and four female Native American individuals who were at least 18 years of age. These interviews were conducted with individuals from a variety of ages to see the different experiences in the educational system throughout the last 50 years. Research continued until the researcher reached a saturation point (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). After a certain number of interviews, major trends begin to recur, and outlying or secondary themes emerge. At this point, it became unnecessary to continue the recruitment and interview processes.

#### *Data Collection*

Once IRB approval was attained (see Appendix D), participants were contacted and sent a copy of the Informed Consent form (see Appendix A). The participants were required to read and sign this form before an interview could begin. The participants were encouraged to voice any questions or concerns to the researcher with the contact information provided. Individuals who were able to meet in person received an additional copy of the form at the scheduled interview to read and sign. Participants involved in phone interviews were emailed

a copy of the consent form, and were required to sign it electronically and return it to the researcher before an interview and the screening survey could begin.

*MEIM – The Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure*

The screening tool employed in the screening survey prior to the interview is a commonly used ethnic identity measure, MEIM - Multi-Group Ethnicity Identity measure. This measure was used to help the researcher understand each participant's commitment and exploration of a Native American identity (Phinney 1992). This scale was first created in 1992, but after a large-scale study and research, Phinney and Ong (2007) reassessed the MEIM, renaming it the MEIM-R. This narrowed the scope of the scale from fourteen questions down to six. The six items are as follows:

1. I have spent time trying to find out about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs.
2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group.
3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.
5. I have often talked to other people to learn more about my ethnic group.
6. I feel a strong attachment toward my own ethnic group (Phinney and Ong 2007).

Each of these six items is answered on a scale, with four different answers. Respondents can select one of the following options: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

This study focuses on the development and negotiation of identity based on educational experiences, so the MEIM-R is used to help the researcher understand the respondent's current view and identification with their identity. This will help the researcher develop a baseline for identity during the interview. The MEIM-R has been used in other studies centering on Native American Identity (Schweigman 2011; Pittenger 1999; Brooks 2000; Reynolds 2009; Pitts 1988), which gives it credibility and context within the nature of this study.

*Interviews*

After the initial screening scale is reviewed, the participants were contacted to schedule an interview. The researcher and the participant agreed on a time and location that were convenient for both parties. Once at the interview, the researcher reviewed the procedures of the study and answered any questions concerning the informed consent form. The participants read and signed the consent form at this time, unless the participant was involved in a phone interview. In the case of a phone interview, the participant emailed the electronically signed consent form to the researcher before the interview began. Participants were reminded that their interview would be audio recorded and that in the process of transcribing; all identifiable information would be erased in order to ensure confidentiality. The participant was then asked again if they had any question before the interview began.

Interviews were the primary methodology used in this study to allow participants to share their life histories, which is a tenet highlighted by Critical Race Theory. Interviews allowed the researcher to ask in depth questions about the participant's lives and identities, which in turn helped the researcher understand formation of a native identity in relation to educational experiences.

The interviews lasted anywhere from 30-100 minutes. The interviews addressed the extensive topics of (a) educational experiences, (b) identity formation, (c) what it means to be a Native American, (d) similarities and differences in educational experiences within their families. These interview questions can be found in Appendix B. Each interview was semi-structured, allowing the researcher to gain a thorough experience and understanding of Native American identity formation in relation to educational experiences.

These interviews explored the experiences that the participants had in the various educational systems they attended, then gradually moved the focus of the interview onto identity construction and formation. The topics discussed illuminated which educational experiences best fostered a sense of native identity, and how Native American languages and cultures were portrayed in different school systems. The aim of these questions was to understand the relationship between educational experiences and identity, and how Native American culture and language fits within this connection.

### *Description of the Sample*

All participants were found through snowball and convenience sampling. All participants were recruited after receiving Institutional Review Board Approval. I started each interview asking the participants about how they identify themselves and attempted to touch on their background a little to ease them into the interview process. By allowing the participants to choose where to hold the interviews, I was able to enhance their comfort and sense of privacy.

The first participant, John, is a man who lived in a rural part of Oregon for the majority of his upbringing. We met at a coffee shop, where we were not granted much privacy, but were able to converse for about 45 minutes. John had a mother who identified as white and a father who identified as being Native American. John chose to solely identify with his Native American heritage. Although he was very connected with his heritage and cultural ties to his tribe through his father, he attended the same public school system for his entire education. The student body at this school was largely white. John mentioned that he was the only individual that identified as Native American in his grade.

The second participant, Brianna, is a woman who was born in Oregon, but lived in Washington, Hawaii, Nevada and Idaho before settling back in Oregon. Brianna mentioned that her constant movement as a child with her mother made it hard to hold onto her Native roots. The interview took place over the phone and lasted around 45 minutes. Brianna had a mother who identified as Native American and a father who identified as being white. Brianna also chose solely to identify within her Native American heritage, even though her parents are divorced and she lives with her father. Brianna attended both on-reservation schools and off-reservation public schools.

The third participant, Leah, is a woman who was born in Washington, but has lived in Oregon for the majority of her life. Leah grew up very connected to her roots, as her parents were active participants in their tribes. We met in a sunny courtyard on Pacific's campus, and talked for about an hour. Both of Leah's parents identify as Native American, of different tribes. Leah is very involved within her Native community and has always known and appreciated the importance of her Indigenous heritage. Leah went to an on-reservation school for early elementary, and then when her family moved to Oregon she attended an off-reservation public school.

Sharlene was the fourth participant. She is originally from Alaska, but spent most of her upbringing in rural Oregon. Sharlene's parents were heavily involved in their tribe, and were regarded as one of the "head families" within it. We conversed in a secluded office on Pacific's campus, to grant Sharlene the privacy she requested. We talked for about an hour. Both of Sharlene's parents identify as Native American, and Sharlene has always felt very connected to her community and her culture because of her parents. Sharlene attended public school through eighth grade, but spoke of the hardships and racism she encountered in that

environment. Because of this, she decided to attend an off-reservation boarding school for her high school years.

The fifth participant was Benjamin. He grew up in rural Oregon, living in the same town until he moved further west for university. Benjamin and I talked in a secluded office on Pacific University's campus. We talked for a little under an hour. Benjamin's mother identifies as Native American, and his father identifies as white, of Irish descent. Benjamin identifies primarily as Native American, unless he is in the context of his father's family. He was constantly assumed to be white because of his skin pigmentation, so asserting his Native identity has always been something of importance to him.

The sixth participant was Sasha. Sasha grew up on the Navajo Nation, and continues to live there now. Sasha and I talked over the phone, for around 45 minutes. Sasha identifies as Native American, and all her relatives and children do also. Sasha is a medicine woman in the health services in her community, and she spoke constantly of the interlinked concepts of health and identity. Sasha is passionate about her culture and heritage, and remarked that younger people were increasingly less likely to participate in traditional medicine and ceremonies, instead preferring more "white" activities and ideologies.

The seventh participant was Douglas. Douglas also grew up on the Navajo reservation, but moved to Oregon in his adulthood. We talked over the phone for around forty-five minutes. Douglas also identified strongly with his heritage and culture, but spoke of the disconnect he experienced between himself living in Oregon and his family living in the Navajo Nation. He never realized how hard it was to maintain the ties he had with his culture until he moved to Oregon and was no longer surrounded by many people who identified as culturally similar to him.

Figure 1: Participant Information

<b><u>Pseudonym:</u></b>	<b><u>MEIM-R Score:</u></b>	<b><u>Type of school(s) attended:</u></b>
John	3.83	Off-reservation public school
Brianna	3.58	On-reservation school, off-reservation public school
Leah	3.58	On-reservation school, off-reservation public school
Sharlene	3.83	Off-reservation public school, off-reservation boarding school
Benjamin	3.41	On-reservation school, off-reservation public school
Sasha	3.66	On-reservation school
Douglas	3.33	On-reservation school

### *Data Analysis*

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. All information that could identify the participants was removed from the transcripts. After transcribing was completed, the researcher began the coding process. Following the suggestion of Charmaz (2006), multiple layers of coding occurred during analysis. The initial coding phase consisted of line-by-line coding. This allowed the researcher to focus on single lines of code, which are often not complete thoughts (Strauss and Corbin 1998). This first level allowed the researcher to make observations and analyses of themes that arise.

The second level of coding was more specific. The researcher took the codes generated in the first round and applied them to the themes of the interview topics: (a) educational experiences, (b) identity formation, (c) what it means to be a Native American, (d) similarities and differences in educational experiences within their families.

A critical race and identity theory approach to data analysis allowed the categories and theoretical conceptualizations presented to emerge from the data and reflect the participants' ideas about what it means to be native American in relation to educational experiences. Interviews were transcribed and coded as data collection continued. Through coding, the researcher hoped to gain a thorough understanding of these topics and analyzed the trends that emerged. Through coding, the research question for this project developed into "What factors influence Native American identity formation?"

After two rounds of coding, six themes emerged from the interviews. These six themes are: family, elementary education, teacher perception, language, school type (on reservation schools, off reservation boarding schools, off reservation public schools) and perceived whiteness. These themes helped to define the experiences of the participants and contextualize their identity constructions in the broader context of society. These themes are explored and explained in the following section.

## RESULTS

### *MEIM-R*

The purpose of the MEIM-R screening measure was to analyze the level of identity commitment and sense of belonging that participants had. This measure was used as a baseline to help analyze the interviews. When scoring the MEIM-R results, the mean is taken. Each of the six items on the scale is answered on a 1-4 scale. The mean of the participants' scores was 3.601, meaning that overall, participants were highly committed to their ethnic identity, and felt a sense of belonging. The mean of 3.601 places the participants between the 3 "agree," and 4 "strongly agree," noting that there is a high self-reported sense of belonging and identity commitment.

### *Family*

A person's family is known to have a weighty developmental impact on an individual's identity development. Family is typically the most constant source of information in an individual's life, especially in their school age years. After coding the interview data, family was the first major theme that emerged. Overall, family was the most prevalent theme throughout all the interviews. Each participant mentioned this theme in some capacity, and it was a vein that ran through each participant's story. When participants were asked the question "What does it mean to you to be Native American?" participants responded with answers like "It's something I'm proud of because of the people who are a part of it" (Benjamin March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014) and "My family is my tribe, my tribe is my family... they're the most important thing to me" (Sharlene February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014). From these two responses, it is apparent that family was one of the first thoughts in the participant's mind when asked a question that seemingly reflects their ethnic identity. It is seemingly black and white – one

has their racial identity, their ethnic identity and their cultural identity. But what happens when all of these are combined into one understanding of the word “identity”? It challenges the traditionally Eurocentric concept by redefining the meanings of the term.

For the participants in this study, both men and women, identity meant a strong connection with the people in your family. John mentioned, “I feel proud to be a part of it, and the people who are a part of it” (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014) and Sasha stated, “everyone is very prideful” (March 15<sup>th</sup> 2014). Pride was a common emotion associated in familial discourse around identity. This strong sense of pride and investment into their identity and heritage led participants to regard the familial perception of Native Identity as very important. When their parents throughout their lives educated participants, they took these stories, thoughts, and opinions as a factual basis for identity construction. For example, Leah stated that “For me, when I think of my ethnicity and why I’m proud... it’s because we were here first... my ancestors fought for our rights... and it’s because my family continues those traditions” (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). When Leah, spoke of this informal education that was relayed to her during her childhood and adolescence, she regarded her parents’ words highly. Her parents are both active members of their respective tribal communities, and have had influential roles in the futures of their tribes. Even though Leah mentioned later in the interview that she was often told by her peers and teachers that her tribe did not exist because of its federal recognition status, she affirmed that although those words and negative assumptions were hurtful, they were not the primary factor in how she felt about her ethnic identity. Leah explains: “My father is \_\_\_\_\_, so I couldn’t just say I wasn’t part of that tribe, even though my teachers told me it did not exist... because that’s my father’s tribe” (February 21<sup>st</sup> 2014). She also goes on to remark, “My family told me that I do exist and that my tribe does exist,

and that's something to be proud of" (Leah February 21<sup>st</sup> 2014). Again, this refers back to the strong influence of family on an individual's identity formation. Even though Leah's teachers tried to discount her identity, the fact that her family was strongly invested and proud of it was the determining factor in the development of pride in her identity instead of shame.

As is illuminated in Leah's example, when participants were educated by their parents that their identity and heritage were important, they believed that in accordance with or contrary to what they heard in the school system. If an individual's family discussed Native American history and heritage in a positive light, that person would internalize those beliefs, even if the educational system displayed contradictory views. This highlights the strength of a familial identity. Thus, if the importance of Native American Identity was stressed within a familial context, it was likely to override negative images; stereotypes and perceptions taught in the school setting or affirm positive images and perceptions that were taught in the school setting.

Building off of the individualized experiences of identity formation and construction is the methodology in which students were educated about their cultural heritage. When the term "family" is mentioned in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "a group of people who are related to each other" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2013). This assumes that in order to be a 'family,' there must be biological relation. However, the participants in this study discount this Eurocentric notion. John noted, "most of the cultural education I had came from the reservation... that's my family" (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014). John redefines the Eurocentric 'nuclear family' to include every individual on the reservation, as they share a common cultural and lived experience to him. Sharlene comments that "I have a lot of family that lives on the reservation... it's just a culture and community within itself" (February 28<sup>th</sup>

2014) honing in on the importance of lived experience and culture on the understanding and development of an identity. History is not black and white, but instead consists of a myriad of narratives and stories that uniquely reflect the experiences of one's ancestors and families. Douglas adds, "you get it [education and stories about your culture] more from the community than your schooling" (March 19<sup>th</sup> 2014), which contributes to the discussion that a cultural and ethnic identity can not be accurately formed without the input and advising of a community of individuals. In turn, this familial background influenced narrative becomes a precursor to understanding and negotiating identity formation in relation to educational experiences.

### *Elementary Education*

Building off of the foundation of familial stories as the common theme in identity formation, it is important to look at the impacts of the school systems as well. Elementary Education seemed to be the most formative time for participants to receive information about their identity and internalize it – especially if this information was negative. Participants were asked the question "was information about your tribe or other tribes ever presented in class"? Leah responded by saying that "We learned about my tribe... by my teachers kept saying that they didn't exist anymore" (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). Leah internalized the concept of no longer existing as negative, and it took her a while in order to change her mindset. It took Leah many years to be able to fully rid her conception of her identity of these negative views. She adds, "as I grew older I realized the information presented to me was wrong, and that I didn't exist and we did exist... even though my teachers and the people at Fort \_\_\_\_\_ kept telling me otherwise" (Leah February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). When children are elementary school aged, they are still in the process of forming their identity and personality. This means that during

this time period, individuals are more susceptible to internalizing outside influences in regards to their identity formation. (Cooper 1983) Overall, when participants were presented with concepts of their identities in a negative light early on in their schooling, they were more likely to adopt these beliefs as truth.

Many participants echoed Leah's views, by adding experiences like "I just took everything the teacher said seriously" (Brianna February 20<sup>th</sup> 2014). Especially when these views were negative, the adoption of teacher's perceptions had a profoundly negative impact on an individuals forming of a positive ethnic and cultural identity. Although the intention of the teacher may not have been malicious, seemingly harmless 'facts' like saying that a tribe no longer exists, which teachers pull from history textbooks, can affect their students more than they may realize. Leah is not alone in her story. Brianna also echoed Leah's views by saying that "a lot of times I heard that we didn't exist, and I just took that like... I guess offensively" (February 20<sup>th</sup> 2014). Although the teacher's intentions may not have been to offend Brianna or discount her experience as a member of that tribe, these comments, especially when heard as a younger child, had a strong impact on the individual views of their own identity.

Sharlene adds to the conversation surrounding the impact of information received in her elementary years by stating that "people were just ignorant, more than anything" (February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014). This level of ignorance, especially from teachers, strongly impacted the way that the participants chose to identify themselves. Leah remarked, "it's impacted me to more often say that I'm \_\_\_\_\_, because that tribe is more well known" (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). Leah's family provided her with information and stories about both of her tribal lineages, histories and backgrounds, but after hearing in elementary school that her father's tribe did

not exist, she chose to identify solely with her mother's tribe. Her mother's tribe was bigger and better known within the area Leah lived in. For the majority of her elementary school aged years, Leah identified solely as her mother's tribe. She said that it took her until high school with lots of information and stories from her father and the education of teachers that her tribe in fact, did exist, for Leah to be able to feel comfortable and proud to identify as her father's tribe. Overall, information presented in the elementary classroom setting had a profound impact on the way that participants chose to identify in their early childhood and adolescence. The way that teachers presented information about history, culture and identity had the strongest impact on students, which will be further elaborated on in the following section.

### *Teacher Perception*

Teacher perception, building off the theme of elementary education, includes the way that students are taught about information surrounding history or culture. In the case of this study, teacher perception is the way that information about Native American culture and history is presented in a classroom setting. When asking participants what kind of information they received surrounding Native American individuals in their schooling, most participants reflected the same themes. Brianna mentioned that they had learned a lot about the Trail of Tears in fourth grade, something that was echoed by all other participants. Overall, most participants received the same subject matter in schooling, but the discourse that surrounded it differed on the teachers' perception.

This connects back to the idea of storytelling, which was introduced in the familial setting. The discourse that surrounded the Trail of Tears depended on the actual teacher presenting the information. Many uninformed teachers adopted the Eurocentric lens, focusing

on the colonization discourse, displaying Native Americans as individuals who needed to be conquered and controlled. John declared that “it just felt like the teachers were saying, yeah, we [Native Americans] got colonized” (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014). These teachers also perpetuated the idea that colonization is a necessary evil in the development of a country. Douglas mentioned that “the teachers were uninformed... their comments were insulting” (March 19<sup>th</sup> 2014). Reflecting back on the elementary education section, it is important to note that many of these teachers, according to the participants, did not have malicious intentions when sharing this knowledge with the class. These teachers were just sharing the knowledge they had learned when going through the educational system, displaying the dominant ideology of times 20-50 years in the past. Sharlene echoes this, stating that “it is history, and we should have to learn about it the right way, not their way” (February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014). This reflects the storytelling nature of history, and because textbooks are written from one Eurocentric story, most school age children do not hear the variety of other stories and narratives that exist surrounding this topic. Leah added, “it [history from a Eurocentric lens] was just a fact when I was younger... but no one should have to deal with other people’s lack of knowledge” (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). This again comes back to the importance of sharing a variety of stories and different narratives in order to combat this perceived lack of knowledge.

Relevancy to curriculum and society was another topic mentioned by participants. Leah felt that “teachers didn’t care because they didn’t know who we [my tribe] were” (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). Leah was made to feel by her teachers that her specific lineage and history was not of value to learn about in the classroom setting. Other participants like Sharlene shared that “their comments could be taken as insulting... but nobody knows... unless you live closer to a reservation, you don’t know a lot of those things” (February 28<sup>th</sup>

2014). Benjamin felt that since there were not a lot of Native Americans in his school or grade, his teachers did not see the importance of adopting any sort of culturally responsive curriculum or teaching practices. Sharlene concluded her story about her educational experiences growing up with the comment, “because it is history, we should have to learn that the right way” (February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014). The word ‘right’ evokes the idea that the way history is currently being taught is the ‘wrong’ way. Sharlene acknowledged that the historical education she received came from this dominant Eurocentric narrative, with a heavy focus on the colonial discourse. The ‘right’ way to teach Native American history is through an indigenous lens, pulling from the narratives that many participants learned from their family and community while growing up. The impact that each teacher’s perception had on the way they taught lessons on Native American history, culture and heritage was influential on participants’ identity construction. Delving deeper into the concept of teacher perception unveils the idea of how language used in the school system and the community affects identity formation and perception.

### *Language*

Language in social and school settings was another theme among participants when talking about their identity formation. The language that teachers/family members used when talking about Native American history and identity had a large influence on the way the participants internalized the information. Phrases like “those natives” or “those people” generally were associated with a negative connotation. Phrases like “Native Americans,” “Indigenous Peoples,” or using the names of specific tribes with correct pronunciation were generally associated with a positive connotation. In addition, the use of stereotypical language also had a negative connotation, much like it does in relation to a teacher’s presentation of Native

American history. If a teacher uses stereotypical language when teaching about history of indigenous peoples, participants were likely to be offended and have a negative perception towards whoever perpetuated those stereotypes.

Many participants were hounded with offensive stereotypes from their peers and other individuals they encountered in society. John recalls constantly hearing “all of those Natives sit in casinos and gamble away their money” (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014). This offended him, as his relatives and other Native American individuals he held in high regard worked steady jobs and have nothing to do with the casino lifestyle. John felt that characterizing an entire group of people under one stereotype was very narrow minded. Brianna said she constantly heard people say: “Native Americans are slobs, Native Americans are drunks” (February 20<sup>th</sup> 2014). Hearing these negative stereotypes constantly made Brianna struggle with the disconnect she saw. She expressed her frustration, proclaiming that “people assume we’re all the same - but people would never assume that all white people are all the same” (February 20<sup>th</sup> 2014). This double standard provides an insight into the uninformed state of many individuals about Native Americans. Leah echoed these insights with some of the comments she received, like “do you live in teepees?” (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014) and “oh, you’re Native? Make it rain” (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014) which she found to highlight how uneducated some individuals are. Sasha said she heard “oh Natives don’t go to college” (March 15<sup>th</sup> 2014) constantly when she was growing up. This blanket stereotype hit Sasha hard, and she elaborated, saying that she felt she had to prove herself by getting into college, because so many people did not expect her to be able to do so because of her ethnic identity.

*School Type:*

The participants in this study attended a variety of schools that can be categorized into three types: On-reservation schools, off-reservation boarding schools and off-reservation public schools. On-reservation schools are schools on Native American reservations funded by the tribe or the federal government. Teachers and students at these schools are most often of Native American heritage. Off-reservation boarding schools are usually private schools catered specifically to students of Native American heritage – this type of school was originally created to educate the “savage Indians.” Now, after a lengthy reform, these schools have come to be regarded as prestigious and viewed as a better quality of education than what students could receive on a reservation. Off-reservation public schools are public schools not on a Native American reservation, open to all students. In the experience of the participants in this study, these off-reservation public schools were predominantly white in regards to the student body population.

*On-reservation schools.* Around 25 percent of the participants in this study attended an on-reservation school for either all or part of their schooling. Participants who went to school on a reservation remarked that there was not a heavy focus on Native American identity within these schools because the majority of the students at these schools were from the same ethnic/racial background. Benjamin spoke of this idea, stating that “it [my identity] means more now to me, because in high school everyone was so used to it, so it didn’t really mean anything” (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). He found that because everyone who attended his school identified similarly, he never really learned anything about his identity at school. He furthered this thought by saying, “we never really talked about being Native American for a significant amount of time in class” (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). Sasha agreed with Benjamin, noting

that “as a Native American, I never felt different... being Native wasn’t a big deal to me” (March 15<sup>th</sup> 2014). Douglas articulated the idea of the communal identity, expressing “the school didn’t talk about it as much... because you know where everyone came from” (March 19<sup>th</sup> 2014). Douglas reinforces the idea that cultural curriculum was not often implemented in on reservation boarding schools because of the populations. As participants stated earlier, family is the primary resource for identity formation. These schools seem to have recognized that, and have strayed from cultural curriculum with the idea that the need is already being met in the community.

Benjamin remarked that “we didn’t have any classes on Native American studies” (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014) and “the biggest negative is that coming out of high school and k-12, Native American history and culture wasn’t addressed” (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). In short, culturally based curriculum simply was not present in on-reservation schools. Douglas articulated that “my identity... it was kind of an afterthought” (March 19<sup>th</sup> 2014), because of the lack of discussion around it in the school system. Douglas mentioned that he never had to really think about his Native American identity because individuals who identified as non-Native American never surrounded him. Affirming the possible motivation in the school system, Douglas recounts “all the information I received came from my family or the community” (March 19<sup>th</sup> 2014). Once Douglas graduated from high school on the reservation, he eventually attended college outside of the reservation. Once there he began to notice just how infrequently he had learned about his identity and heritage within the school system. “It [identity] was never really talked about... which I kind of learned more in school [in college]” (March 19<sup>th</sup> 2014). Douglas felt that the school he attended could have done more to educate its students on identity, although he received what he deemed to be an adequate

amount of information from his family members and the greater community through storytelling.

*Off-reservation boarding schools.* Off-reservation boarding schools were attended by roughly 15 percent of participants in this study. Typically these schools were regarded as prestigious, and students were required to apply to attend, and sometimes pay tuition. These schools had a heavy focus on students achieving higher education. Students were required to take classes in the discipline of Native American Studies and even take special topics classes on specific tribes within the area. The participants in this study that attended off-reservation boarding schools felt that they were very holistically educated about Native American history, culture and identity. Sharlene expressed that “you can be who you are - because everyone has a story, everyone came to that school for a reason... It was just like being home” (February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014). Students were encouraged to share stories, traditions and histories from their own tribes with the greater school community. Sharlene communicated that many people who attend these off-reservation boarding schools are highly invested in their education and their connection to their Native American identity. She recounts “it’s your choice to go there, to get away from the drugs and the alcohol on the rez” (Sharlene February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014).

Students attending boarding schools were self motivated or encouraged by their families to leave the reservation if they wanted to achieve higher education. Overall, off-reservation boarding schools intentionally educated students on their ethnic identity through curriculum and activities. Sharlene felt that she learned more about Native Americans as a whole attending a boarding school, because “although everyone is Native, not everyone is from the same tribe” (February 28<sup>th</sup> 2014). These students were able to express and explore

their individual identities while also contributing to the idea of a communal Native American identity.

*Off-reservation public schools.* Off-reservation public schools were the most commonly attended by the participants. Around 75 percent of participants had spent some of their school aged years in a public school setting. The schools that these participants attended were largely white, with Native American being an obvious minority. Many of these participants were the only individuals of Native American heritage at their school, so they felt that at times that they were the token minority. This label of token minority meant that students were asked to speak on behalf of Native Americans as a whole, which is an impossible task. John proclaimed, “just because I’m Native American they assumed I knew everything about all Native Americans” (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014). It is impossible to speak on behalf of any one group of people, as individual lived experiences and identities are widely varied. Many participants shared stories of being a minority at their school. Benjamin said, “I’m the only Native to make fun of” (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014), Leah mentioned, “I was one of two in my grade that identified as being Native American” (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014) and John stated, “oh yeah, I was called on as the token Native kid all the time” (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014). Brianna noted, “other students didn’t know anything about my culture” (February 20<sup>th</sup> 2014). These participants accepted and internalized the role of the token minority within their educational settings.

Benjamin shared a story about how his school was attempting to be more culturally responsive because of its proximity to a reservation by adding a “Native American Studies” class. He talked about how this class “was kind of like an after thought, like, oh, we should

probably have this class, just in case” (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). He felt that was another perpetuation of Eurocentric education. His school added a class in order to teach students about Native American history and culture, but the class was taught from a Eurocentric perspective. This seemed to negate the entire purpose of the class. Instead, Benjamin proposed that, “I think there needs to be more intermixing at an early age, so Native American kids don’t feel out of place” (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). This can be applied to all minority groups, in order to instill a sense of positive community and belonging within a school. Reframing the focus on similarities instead of differences and highlighting the importance of a variety of stories within the educational system could help to diminish the current lack of belonging for Native American students in off reservation public schools.

However, participants mentioned that there was also a positive side to being one of few Native Americans at their school. John stated, “if I went to a school with all Native Americans I wouldn’t be able to be proud of my ethnicity and who I am. This way [going to an off-reservation school] I got to talk about my ethnicity more... I was one of a kind” (February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014). Here John is acknowledging the power that comes with the label of the token minority, and how to use that to his advantage. Throughout the interviews with participants who attended off reservation public schools, it became apparent that talking about their ethnic identity was a constant happening. This is opposite to participants who attended an on-reservation school stated. There were so few Native Americans, so participants would have to speak on behalf of their entire ethnic identity.

*Perceived Whiteness*

This last theme builds off some of the ideas associated with the token minority that participants encountered at off-reservation public schools. Who is called to be the token? It's not about who represents or portrays the culture, it's the way that a person looks, which allows race to play a big role. With the idea of the token minority comes stereotypical characteristics. For instance, to identify someone as Native American, stereotypically they need to dress a certain way, talk a certain way, and have a certain color of skin. This is problematic, as it takes away the personal aspect of ethnic identity, and individuals do not get to identify themselves the way they want. Leah mentioned that there was another student who identified as Native American at her school, and "he looked full [Native American] so people would always ask him questions instead of me" (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). She added "if it was both of us [in a room], they would ask him first... even though he didn't know anything about his ancestry" (Leah February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). In order to receive the label of Native American, all Leah's classmate had to do was have the 'right' color of skin. Leah's skin was lighter than the stereotypical Native American, so she found that "people just always assume I'm white" (February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). This assumption made her more aware of her identity, and she felt that she constantly had to assert her Native American identity in order for people to stop assuming that she was white.

'Whiteness' can protect someone from the label of 'token minority,' but at the same time it denies him or her their ethnic background and heritage. However, the societal pressures at a school where Leah was one of two Native American students and the pressure to be like everybody else "influenced me to identify with the whiter side of me... but as I grew up and was with more Native Americans I've learned to identify that way too"

(February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014). Again, this reflects back to the importance of encouraging students to develop their identity of their own accord at an early age. By assuming that Leah was white, her peers and teachers in elementary school inadvertently discouraged her from identifying as Native American. This is problematic as it allows society to affix an ethnic identity to someone, rather than an individual choosing to identify of his or her own accord.

Benjamin echoed the thoughts of Leah, adding that there was another female student of Native American heritage at his high school. He stated, “just because she looked more [Native American] didn’t mean she knew more” (Benjamin March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). He noticed that skin pigmentation played a large role in how his peers identified someone. He reflected, stating, “I was always thought of as another white person because I’m not as dark as most [Native Americans]” (Benjamin March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). He became exempt from the label of token minority, but was also denied his identity as a Native American. Benjamin felt that he constantly had to assert his Native American identity in conversations about race, because of the assumptions he faced. He mentioned, “so if people ask me [about my ethnicity] I’m quick to say I’m Native American, because I don’t want them to assume I’m white” (Benjamin March 1<sup>st</sup> 2014). Benjamin articulated that it was exhausting to have to constantly assert your identity. He felt that his darker classmates did not have this problem, because their appearance fit inside the stereotypical image of the ‘token Native American.’ Luckily, he stated, his family instilled him with a sense of pride in his heritage and now enjoys being able to dispel myths about Native Americans in contemporary society.

## DISCUSSION

Results of this study were not necessarily consistent with previous literature surrounding the topic of Native American identity formation in relation to educational experiences. First, Mark Lysne and Gary D. Levy (1997) studied Native American adolescents attending schools with a large Native American student bodies and Native American adolescents attending schools with large White student bodies. What they found was that students who attended schools with large Native American student populations were significantly more likely to engage in identity exploration and commitment than Native American adolescents attending predominantly White schools.

However, this study yields slightly differing results. Participants noted the importance of family in identity formation, which overwrote the pretext of a school setting. Students who attended schools with a predominantly Native American population remarked that there was an absence of cultural curriculum or focus on Native American history or identity within the actual classroom setting. However, these schools with a high Native American student population were most commonly on reservations, leading students to have a strong connection to their family and community. This family and community piece encouraged the most identity exploration for the study's participants who attended on-reservation schools.

Students who attended off-reservation boarding schools had a slightly different experience. These schools often had a private funding component, stemming from tuition or private donors to the institution. These schools were more often regarded as prestigious, and had a more culturally inclusive curriculum. Participants who attended an off reservation boarding school for all or part of their schooling reported that they felt very connected to

their culture and history through the classes that were required for all students. These results correlate more positively with Lysne and Levy's (1997) findings.

Lastly, students who attended off-reservation public schools, which had a predominately Caucasian student population, remarked that although they were constantly put in the position of a token minority (a term that typically has negative connotations), this position forced students to learn about their identity and immerse themselves in their communities in order to respond to all the questions asked by their teachers and peers. This led students to explore and engage in their identity, which led them to having higher levels of ethnic identity commitment and a sense of belonging. This is evidenced in the MEIM-R scores discussed in the results section.

The MEIM-R results of participants were very strongly positive. Most participants only used the scores of 3 "agree" and 4 "strongly agree" when answering the statements about their commitment to their ethnic identity. These scores reveal that participants are highly invested and attached to their identities. This positive sample could have influenced the results of this study in some capacity. The sample would need to be larger in order to run more significant tests and correlations surrounding the MEIM-R scale. This largely positive sample could be representative of the broader population, which would further support the hypothesis that regardless of school setting, individuals will develop their ethnic identity through conversations and story telling within their families and the broader community.

Storytelling is one of the central tenets of Critical Race Theory, pioneered by W.E.B DuBois (1903). The second tenet of CRT reads, "reality is socially constructed and alternative realities can be constructed through the practice of storytelling" (Delgado and Stefancic 2000, 2001; Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Yosso 2005). The importance of

storytelling and acknowledging the multitude of narratives that exist is critical in order for individuals to form an identity. Identity has many parallels to the Critical Race Theory, including Mead's (1934) definition of the self. The self is defined as something that "arises in the process of social experience and activity" (Mead 1934: 135). Both CRT and identity are the process of social experience, and are socially constructed. When CRT and identity are applied to the field of education, it becomes clear that Native American identity is too fluid an experience to be defined in black and white terms.

Multicultural and culturally responsive education connects to this idea of quantifying identity. In the current education system, different cultures are presented in a very generalized way, with no acknowledgement of the different types of experiences that exist outside of the generalized identity. This glossing over of subject material is impactful especially on students in their elementary experience. When the concept of Native Americans is introduced in the current education system, it is often a brief presentation of dates and facts. By simply giving a timeline, it is impossible to assert that education is multicultural or culturally responsive. Culturally responsive and multicultural education eliminates the current trend of mainstream educational institutions where diversity is displayed as simply "a few festivals that celebrate the food, clothing, or dance of minorities" (Haynes Writer 2008: 399). Instead, its purpose is to acknowledge the merit in understanding and celebrating the processes of storytelling and learning about a wide variety of experiences under the same historical context.

According to Brayboy's (2006) TribalCrit, education could provide a positive learning opportunity for Native American students to learn how to connect "Indigenous notions of culture, knowledge, and power with western/European conceptions in order to

actively engage in survivance, self-determination, and tribal autonomy” (437). This would give Native Americans insight into the dominant white ideology while still keeping in line with their Native identity, culture and heritage. Therefore it’s important to look at intersectionalities between how the structures that control our lives, like European conceptions, intersect with Native American history and culture to create individual experiences. This highlights the negotiation of identity with the intersection of indigenous and Eurocentric ideologies.

As part of negotiating this intersection comes the concept of double consciousness. W.E.B Du Bois (1903) defined double consciousness as the ability for one to look at one’s self through the eyes of society, as well as those of other people. He argues that one places values on one’s self based on the view of others, and that people divide themselves into two souls. These souls operate in two different ways: one soul is the way which one views one’s self, and the other soul is the way that others view oneself. This connects strongly to the theme of perceived whiteness. When the participants of this study looked at themselves through the eyes of other people and society, they realized they were perceived as white, not Native American due to the pigmentation of their skin. This accentuates the idea of two souls. The first soul is the way the participants view themselves – as Native American individuals strongly involved in their communities and committed to their identities. The other soul is the way that others view an individual. Participants with lighter skin were viewed as white, and when they stated that they were in fact Native American they were met with doubt over the validity of their identity. Skin pigmentation is the most obvious clue individual’s have when assuming someone’s race, and because the participants did not fit the stereotypical skin color of “Native Americans,” society refused to categorize them as such.

## CONCLUSION

As stated by Mead (1934), the self is “something which has a development; it is not initially there at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity” (Mead 1934:135).

Throughout this study, the importance of the factors that contribute to the social experiences and activity experienced by an individual has been highlighted. Identity is an individualized experience, which has been corroborated by the participants in this study. With the theme of generalizing experiences in academia, a disconnect is developed between individual experiences and classroom experiences. This disconnect is created through the use of Eurocentric narratives in historical events that benefit from multiple narratives and perspectives. Individuals who are taught stories outside of the Eurocentric narrative in their familial settings have to negotiate this disconnect, leading to confusion and conflict within their identities.

Although over 175 years in the past, events like the Trail of Tears in 1836 continue to influence the colonial and Eurocentric discourse surrounding Native American history and culture in the academic setting. However, this does not have to continue in history. Through educating teachers to be culturally responsive in the information they provide to their students, the education system can adopt these additional stories and narratives to help fill the gaps and disconnect within the Eurocentric narrative that currently dominates academia. By acknowledging the validity and importance of these additional stories, students (in this case Native American students specifically) will feel more connected to the cultural curriculum, and will receive a more positive portrayal of the perspectives and history of Native American individuals.

## LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Considering that this study was conducted on a very small scale, it is impossible to propose that the sample of five individuals interviewed for this research could be representative of the entire population of Native American individuals in the United States of America. An accurate sample of individuals would require a greater number of participants overall, and a more diverse sample of opinions. As noted in the discussion, all participants scored very highly in the MEIM-R scale, meaning that all participants were highly committed to their ethnic identity. This may not be entirely representative of the population this study draws from, so recruiting a more diverse sample of participants would be advantageous. This study was also limited by time constraints. The scope of this study could have been expanded had the duration of the study been longer than a one year time period.

In terms of future research, this project could be adapted to become a comparative study. How does the commitment and formation of a Native American identity align with the formation of a Mexican-American identity, an African-American identity or an Asian-American identity? How are the influencing factors behind identity formation similar or different across ethnic and racial divides? Another possible extension of this project could be to compare the process of identity formation for individuals who identify as Caucasian, or who come from the population majority to that of the process of identity formation for a member of a minority.

## LITERATURE CITED

- Beirnacki, P. and D. Waldorf. 1981. "Snowball Sampling: Problem and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling." *Sociological Methods and Research* 10(2):141-163.
- Brayboy, Bryan McKinley Jones. 2006. "Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education." *The Urban Review* 37(5): 425-446.
- Case, C.C. 1971. "Navajo Education: Is There Hope?" *Educational Leadership* 29(2): 129-132.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide to Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks: CA. Sage Publications.
- Cohen, Geoffrey and Julio Garcia. 2008. "Identity, Belonging, and Achievement: A Model, Interventions, Implications." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17(6): 365-369.
- Cooper, Catherine. 1983. "Individuality and Connectedness in the Family as a Context for Adolescent Identity Formation and Role-Taking Skill." *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 1983(22): 43-59.
- Davis, Peggy. 1989. "Law as Microaggression" Pp. 141-151 in Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic, Eds. 2000. *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. 2000. *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- DuBois, W. E. B. 2010. *The Conservation of Races - The American Negro Academy. Occasional Papers No. 2* FQ Books: New York.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Dover Publications.

- Eisen, Daniel. 2011. "Becoming Filipino in Hawaii: Rejection, Reframing and Acceptance of a Stigmatized Identity." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Manoa, HI.
- Encyclopedia Britannica. 2013. "Trail of Tears." Retrieved November 5, 2013 (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/family?show=0&t=1399671174>).
- Encyclopedia Britannica. 2013. "Native American." Retrieved November 18, 2013 (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/native%20american>).
- Faragher, John Mack. 2004. "The Social Fabric of the American West." *The Historian* 66(3): 442-454.
- Glaser, B. G., and Strauss, A. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. New York: Aldine.
- Guyatt, Nicholas. 2009. "'The Outskirts of Our Happiness': Race and the Lure of Colonization in the Early Republic." *The Journal of American History* 95(4): 986-1011.
- Haynes Writer, Jeanette. 2008. "Unmasking, Exposing, and Confronting: Critical Race Theory, Tribal Critical Race Theory and Multicultural Education." *International Journal of Multicultural Education* 10(2): 1-15.
- Lopez, Ian F. Haney. 1994. "The Social Construction of Race." Pp. 163-175 in Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic, Eds. 2000. *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Lysne, Mark and Gary D. Levy. 1997. "Differences in Ethnic Identity in Native American Adolescents as a Function of School Context." *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 12(3): 372-388.
- Kaomea, Julie. 2009. "Indigenous Education for All? A Metaphorical Counterstory." *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies* 2(1): 109-121.

- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mead, George Herbert. 1934. *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary. 2014. "Family." Retrieved March 1, 2014.  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/family?show=0&t=1399671174>
- Middlebrook, Kelly. 2010. "American Indian Adolescents' Ethnic Identity and School Identification: Relationships with Academic Achievement, Perceived Discrimination, and Educational Utility." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Education, University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, CA.
- Quijada Cerecer, Patricia D. 2013. "The Policing of Native Bodies and Minds: Perspectives on Schooling from American Indian Youth." *American Journal of Education* 119(4): 591-616.
- Phinney, Jean S. 1992. "The Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure: A New Scale for Use with Diverse Groups." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 7:156-176.
- Phinney, Jean S. and Anthony Ong. 2007. "Conceptualization and Measurement of Ethnic Identity: Current Status and Future Directions." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 54(3):271-281.
- Salisbury, Neal. 1996. "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 53(3): 435-458.
- Silverman, David and Amir Marvasti. 2008. *Doing Qualitative Research: a Comprehensive Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Smith, L. T. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Dunedin, London: University of Otago Press.

- Solorzano, Daniel G. 1997. "Images and Words that Wound: Critical Race Theory, Racial Stereotyping, and Teacher Education." *Teacher Educational Quarterly* 5-19.
- Strauss, Anselm C. and Juliet Corbin. 1998. *The Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures of Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Pine Forge Press.
- Roessel Jr, Robert A. 1999. "Navajo Education and the Future." *Journal of American Indian Education* 38(3): 1-6.
- Torres, Gerald and Kathryn Milun. 1990. "Translating *Yonnonديو* by Precedent and Evidence: The Mashpee Indian Case." *Duke Law Journal*, 1990(4): 625-659.
- United States Census Bureau. 2010. *2010 Census Briefs*. 4.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2011. *Racial and Ethnic Characteristics of the U.S. Labor Force, 2011*.
- Western Oregon Termination Act of 1954*, Public Law 588-753, Public Laws Of The Eighty-Third Congress, Second Session (1954).
- Williams, Marcia Lynne. 2008. "Race, Identity and Education: An Ethnographic Study of Critical Student Agency of a Midwestern School." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Philosophy, University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN.
- Wolfe, Patrick. 2006. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8(4): 387-409.

## APPENDIX A

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

FWA: 00007392 | IRB: 0004173

2043 College Way | UC Box A-133 | Forest Grove, OR 97116

P: 503-352-1478 | F: 503-352-1447 | E: [irb@pacificu.edu](mailto:irb@pacificu.edu) | W: [www.pacificu.edu/irb](http://www.pacificu.edu/irb)**Informed Consent****1. Study Title**

Schools: Do they Shape our Identity? An Analysis of Native American Identity Formation Experience

**2. Study Personnel**

Name	Amber Reid	Daniel Eisen	
Role	Principal Investigator	Faculty Advisor	
Institution	Pacific University	Pacific University	
Program	Sociology	Sociology	
Email	<a href="mailto:reid7678@pacificu.edu">reid7678@pacificu.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:deisen@pacificu.edu">deisen@pacificu.edu</a>	
Telephone	503-860-4393	503-352-1552	

**3. Study Invitation, Purpose, Location, and Dates**

You are invited to participate in a research study about your experience in the education system as a member of a federally recognized or terminated tribe, and how you construct your identity as a Native American. The goal of this study is to explore how experiences in the educational system influence members of the Native American community identity construction. Another goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of how Native American identity is helped or hindered by the education system.

The study has earned IRB approval and will be conducted during the Fall of 2013, and the Winter and Spring of 2014. The results and findings will be used to complete my senior thesis in Sociology, and will be used at a public presentation at Pacific University in April. The data may also be presented at professional conferences in the fields of sociology and education.

**4. Participant Characteristics and Exclusionary Criteria**

In order to participate in this study you must be over 18 years of age, be a member of a Native American tribe and have completed your education through the eighth grade. You

may be removed from the project if I feel that you are at risk by participating, if you request to be removed.

#### 5. Study Materials and Procedures

Seven to ten individuals will participate in this study. Everyone will be interviewed in a convenient location. You may end your participation at any time, and interview information can be destroyed upon leaving the study. You will not be forced to answer any questions, or discuss any topics you are uncomfortable with. You will read the informed consent form and I will answer any questions you may have prior to the beginning of the interview. I will record the interview using an audio recorder and take notes. The interview will last anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours, but you may leave the interview whenever you choose. Interview information and information regarding your identity will be stored separately and securely on a password-protected computer and in a locked filing cabinet in the office of Professor Daniel Eisen at Pacific University.

#### 6. Risks, Risk Reduction Steps, and Clinical Alternatives

##### a. Anticipated Risks and Strategies to Minimize or Avoid Risk

Minimal emotional risk is anticipated. If a participant wishes to avoid discussing a certain aspect of their life, their wishes will be respected. If a participant experiences emotional distress, they will be reminded that the study is completely voluntary and they may end the interview at any time. The participant will then be referred to appropriate counseling resources in their area. It is highly unlikely that the interview questions supplied will subject the participants to greater risk than is experienced in everyday life. No information given will be identifiable, because every participant will be given a pseudonym, so it should not pose any social, physical, or economic risk to participants.

##### b. Unknown Risks

It is possible that participation in this study may expose you to currently unforeseeable risks.

##### c. Advantageous Clinical Alternatives

This study does not involve clinical trials.

#### 7. Adverse Event Handling and Reporting Plan

In the event that you become sick, injured, distressed, or otherwise uncomfortable as a result of your involvement in the research study, you may stop your participation immediately. If such an event occurs, promptly notify the principal investigator or the Pacific University Institutional Review Board.

If the investigator(s) become aware of an adverse event, the IRB office will be notified by the next normal business day for minor events (discomfort, emotional distress) and within 24 hours for major events (violence or threatening the safety of yourself or others).

#### 8. Direct Benefits and/or Payment to Participants

##### a. Benefit(s)

There is no direct benefit to you as a study participant.

- b. Payment(s) or Reward(s)  
Participants will not be paid for their participation.

**9. Promise of Privacy**

Any data including your name will be replaced with a pseudonym to protect your identity. Any information stating your identity will not be published. The data of all participants will be kept confidential. Responses to interview questions will be recorded and stored separately from the signed informed consent forms. All information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the faculty advisor’s office, or on a password protected computer. All study details and consent forms will be kept on file with the faculty advisor for a minimum of three years after the study ends.

If a participant is believed to be a threat to oneself or others, or child abuse is suspected, I will end the confidentiality and notify the appropriate authorities.

**10. Medical Care and Compensation in the Event of Accidental Injury**

N/A

**11. Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Pacific University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw after beginning the study you will be given the option to have your contact information and interview information destroyed. If significant new findings develop (or are discovered) during the course of this research that could impact your decision to continue participation, such findings will be shared with you and you will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the study.

**12. Contacts and Questions**

The investigator(s) will be happy to answer any questions you may have at any time during the course of the study. If you are not satisfied with the answers you receive, please call the Pacific University Institutional Review Board at 503-352-1478 to discuss your questions or concerns further. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or if you experience a research-related injury of any kind, please contact the investigator(s) and/or the IRB office. All concerns and questions will be kept in confidence.

**13. Statement of Consent**

<p>YES</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>I am 18 years of age or over.</p> <p>All my questions have been answered.</p> <p>I have read and understand the description of my participation duties.</p> <p>I have been offered a copy of this form to keep for my records.</p>
--	---	---

\_\_\_\_\_ I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw at  
\_\_\_\_\_ any time without consequence.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Full Name Participant Study Role

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Full Name Study Role\*

\*This individual must be trained in obtaining informed consent and have authorization from the principal investigator and/or faculty advisor to do so.

APPENDIX B

Interview questions:

1. What tribe do you belong to?
2. What does it mean to be a member of that tribe?
3. What does it mean to you to be a Native American?
4. Where did you grow up?
5. Have you ever lived on a reservation?
6. Have you ever attended school on a reservation?
7. What kind of school did you attend (a school on a reservation, a school not on a reservation, or a boarding school)?
8. How many years did you attend that school?
9. What was your experience as a Native American attending school?
10. Did any of your classes include information or lessons about your tribe or other tribes?
  - a. If yes, what kind of information?
  - b. How was this information presented?
  - c. How often was this information presented?
11. How do you feel your school experience influenced what you think about your tribe or being Native American in general?
12. How did your school experience positively impact what you think about your tribe or being Native American in general?
13. How did your school experience negatively impact what you think about your tribe or being Native American in general?
14. How do you feel your education experience was different from your parents?
15. How do you feel your education experience was similar from your parents?
16. How do you think the education your (future) children receive will be different than your education?
17. How do you think the education your (future) children receive will be similar to your education?
18. How are your traditions and heritage changing as a tribe?
19. What do you think are the forces that are changing these traditions and heritage?

## APPENDIX C

### *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure—Revised (MEIM—R)*

The following questions ask you questions about your Ethnic Identity. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, just answer as accurately as possible. Use the scale below to answer the questions. If you strongly agree with the statement write down 5; if you strongly disagree write down 1. If the statement is more or less true of you, find the number between 1 and 5 that best describes you.

strongly disagree	1
disagree	2
agree	3
strongly agree	4

	1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
	2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
	3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
	4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.
	5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about ethnic group.
	6. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

#### APPENDIX D



**February 17, 2014**

Registered: **February 17, 2014**

Registration Expires: **February 17, 2019**

IRB Reference Number: **182-13**

Project Title: **[545491-1] Schools: Do they Shape our Identity? An Analysis of a Native American Identity Formation Experience**

Investigators: **Amber Reid**

Faculty Advisors: **Daniel Eisen, PhD**

Review Category: **Exempt Review**

This letter signifies that the above research project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at Pacific University and has been registered for five (5) years based on the provided materials. While being mindful of participant confidentiality, keep this letter on file, along with all informed consent and release forms, until the expiration date listed above.

As this project was deemed exempt, continuing review from the IRB is not required. However, if a research-related incident (i.e., adverse event, issue of noncompliance, unanticipated problem) occurs during the course of the study, or if you anticipate modifying the project in any way, please complete the necessary paperwork (available on the IRB website) and submit it to the IRB immediately. As a researcher, you are responsible for the well-being and safety of your participants.

This project automatically will be closed by the IRB at the end of the five (5) year registration period. A project closure request will not be necessary. However, if your project lasts for a period of greater than five (5) years, you must submit a new proposal no less than thirty (30) calendar days before the expiration date listed above. This is required because federal regulations and/or IRB policies and procedures may change during the registration period, thereby requiring further scrutiny of the project.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Breanna Grove at 503-352-1478 or [irb@pacificu.edu](mailto:irb@pacificu.edu). Please include the Pacific University IRB Reference Number **182-13** and your project title in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Pacific University Institutional Review Board

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Pacific University's records.