Student Voices: A Phenomenological Exploration of Stockbridge-Munsee Student's

Experiences and Strategies Related to Persisting in Wisconsin Colleges

by

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As members of the dissertation committee for Jolene Bowman, and on behalf of the Doctoral Program at Cardinal Stritch University, we affirm that this report meets the expectations and academic requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Leadership for the Advancement of Learning and Service in Higher Education.

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JP Leary, Ph.D.   Approval Date

As the Dean of the College of Education and Leadership, and on behalf of the Doctoral Program at Cardinal Stritch University, I affirm that this report meets the expectations and academic requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Leadership for the Advancement of Learning and Service in Higher Education.

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Freda Russell, Ph.D.   Approval Date

Dedication

To the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians also known as the "People of the Waters that Are Never Still". Surviving as a nation through eight historical moves serves as evidence that our ancestors were part of society driven to survive by leading, learning, and serving as a community before self, as their families traveled from the East to Wisconsin leaving Many Trails.

To my grandparents Leona (Burr) and Clarence "Gobe" Bowman who both attended the Immanuel Lutheran Indian Mission school and grew up to have a successful marriage and children. Both of you showed me how unconditional love, hard work, and serving/giving to others support a good and healthy foundation to live by.

To my mother Nathalee Kristiansen for your advocacy, strength, and guidance so I could be anything I wanted to be. To my father Leif Kristiansen who faced and battled Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease with strength and courage to the end, your blue eyes and smile is a forever remembrance, which I ponder in my heart.

To my Aunt Rhonda Bowman for always encouraging me to do better and be better. To my Aunt Carolie Miller for pushing me forward with her continuous demonstrations and emanations of pride. To all of my family and friends for your love, support, encouragement, fun times, laughter, and just being there when I needed you to make my life whole.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to include student voices in the discussion of persistence by exploring experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students in higher education through the lens of Brayboy (2005) TribalCrit theory and the methods of McAfee (1997, 2000), Secatero (2009), and HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002). The following question guided the study: What were the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students who persisted to succeed in Wisconsin colleges? Along with three sub-questions: 1) Which experiences were perceived as positive?; 2) Which experiences were perceived as negative?; and 3) Which experiences were perceived as strategic?

A phenomenological methodology was employed to identify themes and patterns present in each participant's responses to semi-structured interview and focus group questions. Five, Stockbridge-Munsee students with a minimum of 24 credits earned prior and attending a Wisconsin college, participated in one-on-one interviews, and five students participated in a focus group. Data were analyzed following procedures recommended by Hycner (1999) and Marshall and Rossman (2006).

The results were generally consistent with prior research findings that related to college readiness, institutional support, community, financial aid, life imbalances, and family/social responsibilities among others influencing Stockbridge-Munsee students experiences to persist in Wisconsin colleges. However, the connection between the lack of culturally responsive teaching and curriculum in high school to persistence was something new that arose out of this study.

This study offered Stockbridge-Munsee student perceptions of persistence that could inform academia and Mohican nation. It also added to the literature on persistence in general and to the fewer studies adding student voices to the discussion of persistence for American Indian students. The research concluded that high schools, family, institutions, and Mohican Nation influence a student's persistence decisions which points to the need for improving efforts on and off campus.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Vignette

Below is a true story. The story is an example of what happens to many

Stockbridge-Munsee students in higher education.

A Stockbridge-Munsee girl was born to a single Stockbridge-Munsee mother in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1968. The single mother raised her daughter with no government subsidies or other handout programs. Instead the mother worked hard in various jobs to make a comfortable life for her and her daughter. The daughter started Kindergarten at the age of four and did not turn five until three months into the school year. The daughter was the only American Indian in her class, but assimilated well making friends with neighbor children and classmates. Being the only American Indian in her class and making friends with a diverse group of people was nothing new for she attended various schools in Wisconsin, California and Oregon. Learning did not come easy for her, but she did realize that if she put in extra work in to her studies, she would do just fine during her school years. Part of her learning also included getting past teachers who told her that using the all of the white space between the two lines on a wide-ruled piece of paper was "writing big," which is seen as a sign of low intelligence or that using a trick with her fingers to be the fastest at doing the nines timetables was not allowed because she needed to memorize them to be successful. Instead of letting these teachers interfere with her success she thought about higher education.

The daughter's first memories relating to higher education was going to the University of Wisconsin Green Bay (UWGB) while her mother was a student there and then eventually watching her mother walk across the stage to receive her bachelor's degree in business administration with a minor in human resource management. Today her mother remains to be the first and only member among her parents and siblings to attain a higher education degree. In addition, the daughter grew up with family members continually asking 'what she wanted to be when she grew up and how was she going to get there'. The memories and family support gave the daughter self-confidence to go on to college.

After graduating from high school she attended Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) where she received a medical assistant diploma and went on to pass the certification exam with no significant struggles. The daughter's confidence grew from this experience so she enrolled at UWGB with the plan of transferring to Bellin College of Nursing after a year. However, this time the college experience was different. The pressures and expectations were now at a much higher academic level and she was not adequately equipped to address what she was now facing.

> The daughter felt alienated from other students and described it as feeling like a foreigner in a different country. Everyone understood the campus culture and language navigating smoothly to get somewhere or to attain something.   In addition, she soon found herself struggling to keep up with the responsibilities that went along with the academic rigor while simultaneously feeling pressure of not wanting to let her family down.
>
> She continued on barely keeping her head above water to persist through college. As she struggled, she began to wonder if she was college material. Then her grandfather became sick with cancer and on his deathbed, she told him from her mind to his that if he wanted to leave this world that she would be okay and promised that she would take care of granny. Granny is a strong independent woman and did not need much taking care of, but it gave her a justifiable reason to step out of college. If Stockbridge-Munsee students are supposed to be successful in higher education struggle to where they eventually step out, then what does that mean for the rest of them?

Historically, American Indian college students arrive on campus with a different set of family and tribal experiences than their Anglo-American peers. According to Hale (2002), barriers may arise for American Indian students when entering colleges and universities that are derived from European educational traditions. A number of Indigenous researchers believe that education of American Indian students is gloomy. It is up to the educational leaders, administrators, and Tribal Nations to seriously address this issue and implement new and improved ways to support American Indian students who, "without education are disempowered and disenfranchised" (United States Department of Education, 1991, p. 7).

Background of the Study

Over the last 40 years, the number of American Indians attending college has increased however, the rate of degree completion is less than half that of Anglo-Americans. Many colleges and universities struggle to accommodate American Indian students and to create an environment suitable for their success in completing a college

degree. American Indian nations including the Mohican Nation is concerned with the number of their students enrolling in college compared to the number of students who actually complete their college degree.

American Indian people realize and understand that a college degree can change a person and that this change does not only affect the individual, but also their family, and the communities in which they live and work. Reports reveal that if American Indians do well in college and attain a degree, they reap similar benefits as their peers in terms of college degree salaries and completing a graduate program at the same time (Schaefer, 2004; Taylor, 1999; United States Department of Education, 1998). American Indian college graduates remove barriers to improve their quality of life; they give back to the community by working for their nations along with becoming leaders and being role models in the American Indian community. The next section provides additional information by providing specific data.

Statement of the Problem

In addressing the persistence and success rates of American Indians in higher education, one must first examine studies that address national statistics. In a report conducted by DeVoe and Darling-Churchill (2008), "Status and Trends in the education of American Indians and Alaska Native: 2008," which studied the educational progress of American Indian/Alaska Native children and adults and challenges in their education. The report depicts that over time more American Indian/Alaska students are going to college and receiving college degrees. Despite these gains, progress has been uneven and differences persist between American Indian/Alaska Native Students and students of other race/ethnicity groups on key indicators of educational performance. This disparity

deserves a closer look because American Indians are citizens of sovereign nations, giving them government trust responsibility for things like education which is a unique status differing from the other race/ethnicity groups. These upsetting gaps can be seen in the socio-economical areas of poverty, unemployment rates, and wages which correlate to the academic gaps in college enrollment, remedial courses, and graduation rates for American Indians.

More American Indian people live in poverty than any other race/ethnicity groups and this is a serious challenge for American Indian people in higher education. Poverty influences access to quality learning opportunities and success in education. The table in Appendix A-1 on page 229 shows that in 2006, 27% of American Indian/Alaska Native individuals lived in poverty compared to 13% of the general population (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008).

In total more American Indians are unemployed compared to other race/ethnicity groups. The table in Appendix A-2 on page 229 shows that in 2007, American Indians/Alaska Natives unemployment rate of 12% being considerable higher than Whites (4%), Hispanics (6%), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (3%). The table also reflects that unemployment rates lower as one increases their level of education across the board including American Indians (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008).

American Indian students with a formal education have more opportunities with gaining employment and decreasing their likelihood of living in poverty. Sandefur (1991) states, "It is clear that a strong relationship exist between economic development, employment opportunities, and individual and family economic well being" (p. 3). He also refers to how family incomes among American Indians are mostly related to their

low earnings (Sandefur, 1991). Attaining a higher level of education does improve the median annual earnings for American Indians. However, the table in Appendix A-3 on page 230 reveals a shortfall of $1,700.00 for American Indians average annual wages compared to the general population. In addition it shows that in 2006, American Indian's with a bachelor's degree earned 34.5% more than American Indian with a high school diploma (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008).

One of the reasons why American Indians aspire to enter college is because they want to return to their tribal communities to improve the living conditions where they were raised and where their family and friends live (Taylor, 1999). In a report written by Knapp, Kelly-Reid, and Ginder (2012), "Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2010; Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2010; and Graduation Rates, Selected Cohorts, 2002-07," for the purpose to introduce new data collected from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) through the presentation of tables containing descriptive information. The table in Appendix A-4 on page 230 shows that only 52% of American Indian students who graduated from high school in 2004 immediately enrolled in college, as compared to 74% of white students.

In a report conducted by Knapp et al. (2012) and titled, "Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study," studied differences between race/ethnicity student groups in higher education. The report depicts that the percentage of first-year undergraduates who had taken a remedial course in 2007-08 varied by sex with less male than female first-year undergraduates had reported taking a remedial course among all the race/ethnicity groups. The figure in Appendix B-1 on page 235 reveals that 61% of

American Indian females reported taking a remedial course in 2007-08 which is significantly the highest percentage.

According to Knapp et al. (2012) a table in Appendix A-5 on page 231 shows that of all American Indian students who enrolled in a four-year college in the fall of 2004, only 40% completed a bachelor's degree by 2010 compared to 62% for white students. Limited information is available in regards to the persistence and success factors for American Indian students in higher education. Many higher educational institutions do not report information in regard to their graduation statistics factors by race/ethnicity. Therefore, further research is essential to find solutions to decrease the negative margin distribution between American Indian and other race/ethnicity student groups to increase their academic performance in academia.

Overall, the key indicators for educational performance gaps discussed in this section reveals that underperformance and high dropout rates among American Indian students in higher education has led to poor socio-economic conditions, lower employment, lower annual median wages, and a need to create adult education programs to give American Indian students, whom traditional education has generally failed, a second chance (Binda, 2001). As American Indian students gain a formal education, they increase their opportunities for earning a higher wage, thus beginning to tear down the walls of poverty, one American Indian with a degree at a time. A strong education foundation is crucial to ensure Native children have a path to becoming future leaders that preserve and strengthen their Native communities and cultures.

For Mohican Nation tearing down the walls of poverty means building education nations and communities. The purpose of higher education is to sustain and build the Nation in an ever changing world. The tribe invests in their citizen's higher education by supplementing the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funds to provide a tribal grant, yet reportedly an accumulative of 57 citizens of the Nation are not persisting in Wisconsin colleges. When Mohican Nation is successful, they contribute not just towards the overall well-being of their community, but often towards the well-being of the surrounding local communities as well. Therefore, it is vital for Mohican Nation to become better equipped by assisting their citizens to successfully persist through college to attain a degree. Additional Mohican Nation citizens with a degree will help to strengthen their economies and stand poised to help their neighboring communities.

History of the Problem

In developing an understanding of the history of American Indian higher education for American Indian students in the United States, it is important to have in mind the broader context of the history of American Indian people in this country. Reyhner and Eder (2004) describe why a broad context of American Indian history is important by saying that, "In order for educators and policy makers to understand why the various programs in Indian schools exist and why certain curricula are more likely to lead to success, they must first know about past failures and successes of Indian education" (p. 12). Serving American Indians in education means to study and to understand their past experiences with education.

Table 1 is a timeline depicting the relationship history between the federal government and the American Indian educational needs. The history of this relationship is important to acknowledge because it has played a significant role in the past and present of American Indian education. Further insight and details will be shared in Chapter Two.

Table 1

Native American Education Timeline

Year	Actions and Legislation Affecting Native American Education
1771-1879	The federal government signs nearly 400 treaties with Indian nations and tribes, creating trust agreements and promising that the government will provide technical, agricultural, medical, and education services.
1870s	The government begins building its Indian boarding school system, often using deserted army bases. The most infamous one, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania based on the belief that it was necessary "to kill the Indian and save the man."
1887	The General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act, allows the government to survey American Indian land and divvy up sections to individual tribe members, with the surplus going to non-Indians.
1928	The Institute for Government Research (now the Brookings Institution) releases the Meriam Report, a comprehensive look at the condition of American Indian life, and determines the federal government is providing inadequate services.
1934	The Indian Reorganization Act stops the allotment process and provides American Indians with more power to govern and determine their futures. The Johnson O'Malley Act, also passed in 1934, allowed the government to contract with states to provide education services.
1950	Impact Aid legislation compensates public school districts with nontaxable federal land within their school boundaries. American Indian parents were supposed to have say in how to spend these monies.
1950-1965	The Elementary and Secondary Education Act encourages more tribal and parental involvement and, overall, offers more aid for disadvantaged children.
1968	President Johnson calls for the establishment of American Indian school boards at federally managed and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools
1972	The Indian Education Act establishes the Office of Indian Education, now under the Department of Education and provides funds for pre-k to college.
1975	The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act authorize the government to contract with tribes for the operation of BIA and Indian Health Service programs.
1978	Education amendments state, "it shall be the policy of the BIA in carrying out the functions of the Bureau, to facilitate Indian control of Indian affairs in all matters relating to education."
1990	The Native American Languages Act protects the "status of the cultures and languages of Native American," and makes it federal policy to "promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop their language."
2002	The Office of the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities

Adapted from Bergstrom T. L. (2012). *Perceived factors influencing the retention rate of Native American college students: A case study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Liberty University of Lynchburg, VA.

Current Status of the Problem

In February 2014, the Mohican Nation reports having 57 students who are in default with the tribal higher education grant program. The program expense for these default totals $96,000 and the individual default amount ranged from $450 to $6,670 (personal conversation with Chris Miller, Stockbridge-Munsee Education Administrative Assistant, 2013). From a program perspective, this means that 57 Stockbridge-Munsee students received a tribal grant toward their higher education expenses, but did not earn the number of credits on which the award was based. For the Mohican Nation this is a devastating perspective in that the Nation financially invests in tribal members' higher education to secure and build the nation, yet 57 students were not successful in earning a college degree. It is vital to increase the number of Mohican citizens with a higher education degree to build and sustain the Nation. A number of indigenous researchers agree that navigating in the dominating society to defend and preserve their presence and economies is a means of building their nation to better serve it citizens and community while simultaneously assisting local communities surrounding the reservation.

Theory and Action Related to the Problem

This study focuses on models of student persistence based on McAfee's (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model, Secatero's (2009) Corn Model, and HeavyRunner and DeCelles' (2002) Family Education Model (FEM). These models are important to gain a better phenomenological understanding of the experience and relationships between a student and their institution, as well as how the interaction between the two affects a student's decision to persist or drop out. The cohesiveness of these relationships is insightful to American Indian persistence and will be addressed further in chapter two.

Need for Further Study of the Problem

It is vital to study success strategies used by American Indian students to persist in higher education from the same cultural theoretical lens, because the existing research is outdated, there is a lack of American Indians conducting research, and the lack of qualitative data that describes the experiences direct from American Indian student needs is important. There is no prior research that answers the question to how Stockbridge-Munsee students are negotiating, navigating, and problem solving by strategizing their way through higher education.

Year-to year persistence rates are uncertain, given the rarity of research studies on American Indian student persistence in higher education and the inadequate representation of American Indians in national and longitudinal research databases (Benjamin, Chambers, & Reiterman, 1993; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Larimore & McClellan, 2005; Pavel & Padilla, 1993; Tijerina & Biemer, 1988; Wright, 1985). Existing persistent research is geographically being done in the Southwest, Alaska, and Hawaii regions giving limited explanatory from the great lakes area which points to the need to identify and expand on local needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand Stockbridge-Munsee student voices in a phenomenological exploration of their experiences and strategies for persisting in Wisconsin Colleges. Understanding these strategies may enlighten academia about Stockbridge-Munsee student's unique status and needs so that they can assist these students in reaching their education and enduring goals. This study will also provide Mohican Nation with a culturally responsive tool that can be used to educate

academia about the unique needs of their citizens in higher education. The related research question that guided this study was:

1. What were the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students who persisted to succeed in Wisconsin colleges?

   - Which experiences were perceived as positive?

   - Which experiences were perceived as negative?

   - Which experiences were perceived as strategic?

Approach of the Study

Given the research purpose of identifying, describing, and understanding the narratives of the academic experience by Stockbridge-Munsee students, focusing on the factors they faced and the strategies used to overcome obstacles, the research approach was that of a qualitative study utilizing phenomenology as the research design to employ the TribalCrit theory of Brayboy (2005) and the methods of McAfee (1997, 2000), Secatero (2009), and HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002).

Significance of the Study

Acknowledging the personal positive and negative experiences along with the strategies used by Stockbridge-Munsee students to persist in Wisconsin colleges can support a greater understanding for institutions regarding their American Indian student population. From this support universities can grow and develop plans that successfully and proficiently increase the attainment of a higher education degree for these students. Recognizing barriers that Stockbridge-Munsee students experience while attending college can lead to administrators, student affairs professionals, staff, and faculty to begin

tearing down the barriers so that these students college experience results in a thriving and flourishing life for themselves and their nation. Recognizing how Stockbridge-Munsee students overcome barriers, Mohican Nation will gain insight to how their students solve difficult issues that they come across while attending a Wisconsin college. Based on the information identified Mohican Nation can develop and share a strategy guide to assist students as they navigate through the higher education system.

Uniqueness and Compatibility of the Research

A qualitative study following a phenomenological research design is useful for understanding the factors that influence the persistence rate of Stockbridge-Munsee students, but it is only one component to a more meaningful understanding. A qualitative study is an effective tool that points to factors that may predict who will or will not succeed in institutions of higher learning. Qualitative studies cannot be overlooked and give basis for quantitative inquires (Yin, 2009). Qualitative work in Indian Education research is vital because storytelling is common among American Indian's to teach others the way in life. Reporting findings using the participant's stories can erect individual truth, comparing experiences with others. Reporting the participants own voices to affirm their own associations to the study is a truthful way to report research (Cleary & Peacock, 1997).

Contribution to Knowledge, Theory and Practice

Working through barriers can lead to developing successful strategy tools leading to a positive college experience (Struthers, Perry, & Menec, 2000). Higher education institutions are making efforts to address the issue of retaining American Indian students by implementing culturally relevant retention programs (Meyers, 1997). For those

institutions, this study can be used as a guide and assessment instrument to evaluate how well their programs and campus environment value culture sensitivity. This study may also be helpful to other minority groups within institutions, as patterns of removing barriers emerge and strategies identified for American Indian students could possibly be functional to other underrepresented groups who encounter the same barriers.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Participants for this study were limited to those who are citizens of Mohican Nation, attending an accredited college in Wisconsin, and are over the age of 18. The decision to limit the participants to those who are Stockbridge-Munsee enrolled allowed the study to filter the factors that affect other Native people and place an emphasis on producing Stockbridge-Munsee college graduates.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are important to this research:

1. The researcher's relationship and understanding with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community and culture will assist with participants feeling comfortable with self-disclosure and while fostering the belief that their stories will make a difference and be secure.

2. All research participants will give truthful answers.

3. Contrary to assumption three and four the researcher's role as the Director of Education and Cultural Affairs might instill fear of retribution which may influence their responses.

4. A phenomenological study is the best approach of research because the focus of this study resides in complicated lived experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students while attending a Wisconsin college.

5. This study may bring in more awareness to faculty, staff, deans, and chancellors in serving and meeting the needs of Stockbridge-Munsee students to persist in college to gain a degree.

6. This study may assist in developing a strategy guide resource that will be useful for Stockbridge-Munsee students' academic success in higher education.

7. Tribal college experience will be different from predominately white institutions College experience.

Parameters

This research examined the identifying factors and strategies, which will be put forth by the participants that helped them to succeed in college. It will also explore their suggestions regarding barriers that may hamper success in achieving educational goals. The participants must be currently attending and have successfully completed 24 or more credits at an accredited College in Wisconsin. The data will be examined, analyzed, and interpreted using Brayboy (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) as a lens to evaluate Stockbridge-Munsee student stories about their education experience while attending college and earning credits.

Timeframe

The timeframe for this research covered a six month period. The study began September 2013 and ended March 2014.

Vocabulary of the Study

(Note: Any definition of a term which is not cited was created by the researcher for a

greater understanding).

Academic Culture:

Culture in higher education is the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms,

values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behaviors of individuals

and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference

within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and of campus.

(Kuh & Whitt, 1988, pp. 12-13)

Academic Success: The term *academic success* refers to the student's ability to

earn college credits with a "C" or better while maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.0.

American Indian: Concerning this study, the words Native, Native American,

Indigenous and Indian all can be a substitution for *American Indian* (A/I), which will be

inclusive of Alaska Natives. The term American Indian is a citizen of a federally

recognized tribe of the United States. Horse (2005) describes the designation of being

American Indian well: The practical benchmark for Indianness is the political distinction

that tribes enjoy as sovereign nations. Members of tribal nations are thus dual citizens.

They are citizens of the United States and of their respective tribal nations. It is not

simply a matter of American Indians being just another ethnic minority (p. 67).

Indigenous Cultures:

Those Indigenous Peoples who continue to maintain their own cosmology, world

view, language, ceremonies, government, economic system, health systems, and

traditions which are rooted in their specific land base and which have existed

from antiquity. Indigenous cultures have deeply rooted complex sets of beliefs,

customs, and traditions that are culturally specific and those beliefs are

maintained to the present day because those beliefs are integral to life as the

people of the culture understand life to be (Cornelius, 1999, p. 27).

Mohican Nation: American Indian and Alaska Native communities generally

define "nation" as a specific combination of kinship, government, shared territory,

worldview, and spiritual community (Champagne, 2008). Concerning this study, the

words Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, Stockbridge-Munsee,

and S/M can be a substitution for Mohican Nation which were also known as the Muh-

he-con-ne-ok meaning "People of the Waters that Are Never Still" with a rich and

illustrious history through oral tradition and the written word. The term Mohican Nation

is the modern name of a federally recognized tribe of the United States. Mohican Nation

received federal recognition in 1937. The tribal reservation is currently located in

Northeastern Wisconsin.

Stockbridge-Munsee Student: Is a citizen of Mohican Nation that is also

attending an accredited higher education institution in Wisconsin with 24 or more college

credits earned.

World view:

Each culture has a specific set of beliefs that explain how this world came to be

and how human beings should live on this earth. This set of beliefs forms the

foundation of their culturally specific paradigm. Within that paradigm are a series

of interrelated factors, a world view, that structure this culture's way of life and

how they interact with other cultures. The world view contains an interconnected

web of relationships necessary to maintain the culture's world view (Cornelius, 1999, pp. 51-52).

Horse (2005) adds that

> As American Indian people, we inherit an innate sensibility about the world that originated far back in our ancestral past. That consciousness, that psychology if you will, developed separately and apart from the experience of other peoples who were not indigenous to this land. It is a worldview that in inherent in American Indian tribal traditions, most of which were handed down orally in the tribal languages (p. 61).

Summary and Forecast

This introductory chapter presented an overview of the study through description of the background, purpose, approach, significance, delimitations and limitations, and vocabulary of the research. Chapter Two constructs the theoretical framework of the study through a review of literature related to the research questions. Chapter Three describes the research design employed to conduct the study, with particular attention to methodology and technique applied to data collection and analysis. Chapter Four presents the study results in the form of data generated and analyzed through application of the research design. Chapter Five presents a discussion of study findings and conclusions related to the research questions and reviewed literature. This concluding chapter also addresses the implications of the findings for practice and research, as well as leadership, learning, and service.

American Indian students in institutions of higher education have barriers similar to those of any other college student yet American Indian students face different and

sometimes extreme personal and demographic disparity from their peers. The numbers show that American Indians starting college is on the rise yet their persistence to stay in college to degree completion remains low, diminishing their part to improve living conditions for those in which they live and socialize with. Efforts made to recognize how American Indian students deal with dilemmas in college will explain and possibly provide answers to the mystery of American Indian student persistence. The next chapter will give an overview of the existing literature pertaining to American Indian students in higher education.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Organization of Review

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand Stockbridge-Munsee student voices in a phenomenological exploration of their experiences and strategies for persisting in Wisconsin Colleges. The related research question that guided this study is:

1. What were the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students who persisted to succeed in Wisconsin colleges?

    - Which experiences were perceived as positive?

    - Which experiences were perceived as negative?

    - Which experiences were perceived as strategic?

While the works of Tinto and others in the field are often highlighted in higher education studies they do not account for how American Indian student's background, experiences, or perspectives impact their persistence in a holistically culturally relevant higher education framework. For example, Tinto's (1993) model, when students become integrated parts of the college, the academic institution represents the center of a student's world. This is not essentially true for American Indian students, who come from communities of resistance that serves a bridge between their worlds of home and school. Therefore, to capture the cultural relevancy of this study only American Indian based theories and models will be employed.

This chapter reviews literature addressing research and Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory including support utilizing models from McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model, Secatero (2009) Corn Model, and HeavyRunner and DeCelles

(2002) Family Education Model (FEM) relating to the study. Next Figure 1 draws upon these indigenous models and theory to depict a graphic representation using the Many Trail symbol which has symbolic meaning to Mohican Nation and is further described later in this chapter. The Many Trail symbol represents a path to persistence by identifying the prominent themes and briefly summarizing the findings found within the section headings of; theoretical framework, American Indian based models, American Indians' in higher education, American Indian persistence factors, tribal identity, tribal colleges, and Mohican Nation. The black, white, red and yellow colors used in the symbol traditionally represent the four original colors of the human race in American Indian culture. The intent of this symbolism is not to restrict who can use or benefit from this model, but rather a tool or resources to share with others the research findings to obtain a better understanding of American Indian persistence in higher education.

Figure 1

American Indian Students Building Tribal Nations through Persistence in Higher Education

American Indian Students Building Tribal Nations through Persistence in Higher Education

← TRIBALCRIT THEORY →

Reasons for Stepping Out or *In*

Institutional Support

Reasons for Stepping Out or *In*

College Readiness

Enters College

Not having/having Indigenous knowledge and culture throughout the institutional environment such as: policies, resources, college programs, campus/staff presence, student services, and student organizations.

Not having/having academic skill building, higher expectations, and advanced placement courses throughout the high school years.

Financial Aid

Tribal Community

Not having/having needs that are met, timely resources, and financial aid at the beginning of a semester.

Not having/having cognitive recognition for: historical trauma from the boarding school experience; degrees correlating to status; and feelings of ambivalence among family, community, and nation.

Colonization

Linear: Focus on Self

Predominately White Colleges

Circular: Focus on the whole (holistic)

Tribal College

Tribal Identity

CHARACTERISTIC
- Balance two worlds within themselves
- Strong motivation, engagement, and determination

STRENGTHS
- Resourceful and Clever
- Strong support network

Degree Completion

Family/Social Influence

Life Imbalances

Not having/having the understanding for: a strong innate desire and need to take care of children, elderly parents and/or grandparents before self; a tight and close connection to family and home which can lead to one being severely home sick when going away to attend college; and the personal value of attending and being part of traditional ceremonies and/or community happenings.

Not having/having time management, budget/fiscal responsibility, commitment, and discipline skills, good health, and encouragement.

Adapted from Edwin Martin's (1965) "Many Trails" design.
Bowman, 2014

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study resides in an emerging theory by Brayboy (2005) which he calls Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit). Even though TribalCrit is rooted from the Critical Race Theory (CRT) it is different from other CRT frameworks because its focus is American Indians while simultaneously challenging the traditional paradigms, methods, texts, and separate discourse on race and class by showing how these social constructs intersect to impact American Indian communities. From this in a personal conversation with Dr. Brayboy (2013) he shares a fair critique that "he forgot about gender" and then he went on to say that "he did not forget about it, he just didn't address it." An overview of Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory incorporates nine principles, which he summarizes as follows:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.

2. United States 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 goals 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.

8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.

9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (pp. 429-430)

These nine principles of TribalCrit are employed in this study utilizing a phenomenological research design to address the range and variation of experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students attending a Wisconsin College is explained in further detail next. The first principle is at the center with all the other principles being offshoots of this essential theory. Lomawaima and McCarty (2002) describes this vital principal in the framework of American Indian education:

> The goal has been "civilization" of American Indian peoples…[which] assumes that what is required is the complete and utter transformation of native nations and individuals; replace heritage languages with English, replace "paganism" with Christianity, replace economic, political, social, legal, and aesthetic institutions. (p. 282)

Transforming to fit the ideals of the dominate society requires assimilation into that culture while letting go of one's own ideals. Colonization can be described as a process when American Indians stop challenging the dominate society opinion about their fit within the larger population. Walters (2014) adds that colonization "fundamentally disrupts a people's ability to fulfill their original instruction". The second principle adds

that federal policies regarding American Indians initiated for the purpose of imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain. The third principle adds liminal space, because American Indians have unique relationship with the federal government having a joint status as legal/political and racialized people. The fourth principle adds tribal autonomy, self-determination, self-identification, and tribal sovereignty which knowledge and understanding allows researchers to examine interactions between Indigenous students and higher education institutions. The fifth principle adds Indigenous culture, knowledge, and power (sovereignty) as a means of understanding American Indian students through an American Indian lens. The sixth principle adds teaching American Indian students to combine both their Indigenous ideas with the dominate society's notions to survive and persist in higher education. The seventh principle adds that success is not autonomous but instead related to community's ideas of power and survival. The eighth principle adds American Indian storytelling as a strong oral tradition used to share culture and knowledge. The ninth principle adds the final component to the TribalCrit which includes making an active change in the condition and circumstance being studied.

A study by Castagno and Lee (2007) examines one university's policies regarding Native mascots and ethnic fraud through a Tribal Critical Race Theory analytic lens. He found that on the surface the university had an interest in diversity or multiculturalism, but it does not have an interest in policies that challenge the status quo. Also, a theoretical lens from an American Indian perspective is vital for addressing current issues for Stockbridge-Munsee Community, which includes a holistic approach to revitalizing a tribal language, natural resources management, health care, housing, education, and

government-to-government relations. Guillory and Wolverton (2008) suggest meeting the needs of American Indian students in higher education means not assuming that traditional theories on student persistence will work with these students. Indigenous-based models on student persistence in college are starting to emerge that clearly focus on American Indian students. TribalCrit is an indigenous based framework that will guide the research questions to gain insight to how Stockbridge-Munsee students are problem solving to navigate and persist in college.

Review of Research and Theory about American Indian Based Models

The Indigenous models in this section are explored to gain a better understanding of the experiences and relationships between an American Indian student and higher education. Over the past 85 years, the attention brought to the federal government over the need to improve the academic success rate among American Indian students has not diminished. Policy milestones of the Meriam Report (1928), The Kennedy Report (1969), Indian Nations at Risk (1991), and the White House Conference on Indian Education (1992) which emphasized the need to help the difficulties faced by the American Indian population. Researchers used these policy milestones to develop government funded programs such as; Title VII, Impact Aid, Johnson O'Malley, Head Start, Higher Education Scholarships, Adult Vocational and Technical Training, and Adult Basic Education to aid the persistence rate among American Indian students.

According to Secatero (2009), American Indian educational models are becoming a popular theoretical framework for American Indian researchers and educators. Historically, the evolution of American Indian based models was rare, but American Indian epistemology continues to rise. This study employs American Indian Based

Models from McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model, Secatero (2009) Corn Model, and HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) Family Education Model (FEM) to explore how interactions within the academic institutions and social communities lead American Indian students to withdraw or persist in institution of higher education. Next these models will be further described.

McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model.

This is an indigenous models used to understand and explore the path of persistence for American Indian students. McAfee's (1997, 2000) work explains why some American Indian college students have at least one "stepping out" (p. 256) experience while attending college. The model uses the concept of stepping out rather than dropping out because the students in the study were able to find the necessary stepping-stones to earn a college degree. The stepping-stones resided in cultural identity, academic preparation, financial resources, motivation, family support, academic performance, alcohol and drug use, and institutional interface. These stepping-stones can be viewed as both positive and negative factors. McAfee (1997, 2000) suggests that these factors may lead to stepping out however it is possible to avoid some of the stepping out experiences if predominately white colleges are willing to change how they service American Indian students. In addition, she provides suggestions for how predominately white colleges can offer a path back to these students by implementing a system that regularly checks up on the student during their step-out time to hasten, assure, and nurture their return. In Figure 2 McAfee, (1997) utilizes arrows as a means of depicting factors, process, and flow of what stepping in/out of higher education may look like for American Indian students. Huffman and Ferguson (2007) conducted a five-year

study using McAfee's "stepping out" model to examine the attitudes, perceptions, and expectations regarding higher education among a sample of American Indian students attending a predominantly non-Indian university and found that financial stress was a critical factor in the decision to stay or leave school.

Figure 2

Model of College Attendance of American Indians in Higher Education

Mode of College Attendance of American Indians in Higher Education
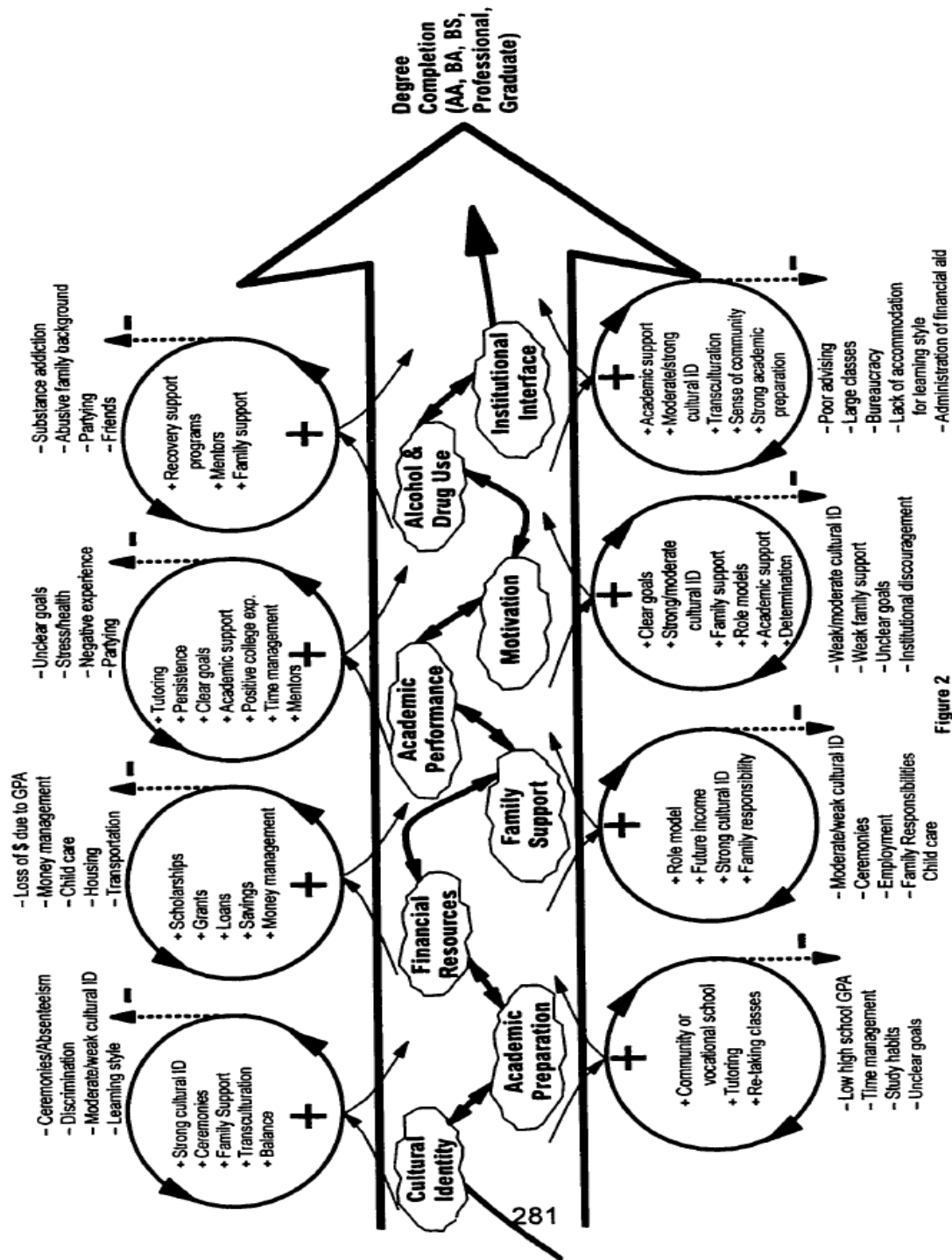
Source: McAfee, 1997.

Secatero (2009) Corn Model.

This model is second of the three indigenous models used to understand and explore the path of persistence for American Indian students. Secatero (2009) model is an indigenous-based model that symbolizes the spiritual, mental, social, and physical aspects of American Indian higher education. This model intertwines Cajete's *Native Philosophy of Indigenous Visioning* (2005) by correlating several processes of indigenous visioning including (a) vision, (b) asking, (c) seeking, (d) making, (e) having, (f) sharing, (g) celebrating, and (h) being. The model illustrates graduate school success and persistence factors that characterize the dynamics of corn. He uses corn to represent American Indians and the life changes they endure to learn about themselves (Secatero, 2009). The five elements of corn along with the perspective feature that they relate to include (a) the root which indicates physical, (b) the lower portion of the corn stalk that symbolizes social, (c) the central cornstalk which stands for culture, (d) the upper portion of the corn stalk which designates mental, and (e) the corn tassel which portrays spiritual (Secatero, 2009, pp. 59-62). He felt it important to point out and stress that each section of the corn stalk has a significant symbolism for physical survival as well as success in graduate and professional education.

A year later Secatero (2010) later added all students not just graduate or professional students to the Corn Model to assist all students to persist in college. He did this by developing values based American Indian Model in Higher Education for holistic well-being. The main purpose of this holistic model is to create a blueprint for American Indian college students who plan on entering and succeeding in college. Marcus (2011) employed Secatero (2009, 2010) Corn Model as part of his theoretical framework in his

study identifying barrier and factors that influence persistence for first-year American

Indian students who participated in a university summer bridge program. Figure 3 shows

the first five elements of the Corn Model along with the professional, emotional, and

environmental factors which are referred to as pillars. Secatero (2010) maintained that all

eight pillars must coincide in harmony to ensure college success.

Figure 3

Eight pillars incorporated into a well-being symbol of corn.

Source: Secatero, 2010.

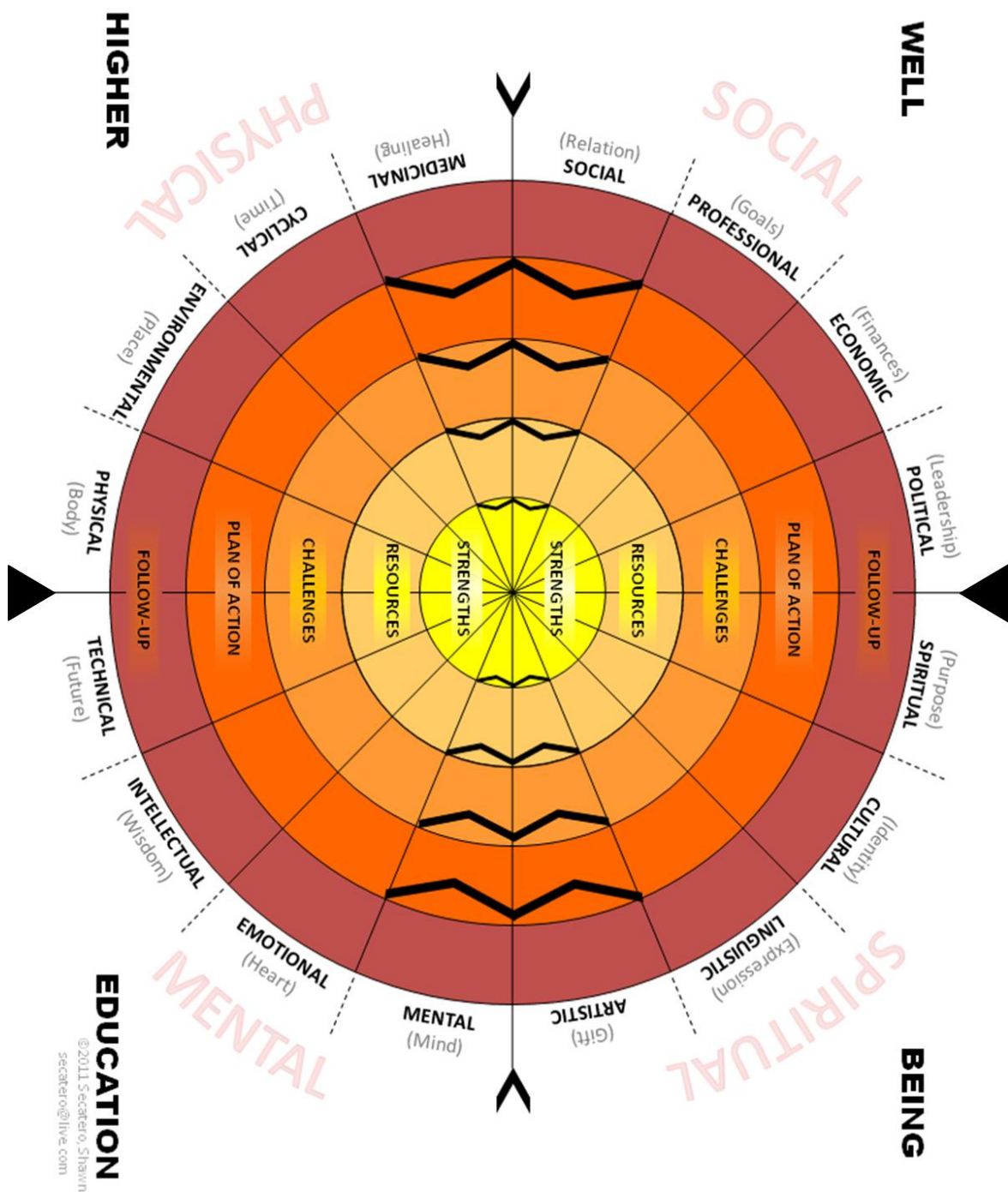**HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) Family Education Model (FEM).**

This model is the third of the three indigenous models used to understand and explore the path of persistence for American Indian students. The HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) model is an indigenous-based model designed by American Indian staff from four Montana tribal colleges primarily for American Indian student persistence. The model describes a college environment that values and promotes family involvement by inviting those close to the student to attend social and cultural activities held at the college. When student's families or relatives participate in these activities, they find their own sense of "fitting in" to college and any hesitation towards the student attending college disappears. HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) write, "Establishing and maintaining a sense of 'family' both at home and at college fortifies American Indian students' academic persistence" (p. 3). The FEM suggest establishing a family structure within the college environment to promote a positive integration of American Indian students on the college campus.

One of the two founders of the FEM model Dr. Iris Heavy Runner-Pretty Paint in a key note speech (2013) asked the audience "What Makes Students Strong"? She answered this question by referring to diversity among tribal nations and their governments along with tribal colleges makes a student strong. She also talked about the principles of sovereignty being power and control and that we should focus on strengths and why students are staying in college.

Larimore and McClellan (2005) applied resiliency theory (Clark, 2002) to the question of Native American persistence in higher education using the Family Education Model and found it to be a useful in addressing Native American retention in education.

Also, Lee, Donlan, and Brown (2010) findings provide empirical support for the Family Education Model. In addition, Guillory (2009) presents findings from a qualitative study examining the similarities and differences between American Indian/Alaska Native student perceptions and others about persistence factors and barriers to degree completion. He found that there is significant difference in perceptions and agreed with HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) who said that "institutions fail to recognize the disconnect between the institutional values and [Indian] student/family values; hence the real reasons for high attrition rates among disadvantaged students are never addressed" (p. 8). While Marcus (2011) employed HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) FEM Model as part of his theoretical framework in his study identifying barrier and factors that influence persistence for first-year American Indian students who participated in a university summer bridge program

McAfee (1997, 2000), Secatero (2009, 2010), and Heavyrunner and DeCelles (2002) studies provide a good understanding and background to identifying and explaining student persistence, which is important to recognize and acknowledge for American Indian students to persist in college. These studies provide recommendations for higher education institutions that are interesting in helping and sustaining American Indian students. The following is a review of the literature that addresses factors that aid and hinder the academic success of American Indian college students.

Review of Research and Theory about American Indians in Higher Education

To understand American Indian higher education today starts with understanding its history with colleges. It was impossible for educated American Indians in the colonial years to participate and fit in both their tribal and non-tribal world (Oosahwe, 2008).

Past. The colonial era begins with the first contact between European and Native American people and extends to the Revolution War. In this era, three of the nine original colonial colleges included educating American Indians in their statements of purpose or mission. With respect to their statements, colleges shifted their focus from educating American Indians to focusing on religion. Harvard University, the College of William and Mary, and Dartmouth College enrolled 47 American Indian students with only four graduating in 80 years (Carney, 1999, p. 31).

Hale (2002) informs us that prior to any settlers arriving on this continent, tribes had their own formal and informal way of educating their children. She wrote, "Scholars, intellectuals, and elders ensured that the collective wisdom identifying each tribe was preserved and handed on the next generation, so that young men and women learned the tribal customs, stories, health practices, and rites and rituals" (p. 11). The education American Indians received was not useable in their tribal communities and their communities received them with suspicion if they went back.

After the colonial colleges' weak effort to enroll American Indians, came a devastating time in education referred to as the "Federal Period." The federal era begins with treaty relationships between the United States government and American Indian nations following the American Revolution and extending through the start of the movement toward Native American self-determination (AIHEC, 2000; Carney, 1999). In this era, 97 treaties were signed addressing education for American Indians, which resulted in the United States government creating a trustee responsibility for American Indian education as the subject of these treaty obligations and succeeding legislation. As a result, "monies were given to prestigious universities…to be used specifically to cover

tuition and living expenses Native American boys and they were to receive instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, as well as catechism" (Kickingbird & Kickingbird, 1979, pp. 14-15). In actuality, very few American Indian boys ever attended the colleges. The aim of education was to induct American Indians into a European worldview for the purpose that American Indians would help their lot in life if they would take on European ways (Hale, 2002).

When the federal government took control over the life of American Indian people, it is also a time where the government focus changed from assimilation to one of elimination. The federal government enacted the Allotment Act of 1887 and the Curtis Act of 1898 to reduce tribal nations (Carney, 1999). The first attempt to destroy tribal government came through the Allotment Act, which is legislation that called for taking land from the tribal nations and dividing it among individual tribal members for their personal control and ownership. Carney (1999) writes, "The intent was to break the tribal structure, leaving only individuals to be absorbed into American society" (p. 55). Eliminating tribal government came in the Curtis Act, which is legislation that resulted in tribes losing their ability to self-govern their own tribal nations and members. American Indians are still dealing with the effects of these enactments as land disputes exist today because of the Allotment Act of 1887.

After surviving the invasion of the Europeans significant changes occurred emerging a commonly used term that is still used today called Self-Determination and where policy changes were made at the federal level. A report titled "The Problem of Indian Administration," commonly referred to as the Merriam Report, condemned the government's management of Indians by revealing the poor living, health, and

educational conditions of these people. The report demanded change that included

dispose of boarding schools and establishing public schools on the reservations. The

report also insisted that that American Indians should attend college and receive training

to work in professional positions (Oosahwe, 2008; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Overall, the

Merriam report opened the eyes of many to demand positive government changes to

improve the livelihood of American Indian people.

From the Merriam Report came the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 that re-

established tribal government self-governance (AIHEC, 2000; Carney, 1999). The tribes

regained governance of their own people and destiny starting with the elimination of the

Allotment Act and writing their own tribal constitutions. McIntosh (1987) notes, "To

implement the 'self-determination' goal, each Indian community must authorize an

education committee from out of its members," (p. 8) giving tribes self-governance over

their tribal members educational needs. During this time, the Johnson O'Malley Act was

initially a contracting system used to pay local districts to enroll American Indian

students. Prior to that, it was a piecemeal process affecting very small numbers of

students (Leary, 2005).

The establishment of American Indian studies programs within colleges initiated

the appreciation of the American Indian culture and insisted that the curriculum is one

avenue to bring in the culture rather suppressing or eradicating it (AIHEC, 2000).

Scholarship programs appropriated through the Bureau of Indian Affairs designated tribal

grant funds for American Indian higher education (Carney, 1999). Tribally Controlled

Community College Act of 1978 legislation lead to the opening of tribal colleges for the

purpose of bridging American Indian students and the predominately white world by

providing emotional, academic and financial support and assistance. In addition, it helps American Indian student who 'step out' from a predominately-white college to re-enroll. Tribal colleges also play a significant role in providing specialized training to prepare students for upcoming job opportunities off the reservation, but with-in travel distance (Belgarde, 1996).

Present. In spite of the past, tribes and American Indian families are encouraging their youth to attend college. According to Knapp et al. (2012), enrollment for American Indian students in college has increased in the last 36 years growing from about 76,100 in 1976 to 166,000 in 2011 with 46% of those students attending a 4-year institution (p. 20). This shows that American Indian students are entering colleges at all levels.

American Indians are entering college while at the same time their persistent rates are up for debate. The nature of the debate resides in the disproportion between American Indian students and others persisting in college to attain a degree. Retention rates reported for first year college students is 45% to 54% (United States Department of Education, 1998, p. 1; Wells, 1997), while estimate reports for dropping out of college were 75% to 93% for American Indian students (Guyette & Heth, 1984, p. 23; Brown & Robinson Kurpius, 1997, p. 3). The data reflects that 56% of the general population is able to earn a college degree within six years compared to 36% for American Indians. This rate is below other minority student groups in higher education (Oosahwe, 2008; Reddy, 1993; United States Department of Education, 1998, p. 1).

According to DeVoe and Darling-Churchill (2008) the results of a study in 2007 on educational attainment of American Indian/Alaska Native adults 25 and over indicated that 44% of American Indian/Alaska Native had attended at least some college. The

table in Appendix A-6 on page 231 reveals that approximately 36% had finished high school without continuing onto post secondary education and 20% had not finished high school.

College and universities are becoming more diverse as their minority enrollments increase. American Indians in higher education has doubled from 1976-2011 but in comparison with other minority student groups, their participation is lower. In 2011, a smaller percentage of American Indians were enrolled in the fall 2011 semester than other minority student groups. For example, according to Knapp et al. (2012) the table in Appendix A-7 on page 232 shows that a total of only 0.8% of American Indians were enrolled in the fall of 2011 compared with 54.6% of Whites, 5.4% of Asian, 13.8% of Blacks, and 13.1% of Hispanic. Enrollment in 4-year and 2-year undergraduate programs for American Indian students revealed equal distribution while the general population revealed significantly more students were enrolled in 4-year than 2-year undergraduate program for the fall 2011 semester.

Between 1980 and 2006, college enrollment of male and female American Indians grew at different rates. The figure in Appendix B-2 on page 235 shows that in 1980, there was a near parity between the American Indian males and females but from 1990 thru 2006, females at an increasing rate surpassed males enrolled in colleges. According to DeVoe and Darling-Churchill (2008), in 2006, 111,000 American Indian/Alaska Native females (61%) and 71,200 males (39%) were enrolled in institutions of higher education which is a difference of 22 percentage points, placing them second overall race/ethnicity groups to Blacks who had a 30% gender gap in 2006.

The past and present review of American Indians in higher education depict that physiologically they have experienced centuries of being treated differently by the majority culture. To address this disparity is to gain a deeper understanding of factors that negatively influence their persistence in higher education.

Review of Research and Theory about American Indian Persistence Factors

This section synthesizes multiple qualitative studies to stream line the varying persistence factors. In their qualitative study utilizing the interview design with 125 American Indian and Alaska Native college students, Falk and Aitken (1984) found four interwoven factors of support. The factor identified in the literature of college readiness, institutional support, nation support, and financial aid along with sufficient student motivation to connect and build American Indian student persistence in higher education. (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Hoover & Jacobs, 1992; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991)

College Readiness. Students continue to enter college unprepared for the intellectual rigidity and no thoughts of how to manage academic rigor with personal activities and needs. Lau (2003) reports that students, who lack basic math and writing skills, struggle to manage the basic academic rigor of attending college. For example, the sample of students they studied almost 10 years ago revealed that insufficient preparation was an issue (Pewewardy & Frey, 2004). A report by ACT in 2013, "The Condition of College and Career Readiness: National," which focused on the college and career readiness levels of the ACT tested United States high school graduating class of 2013 which presented 54.3% of all 2013 graduates in the United States (p. 1). The figure in Appendix B-3 on page 236 reveals that Native students who took the ACT in 2012 scored significantly less than white graduates at the college-ready level in math and reading.

Wright and Tierney (1991) describe how American Indian students come from poor remote rural areas where only three out of 100 ninth graders will attain a 4-year degree. Guillory (2009) agrees that school systems in American Indian communities are below the national education standards and that this produces students who are not prepared because they avoid taking higher level academic courses that prepare them for college. They suggest that if K-12 schools improve along with demanding teaching excellence may increase the chances of American Indian students earning a college degree. American Indian students who are not college ready enter college and have to play "catch up" because they are required to take remedial courses before they can take courses toward attaining a degree. Guillory (2009) notes that students do not realize they have some catching up to do until they start college. Boose, Duncan, Gapp, and Newland (2011) and Gilbert (2000) are studies that both found that American Indian students who did not receive college preparation in high school were more likely to drop out of college. In a report published by The Education Trust and Equal Opportunity Schools in 2013, "Finding America's Missing AP and IB students," which looked at gaps in participation rates in Advance Placement (AP) courses and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs by race and family income. The figure in Appendix B-4 on page 236 reveals that Native students are less likely to attend a high school that offers AP courses than other race/ethnic student groups.

Statistics report that American Indians have devastating high school drop-out percentages (Swanson, 2004) and are less prone to complete college introductory classes in high school (Chavers, 2002; Greene & Forster, 2003; Planty, Bozick, & Ingels, 2006) and have college attrition and retention percentages below other student groups in the

United States (Devoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008; Hunt & Harrington, 2008). Brown and Kurpius (1997) connect college persistence to the amount of high school preparation. They recommend that American Indian students receive additional training in study skills and college preparation. Hoover and Jacobs (1992) uphold that high school guidance counselors do not adequately prepare American Indian with planning for higher education and careers. Less adequate exposure to guidance and preparation results in students not being ready for college and/or the workforce.

Research indicates that taking academically challenging courses in high school correlates to attending or succeeding in college and doing well in the workforce (Achieve, Inc., 2009; Adelman, 1999). National studies report that unlike their peers American Indian high school graduates are less likely to have completed college introductory classes necessary for college entrance and preparation (Greene & Forster, 2003; Planty, Bozick, & Ingels, 2006).

Students whose parents did not attend college are limited to where they can gain information about college (McDonough, 1997, 2004, 2005). In larger school districts, access to college/career counselors is available by track placement. This means that if students are not successfully completing college preparatory courses, they will not receive information about college (McDonough, 2004, 2005; Oakes, 1985). Research reflects diversified classroom instruction that uses culturally relevant curriculum, tribal language, and positive identities of American Indian people predict higher grades, self-esteem, and high school graduation rates (Campbell, 2007; Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997; Demmert 2001: Deyhle, 1995, 1998; Ledlow, 1992; McCardle & Demmert, 2006). Early-intervention programs begin in middle school for promoting college aspirations to

improve the likelihood that a student will attend college and outreach programs provide a "Safety net for thousands of students who do not get the level of support, academic and social, within their current academic environments to become college ready" (Swail & Perna, 2002, p. 16). It is vital to reach out to youth early to discuss higher education regularly throughout their middle and high school years.

      Institutional Support. This section explores six areas in which institutions can provide support to American Indians and they are; administrative support, differing perspectives, a better understanding, Indigenous knowledge, campus climate, and policies and practices. Next administrative support is explored.

      Regardless of positive expression, mainstream universities campus environments do not feel welcoming to American Indian students (Bass, 1971; Benjamin, Chambers, & Reiterman, 1993; Houser, 1991; Kahout & Kleinfeld, 1974; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Pavel & Colby, 1992; Woodcock & Alawiye, 2001; Wright, 1990a). Tierney (1992) points to administrative support as a possible negative experience for Indigenous students in higher education. Universities interested in changing this perception must start with having honest assessments of their campus environments. This includes answering questions like; are the colleges unreceptive to other ways of thinking and interacting, is the college welcoming in different viewpoints, and is there a place for American Indian students to engage in school in ways that are comfortable for them (Brayboy, Fann, Castagno, & Solyom, 2012). Lack of administrative support and differing perspectives are examples of things that universities can change to better serve American Indians. Next differing perspectives are explored.

Differing perspectives does impact an American Indian's persistence in higher education. Jennings (2004) states that, "Opposing worldviews and different understanding of the function of education in society has been at the root of failed programs and inappropriate structural responses" (p. 5). In their study, Guillory and Wolverton (2008) compared American Indian students' perspectives with the perspectives of college staff regarding the barriers and factors to persistence in higher education. They interviewed 30 students and 15 college staff at three different public higher education institutions in the western United States. The study revealed that college staff acknowledged financial support and academic preparation as the primary persistence factors affecting American Indian students. However, the students acknowledged family, giving back to their tribal communities and on-campus social support as persistence factors with the core barriers residing in family, being a single parent, not prepared for the academic rigor, and having unmet financial need. Next gaining a better understanding is explored.

Colleges that increase their knowledge and awareness about the unique experiences, expectations, and goals of AI/AN people(s) and nations are more successful in retaining this student population. As Austin (2005) notes, for colleges to gain a better understanding of American Indian people and nations, colleges need to be more knowledgeable and aware of the unique political status of American Indian people so they can understand students and the responsibility institution's have toward American Indian students and communities. For example, Fixico (1995) writes the following:

In the educational process of American Indian students attending mainstream schools, students are compelled to understand or perceive everything from the

45

mainstream point of view. But the instructor should be cognizant that traditional

Indian youths also possess a Native perspective that is likely incongruent with

mainstream thinking. For these students, they are learning in an alien culture.

This unacknowledged and unaccounted for conflict between perspectives has

resulted in many Indian student doing poorly in school and dropping out. (pp.

108-109)

McClellan, Fox, and Lowe (2005) suggest that higher education professionals develop

their awareness about American Indians and their traditions to better serve and support

them without generalizing, instead expanding appreciation for the diversity that exists

among them. Having an understanding for indigenous theories, models, and practices is

essential when supporting and serving American Indian students, staff, and faculty. Next

Indigenous knowledge is explored.

This understanding also includes that of Indigenous knowledge. Institutions

where knowledge systems are centered not willing to incorporate other knowledge

systems are only serving themselves and individuals like themselves. Brayboy (2009)

describes this for American Indians as Indigenous knowledge meaning that knowledge in

predominately white colleges is achievement motivated rather than relational. For

example, skill sets from predominately white colleges measure performance and oral

skills where Indigenous knowledge values reproduction. Taking it to a deeper

understanding is that American Indians have referred predominately white college's

teachings as more linear and focused on themselves that leads to one to wonder if they

can see or hear anyone else. Where American Indian students want to build and make

connections that are more circular or holistic to construct knowledge that serves others because throughout their history it was essential for cultural survival and well-being.

Brayboy and Maughan (2009) describes Indigenous knowledge well writing that "Indigenous peoples come to know things by living their lives and adding to a set of cumulative experiences that serve as guideposts for both individuals and communities over time" (p. 3). The purpose of Indigenous knowledge is to broaden other knowledge systems. For institutions to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the campus knowledge system as both being worthy and useful will transform the campus climate from a place of destruction to a place of hope and possibility for American Indian students. Next campus climate is explored.

Understanding and analyzing the campus climate is an important part of examining the persistence of American Indian students in higher education. An emerging theme coming from studies employing the Critical Race Theory (CRT) which TribalCrit is rooted in has a framework that points to the devastating effects of racial microaggression and its impact on campus climate for non-white students. As reported by Carroll (1998); Guinier, Fine, and Blain (1997); Hurtado (1992); and Hurtado, Milem Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1999), institutions supporting a positive campus racial climate for minorities incorporate: inclusion of minority students, faculty, and administrators; a curriculum reflecting accurate historical and contemporary experiences of minorities; programs to support the recruitment, retention, and graduation of minorities; and a mission that strengthens the institutions investment to diversity and pluralism. Racial microaggressions for American Indians in academia can lead to students struggling with feelings of self-doubt, frustration, and isolation.

Issues negatively affecting the campus climate include the use of American Indian mascots and artifacts. Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, and Stone (2008) identified the presence of Native mascots as a campus climate issue and Brayboy et at.,. (2012) sharing the American Psychological Association reports regarding the use of American Indian mascots and artifacts as damaging to the education and health of Indigenous people and society. Referencing practical studies, the report stated that college should not use mascots and artifacts because of the negative effects it has on students' lives and community in general. In a case study conducted by Fryberg et at.,, (2008) addressing the mascot controversy of whether Indian mascots have a positive or negative association for American Indians uncovered in all five of their study scenarios that mascots do result in negative associations for American Indians. Next policies and practices will be explored.

Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) discuss how colleges continue to use policies and practices that lead to low graduation percentages for American Indian students. Their work focuses on bias and prejudice within higher education that presents barriers to American Indian earning a college degree. Institutions can develop successful enrollment and retention programs by incorporating culture-related extracurricular activities on campus (Hoover & Jacobs, 1992) and reexamining the current practices to link differences between American Indian students, families, and leaders. Hiring faculty and staff that are American Indian will strengthen the continuity of American Indian higher education and research. Finally, it is essential for colleges to integrate American Indian people and their perspectives for improving American Indian higher education (McClellan et al., 2005).

Tribal Community. Brayboy (2005b) states that the main reason why American Indian students pursue postsecondary education is to serve their families and communities so they can improve their quality of life. However, unlike the perspective of mainstream society, a college degree does not give status in tribal communities because it is different from their traditional perspectives and values (Brade, Duncan, & Sokal, 2003; Brayboy, 2005b; Cunningham, McSwain, & Keselman, 2007; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Grande, 2004; Smith, 1999; Waterman, 2007). In tribal communities, students' lives coexist with the lives of their entire communities, affecting both risks and opportunities (Besaw, Kalt, Lee, Sethi, Wilson, & Zemler, 2004).

American Indian culture includes views and values of knowledge in the context of respecting community and its relationship to survival that appreciates all personal lived experience. This knowledge then informs theory of the importance of rationality, respect, and reciprocity including the importance of land. The survival of an American Indian community is more important than any individual and Brayboy et at.,. (2012) write, "Individuals must act outside of their self-interests for those of the community and work toward their own betterment for the community's sake" (p. 16). For American Indians education is not for self-gain, but rather for communal gain.

Coffey and Tsosie (2001) write, "Cultural sovereignty is a process of reclaiming culture and of building nations" (p. 191). The process of exercising cultural sovereignty is to dedicate oneself to earning a college degree for the betterment of their family and community. Nation building encompasses intricate multifaceted aspects residing in the togetherness of the community as the motivation for nation building. In addition, support and encouragement from one's parent nurtures the desire to attend college (Auerbach,

2002; Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1998; McDonough, 1997; Stage & Hossler, 1989).

Financial Aid. Financial circumstances and college costs are barriers for many college students. American Indian students experience these barriers in addition to having unmet financial need and they do not receive resource material regarding how to access financial aid in a timely matter (Cunningham, McSwain, & Keselman, 2007; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Tierney, Sallee, & Venegas, 2007). Engle and Tinto (2008) found that over half of low-income students whose parents did not attend college would leave college after their first year, a rate four times greater than their peers would. They also found that only 11% of these at risk students would earn a bachelor's degree in six years, compared to 55% of their peers (p. 16).

According to DeVoe and Darling-Churchill (2008) and depicted in table Appendix A-8 on page 233 the 2003-04 school year American Indian undergraduates were in the second largest percentile to receive financial aid among all other race/ethnicity student groups. In addition, American Indians received on average $9,500, which was not significantly different from the average amount of aid received by other students.

A 2007 report notes that American Indian students have insufficient funds to pay for higher education and that they do not want to incur debt from loans to pay for their college expenses emphasizing the difficulty American Indian students experience with financial aid. The report reveals a decrease in the percentage of American Indian undergraduates receiving financial aid yet maintaining the second rank compared to all other race/ethnicity student groups (Tierney, Sallee, & Venegas, 2007). While this seems

to be an insignificant difference to what DeVoe and Darling-Churchill (2008) reported, a closer look at the amount of aid that students received by Tierney et al. (2007) suggests otherwise.

> The national average amount of federal or state aid is $6,892 per student. For American Indian students, the average amount of financial aid awards is $6,413, ranking fourth out of the five categories of race/ethnicity groups. There is a difference of $479 between the average aid received and the average aid received by American Indians. One semester of full-time tuition is $479 for community colleges in New Mexico, or up to 25% of community college or regional four-year college tuition rates in states like Montana and Arizona. These gaps in funding can make the difference in deciding whether or not to purse postsecondary education. (p. 19)

Even though American Indian students have a varying range of additional financial aid and rules for accessing these funds it creates additional layers of red tape within an already burdensome and intricate system (Tierney et at.,. 2007).

Over the last 20 years, St. John (1991, 2004) noted that the cost of college has increased while the federal Pell grants reduced by more than 50% (p. 7). This initiated states to implement new grant programs that resulted in favoring White students from stable income backgrounds, but not for minority students. Most states have yet to implement grant programs to equalize college access for poor and working-class students.

The state of Wisconsin offers five need-based financial aid grant programs which are listed in Table 2 which includes one grant specific for American Indian students.

Table 2

Which Grants are Available at Which Schools

GRANT	University of Wisconsin System	Wisconsin Technical Colleges	Independent Colleges & Universities	Tribal Colleges	For-Profit Schools	Out-of-State Schools
Wisconsin Higher Education Grant	X	X		X		
Wisconsin Tuition Grant			X			
Talent Incentive Program Grant	X	X	X	X		
Indian Student Assistance Grant	X	X	X	X	X	
Minority Undergraduate Retention Grant		X	X	X		
Hearing & Visually Handicapped Student Grant	X	X	X	X		X

Copied from http://www.heab.state.wi.us/programs.html

Under the Wisconsin State Statute 39.38 for Indian Student Assistance describes a grant program for Wisconsin residents who are at least one/fourth American Indian and are undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in programs at higher education institutions located in Wisconsin. Awards are based on financial need with a lifetime of 10 semesters and for a maximum of $2,200 per year. However, according to the Wisconsin Indian Education Association Issue Paper dated February 23, 2011, this original level was cut in half in 1996 and has increased with the overall number of American Indians attending college. Today, the grant remains funded from Indian

gaming dollars yet it covers less of the costs associated with college attendance than years past.

Review of Research and Theory about Tribal Identity

The concept of tribal identity and its impact on American Indians in higher education is important. Glatzmaier, Myers, and Bordogna (2000) consider the connection between American Indian cultural identity and history when they say "cultural persecution and survival of their ancestors as well as themselves affect current believes and values, held by members of this group and the practices they perform, and also affects how they teach others and their children about their culture" (p. 7). Others connect being raised and living in unhealthy environments to influencing tribal identity. Brown (2003) connects that "American Indian adolescents face several unique challenges as they attempt to identify to identify themselves, encountering a high prevalence of alcoholism and poverty associated with their ethnic group; such factors may make their search for identification longer and more difficult" (p. 6).

Okagaki, Helling, and Bingham (2009) supports Huffman's (2001) observations that students who are able to manage their American Indian culture while at the same time integrating into the majority culture have related beliefs and a healthy higher education experience. Huffman (2001) termed these types of students as being "transculturated" (p. 1) because they could freely socialize and interact in two worlds, which contributes to college persistence. Huffman's (2001) also found that students with the ability to get strength from within tapping into their tribal identity when experiencing barriers and difficulties on campus were more successful earning a college degree than students with no sense of bicultural competency.

For American Indians college success is being participating members of their tribal communities while meeting the academic rigor and social activities of their college community. Okagaki et al. (2009) found that American Indian students perceived that persisting and earning a college degree influenced what they thought about themselves. These authors also found that American Indians students understood their backgrounds and were interested in learning about their cultural heritage. The ability to manage two worlds while persisting in college is to maintain culture while transitioning tribal communities out of poverty.

Establishing tribal identity as an American Indian can be complex (Shaefer, 2004) so it is helpful when working with them to identify with their tribal culture and family traditions (Garrett & Herring, 2001; Heinrich, Corbine, & Thomas, 1990; Sutton & Broken Nose, 1996; Wetsit, 1999). Individuals working with the diversity among American Indian people should care for each person separately and avoid generalizing (Skouras, 1998). American Indian people make up 1.5% of the of the total United States population setting them apart from other minority groups and resulting in less exposure and education about American Indian culture (NCES, 2012, p. 3). This suggests that American Indians may find themselves in situations where they are educating an instructor or entire classroom on American Indian culture, traditions, and issues.

Cultural, racial, and self-identities connect to conflicts of identity for American Indian people and their values. Sutton and Broken Nose (1996) suggest that a person "would do well to acknowledge a client's depth of loss of his or her culture, even for those who are assimilated, and are grieving for what they never had" (p. 35). For example, an American Indian student could identify as American Indian and have no

connection to American Indian cultural values. The levels at which American Indian people categorize themselves are as different as tribal nations are today. When colleges attempt to attain American Indian students, they need to take into consideration the wide range of student and identification issues related to this student group to increase their numbers while also bringing in a diverse perspective to expand student learning.

Tribal identity is a factor for American Indians in predominately-white colleges yet tribal colleges are successful at making these students feel comfortable and at home while on campus. Predominately white colleges who want to serve their American Indian students better may want to examine tribal colleges and their approach with tribal identity.

Review of Research and Theory about Tribal Colleges

The civil rights movement of the 1960s changed a generation of people and their attitudes towards different cultural groups and the need to support and celebrate these differences (Hale, 2002). The changing attitude gave many tribes and native communities an opportunity to form organizations to help improve educational opportunities. Tribal colleges originated to meet the needs of Native Americans who lived on reservations, which were far from urban areas where most mainstream colleges and universities are located (Cole & Denzine, 2002).

Researchers such as HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) describe the inception of tribal colleges as a product of the self-determination movement. From this movement, President Carter signed the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 into law. This allowed tribal college's access to federal funding that was previously unavailable to them. Cole and Denzine (2002) remind us that tribal college's purpose is

to provide American Indians a culturally relevant education, along with more accessibility for meeting their family and tribal responsibilities.

Getting to college is a major factor for American Indians. Boyer (1997) found that physical distance of the college, poor academic preparation, and lack of confidence ends with students more likely to dropout or even go to college. Having a moral purpose and mission where cultural ways of life are inherent in teaching at tribal colleges leads to these colleges excelling by allowing students to remain Indian and practice tribal customs. This philosophy not only helps the student, but the community as well (Pavel & Colby, 1992).

There is a unique relationship between the United States and Indian tribes, along with the United States and Alaskan Natives. In 2002, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13270, which ensured the nation's commitment to educational excellence and opportunities extended to the tribal colleges and universities. The Executive Order states:

> Tribal colleges are both integral and essential to their communities. Often they are the only postsecondary institutions within some of our nation's poorest rural areas. They fulfill a vital role: in maintaining and preserving irreplaceable languages and cultural traditions; in offering a high-quality college education to younger students; and in providing job training and other career0building programs to adults and senior citizens. Tribal colleges provide crucial services in communities that continue to suffer high rates of unemployment and the resulting social an economic distress. (United States Department of Education, 2002, para. 3)

One of the main purposes of the Executive Order was for the federal government to reaffirm its commitment to tribal colleges in providing educational excellence by implementing the innovations and reforms of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110).

Boyer (1997) describes tribal colleges as a mirror of the populations they are supposed to serve. They are generally small, geographically isolated, underfunded, and in danger of losing their distinct form (Boyer, 1997). Martin (2005) agrees that tribal colleges do provide culturally relevant, holistic, and participatory educational experiences. There are currently 37 tribal colleges and universities within the United States with two tribal colleges located in Wisconsin. One Wisconsin tribal college is the College of Menominee Nation, which has two campuses. The main campus is in Keshena and its satellite campus is in Green Bay. The other Wisconsin tribal college is Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC), which has five campuses. The main campus is in Hayward and its four satellite campuses are in LCOOCC North (by Washburn), Lac du Flambeau (by Minocqua), and St. Croix (by Hertel). Collectively tribal colleges share the following characteristics:

1. A small student body, primarily made up of American Indians;

2. An open admissions policy (high school diploma or earned GED within the first semester of attendance);

3. Established initially as a vocational school or community college offering trade certificates and 2-year degrees, but then add bachelor and later even master's degrees.

4. The figure in Appendix B-5 on page 237 shows that a flourishing growth rate of

23% between the fall of 2001 to 2006. (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008)

Although research points to tribal colleges as a culturally appropriate form of

higher education for American Indians, not all researchers concurred. Szasz (1974)

criticized federal policy and the Bureau of Indian Affairs with perpetuating the disparity

in American Indian education. She argued that mainstream colleges and universities

should also be responsible for providing culturally appropriate education for American

Indians. A later study concurred with Szasz's criticisms. Whitehorse (1992), echoing

earlier research (Szasz, 1974), stated "An embedded notion was that Indian students

could only satisfy cultural education needs in tribal colleges: that they had to divest

themselves of cultural considerations to attend mainstream colleges" (p. 36). Tribal

colleges cannot compete with various services and degree programs offered at

mainstream colleges and universities. "Tribal colleges currently offer 2-year associate's

degrees in over 200 disciplines and over 200 vocational certificates, yet 60% of their

educational courses are remedial" (J. Moore, personal conversation, 2011, in Bergstrom,

2012). Even though some view the majority of tribal college classes as remedial, they

remain a vital bridge between American Indian students and predominately-white

institutions.

Review of Research and Theory about Mohican Nation

The Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians also known as the

Muh-he-con-ne-ok "People of the Waters that Are Never Still" is a federally recognized

Indian Tribe with a constitution approved November 18, 1937. History starts recording

contact with the tribe back in 1609 with Henry Hudson writings regarding his discovery

of the Mohican Indians (Davids, 2004; Loew, 2013). As a tribal nation their ancestors

came from the East relocating eight times to the present day reservation in 1937, which is

symbolized through the Many Trails design which continually reminds all Mohicans of

their past struggles to survive and their need to stay united to ensure the future of the

tribe.

<div align="center">**The Muh-he-con-ne-ok**</div>

Many Trails is an original design created and designed around 1965 by
Edwin Martin, a Mohican Indian. The Many Trails symbolizes
endurance, strength and hope from a long-suffering proud and
determined people. The curved shape represents arms raised in
prayer. The circles represent many campfires. The lines represent the
many trails taken from the time the Mohicans left their ancestral home.

Today, Mohican Nation is one of the 11 federally recognized American Indian

tribes in Wisconsin with their reservation located in Shawano County, Wisconsin on

23,575 acres. The reservation incorporates 17,217 acres in trust and 6,358 acres in fee

lands all located within the Townships of Bartelme and Red Springs (Loew, 2013).

The 2010 Census noted an unemployment rate of 8.7% on the Stockbridge-

Munsee Reservation. Eighty percent of the workforce was employed within Shawano

County. Currently, the Mohican North Star Casino and Bingo is the largest employer in

Shawano County with 446 employees, of which approximately 14% are enrolled

Stockbridge-Munsee. An additional 12% are either direct descendants or spouses of

enrolled members (P.L. 102-477 program plan, 2011-2014).

Gaming has significantly stimulated the reservation's economy. As a result, the

Tribal Government itself has expanded to employ 370 persons in areas of Administration,

Health and Family Services, Public Safety, Education, Elderly Services, and others. Of

these employees, 54.3% are enrolled members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe (P.L. 102-477 program plan, 2011-2014). Aside from Tribal governmental operations, Tribal businesses include The Mohican North Star Casino & Bingo, Mohican RV Park, Pine Hills Golf Course & Supper Club, Mohican LP Gas, Little Star Convenience Store, and Stockbridge-Munsee Health and Wellness Center. Private businesses in the area which are owned by tribal members include: Arrowhead Log Homes, Headquarters General Store, Konkapot Lodge, and Cameron Construction.

According to the 2010 United States Census Report, there are a total of 1,744 persons living on the reservation, of which 61% are Native American. Approximately 20.6% of the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe's workforce does not have a high school diploma or GED (P.L. 102-477 program plan, 2011-2014). While the majority of local jobs are restricted to those who have a GED or High School diploma, the workforce has tightened in local areas recently and there is more pressure on existing employees to complete a GED. However, as technological advances are made, computers are becoming an essential tool for increasing numbers of employees, and it is necessary to ensure that all Tribal members become computer literate.

The Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians administers a higher education grant program that is funded through federal and tribal resources to provide financial aid to enrolled members of Stockbridge-Munsee who are accepted into an accredited higher education institution that are not classified as "For Profit". The last time the grant funding was modified was back in the 2004 fiscal year, yet the Fast Facts on tuition costs of colleges and universities shared with the education board and then tribal council from the U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education

Statistics (2012) reported that, "Between 2000-2001 and 2010-2011, prices for undergraduate tuition, room, and board at public institutions rose 42% and prices at private not-for-profit institutions rose 31%, after adjustment for inflation" (p. 1). Therefore, on October 23, 2012, tribal leaders approved to increase the grant amount by 30% as presented and recommended by the education board.

The grant is determined by the school's financial aid office and based on the Stockbridge-Munsee Higher Education guidelines. The grant provides supplemental grant monies for "educational" expenses. It is not intended to replace annual income or meet total personal/household expenses. The program is intended to assist members with their employment and training needs through higher education in order to develop more fully their academic, occupational, and literacy skills. This results with tribal members improving their employability by being more competitive in the workforce while also improving the economic and social development for themselves and the community in which they live.

Summary of Findings and Themes within Reviewed Literature

The above review of literature represents the theoretical framework related to the research questions addressed by the study. This final chapter section summarizes prominent themes and findings within the framework. This summarization will serve as a base for comparison of study findings to relevant literature in Chapter Five.

Theme/Finding: American Indian student persistence in higher education

Garrett and Pichette (2000) describes the calculated attempts by government agencies, schools, and churches throughout United States history to change the American Indian family, clan, tribal structure, religious belief systems and practices, customs, and

traditional way of life as these practices are indicators of the challenges that face many tribes across the country. American Indian students remain underrepresented in higher education (Tierney, 1992). The literature indicates that this group of students are admitted to college at an increasing rate while persisting in college at lower rate (Jackson, Smith, & Hill, 2003; Schaefer, 2004). Assessing college has improved for American Indian students but persisting through to earning a college degree is not improving at the same rate (Jackson et al., 2003; Reddy, 1993).

The literature review documents American Indian students are experiencing difficulty with persisting in higher education (Astin, Tsui, & Avalos, 1996; Pavel, Swisher, & Ward, 1994). Much of the literature focuses on identifying barriers to success and recommendations to help increase college degree completion rates for American Indian students. Literature points to factors affecting American Indian student college success and failure, which include college readiness, institutional support, nation support, and financial aid (Dehyle, 1992,; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Huffman, 1993, 1999, 2001; Huffman, Will, & Brokenleg, 1996; Jackson et al., 2003; Lin, 1985; Lin, LaCounte, & Eder, 1988; Scott, 1986; Wells, 1997).

The review of the literature reflects a new term used by researchers which is "bi-cultural identity", to describe the phenomena meaning a skill to balance two cultures where one has the ability to be accepted and thriving in both. Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman (1993) describes the skill of assuming worldview characteristics while maintaining a traditional culture view may be a factor in American Indian student success in college.

Forecast Chapter Three

This study is vital to sustaining Mohican Nation because without Mohican students earning college degrees, the living conditions of most Mohican people will not change no matter where they live. Sandefur (1991) suggests that increasing one's level of education decreases the possibility of living in poverty. Increasing the number of Mohican people with college degrees will address social issues to improve living conditions for their families and communities. This study uses a phenomenological research design to explore American Indian based theories and models to gain a deeper understanding of cultural relevancy utilizing Brayboy's (2005) tribal critical race theory and supportive models from McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model, Secatero (2009) Corn Model, and HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) Family Education Model (FEM) to search for the factors and strategies from Stockbridge-Munsee student experiences to persistence in college. The information gained is useful in serving students to degree completion so Mohican Nation can sustain as a self-governing government to improve education, health care, housing, and natural resource management for increasing the quality of life for all Stockbridge-Munsee tribal members.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Rationale

American Indian students face barriers in college that originates from a unique cultural background (Benjamin et al., 1993). Much of the research on American Indians used quantitative means. Hoffman, Jackson, and Smith (2005) challenge that conclusions from quantitative studies can reveal an optimistic representation of this population that may or may not fit its needs. This hint to use qualitative techniques can be more suitable for discerning and capturing the experiences of American Indian students. Critical race theory also influences the use of qualitative techniques in the form of personal stories to identify with people's experiences (Daniel, 2007). Alternatively, Brayboy's (2005) TribalCrit Theory is specific to American Indian people's experiences. This process is supported by other scholars who also recognize the value of identifying with the special class of cultural views for American Indian students which include descriptions of their experiences and views of significant factors in higher education success stories (Brown & Robinson Kurpius, 1997; Jackson & Smith, 2001; McWhirter, 1997). Figure 4 highlights the means, process, method and design employed to collect data for this study.

Figure 4

Stockbridge-Munsee Students with a minimum of 24 credits earned informing research about their persistence in Wisconsin Colleges

Stockbridge-Munsee Students with a minimum of 24 credits earned informing research about their persistence in Wisconsin Colleges

← TRIBALCRIT THEORY →

Document Review

Five Member Focus Group Interview

Qualitative Study

Phenomenological Design

DATA COLLECTION

Phenomenological Design

Qualitative Study

Five One-on-One Interviews

Adapted from Edwin Martin's (1965) "Many Trails" design.
Bowman, 2014
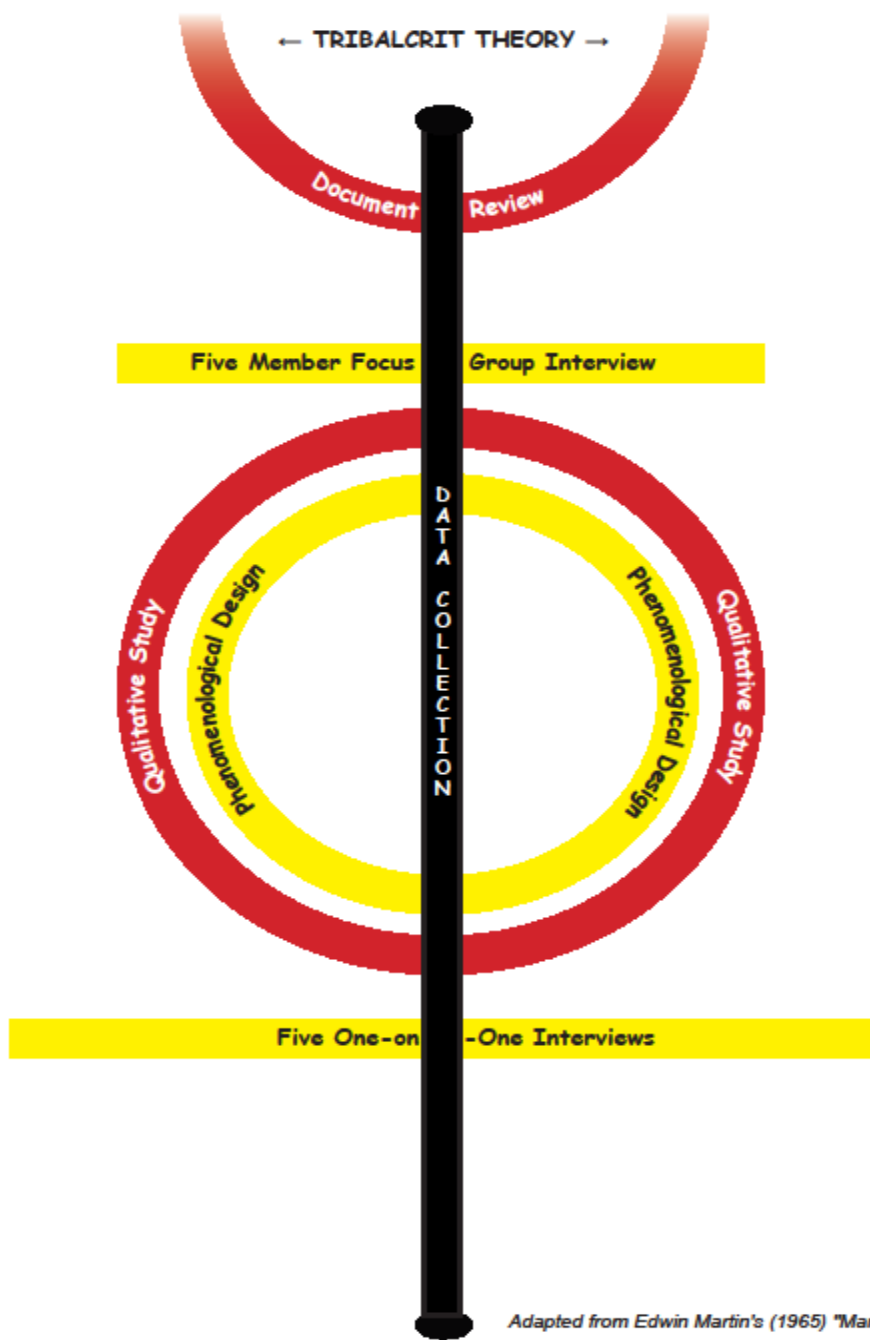
Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore Stockbridge-Munsee students'
experiences and strategies relating to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges by
uncovering barriers that come up in college while describing problem-solving strategies
for success. The plan is to share the findings attained through this study with future
students so they can learn from their relatives who persisted to attain a higher education
degree. The related research question is guided by the larger context of Indian Education
to find where Stockbridge-Munsee students fit in this larger picture and will include:

1. What were the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students who persisted to
    succeed in Wisconsin colleges?

    - Which experiences were perceived as positive?

    - Which experiences were perceived as negative?

    - Which experiences were perceived as strategic?

Research Approach

The research approach employed in the study was qualitative. A
phenomenological methodology was used to understand and explore Stockbridge-
Munsee's voices, stories, and experiences as perceptions of experiences and beliefs
related to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges to earn at least 24 credits. This
technique "describes the meaning of lived experiences for several individuals about a
concept or phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998, p. 51).

Nature of the Methodology

Qualitative research is a means by which a researcher is able to explore and understand the meaning that groups or individuals attribute to a social or human crisis. A qualitative crisis can come in five different forms; process, decision, incident, phenomenon, or culture (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) added that a qualitative study "attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings" (p. 139). The purpose of this methodology is to describe what a selected experience or phenomenon means to an individual through storytelling as stories reside within indigenous based epistemology. Cajete (1994) suggests stories are about "honoring a process for seeking life that American Indian people represent and reflect through their special connections to nature, family, community, and spiritual ecology. It is honoring connections and the place traditional teachings and learning have in American Indian life" (p. 23). Bruchac (2003) adds:

> Stories have always been at the heart of all our Native cultures. Although they have been classified as myths and legends or placed under the rubric of oral traditions, these powerful tales are not just spoken or written words to American Indian people. They are alive. Alive as breath and the wind that touches every corner of this land. Alive as memory, memory that shapes and explains a universe, alive, aware, and filled with power, our stores open our eyes and hearts to a world of animals and plants, of earth and water and sky. They take us under the skin and into the heartbeat of Creation. They remind us of the true meaning of all that lives. Our stores remember when we forget. (p. 35)

Therefore, the researcher conducted in depth interviews as the primary data collection tool. The study investigated the social issue of Stockbridge-Munsee students persisting in Wisconsin colleges and worked to understanding the essential qualities of that phenomenon from the lived experiences of those students. Their experiences and success strategies as they correlate to persistence were then examined for factors that promoted and hindered their higher education experience.

Cultural studies of anthropology and sociology were rooted in qualitative research until the 1980s when it expanded into education and other social sciences. This development opened the door for new strategies or methodologies and means of analysis to be employed in qualitative investigations. Qualitative encompasses numerous philosophies and methodologies with the commonality that knowledge is not objective and that "the researcher learns from participants to understand the meaning of their lives [while maintaining] a certain stance of neutrality" (Marshal, et al., 2006, p. 5). The nature of qualitative methodologies creates understandings through focused, purposeful conversations with one or many informants, which is inductive as it seeks to understand a decision, process, purpose, perception, incident, phenomenon, or culture without pre conceived notions or theory. With several philosophies under the umbrella of qualitative, this study focused on Stockbridge-Munsee students draws from a naturalist philosophy which assumes truth is dependent on experience, and that understanding context is imperative (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The goal of this investigation is to identify the conditional truth or "truth that holds at a particular time under specified circumstances" (Rubin et al., 2005, pp. 24-25). Stemming from the naturalist perspective is Brayboy's (2005) TribalCrit which has roots in critical theory to promote action for reducing

societal crises. Critical theory lends itself to empowering and giving a voice to individuals or groups of individuals who might not be heard otherwise. Therefore, interviewing is the main source of providing that voice to potentially uncover problems and potential solutions (Marshal et al., 2006; Rubin et al., 2005).

Appropriateness of the Methodology to the Research

Since the researcher's naturalistic epistemology according to Holloway (1997), Mason (1996) and Creswell (1994) is also viewed as theory of knowledge, which serves to decide how the social phenomena will be studied. Based on Davidson (2000) and Jones (2001), phenomenological methodology is the best means for this study. Phenomenologist does, in contrast to positivists, consider that the researcher cannot be separated from his/her own assumptions and that the researcher should not make believe differently (Hammersley, 2000). In addition, Mouton and Marais (1990) mention that individual researchers "hold explicit beliefs" (p. 12). Groenewald (2004) further states "To arrive at certainty, anything outside immediate experience must be ignored, and in this way the external world is reduced to the contest of personal consciousness" (p. 4). The intention of this research from the start was to gather stories regarding the experiences about the phenomenon of strategizing in higher education to persist and the contribution of Stockbridge-Munsee students negotiating, navigating, and problem solving their way through higher education.

The effectiveness of phenomenological research is that it tries to find what an experience means for the individuals who have had the experience by reviewing the individual descriptions that draw from broad or worldwide means (Moustakas, 1994). Understanding the lived experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students in postsecondary

institutions is vital and that is why the use of interviewing in research is most appropriate. This form of research studies lived experiences as well as "the way we understand those experiences to develop a world view" (Marshal et al., 2006, p. 104). According to Creswell (2007), "A phenomenological study describes the meaning of lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon" (p. 57). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) added that this type of study "attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings" (p. 139). The purpose of a phenomenological long interview technique as the objective of research is to be aware of Stockbridge-Munsee students' experiences in higher education from their own point of view. Specifically, this research will focus on the factors experienced and the strategies used by Stockbridge-Munsee students to thrive and persevere through college. Research questions will be answered with voluntary open responses from the participants.

The intent of the study is to elicit information from the stories to provide those who serve Stockbridge-Munsee students with insight from the student's perspective. As a result it might lead to academia practices that help to lessen the number of times that a Stockbridge-Munsee student steps out of college. The findings will also be beneficial in addressing the issues of persistence for American Indian students in general, which is a problem that impacts the greater good of society as a whole.

Research Plan

The foundation of the phenomenological framework in this study is an in depth document review connected to long interviews which consisted of; a focus group interview, and a series of one-to-one interviews. Patton (1990) states that "the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is . . . in someone else's mind" (p. 278). Therefore,

interview protocols and questions for the focus group interview can be seen in Appendix C-4 on page 242 and the one-on-one interviews in Appendix C-5 on page 245. This study employed "an informal, interactive process" using "open-ended comments and questions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114) "that have both social meaning and personal significance" which expand from an "interest in a particular problem or topic" because "personal history brings the core of the problem into focus" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 104). Sharing what one has learned is important in American Indian tradition. Archibald (2008) states "This type of sharing can take the form of a story of personal life experiences and is done with a compassionate mind and love for others" (p. 2). Wilson's (2008) Research is Ceremony speaks to building relationships because reality exists and the space between them is sacred. Ceremony bridges this sacred space and builds closer relationships.

Site and Sample

Selection and Description of Site

The researcher set up the focus group interview at a neutral site that was familiar to all participants. The site was at the Stockbridge-Munsee Education Building in the conference room located on the reservation at W13447 Camp 14 Road, Bowler, WI 54416. The participant selected the site for their one-on-one interviews, which took place at the following sites: two in the researcher's home at the kitchen table and three in the Stockbridge-Munsee (S/M) Education building with two in the conference room and one in the researcher's office. The researcher ensured that the sites had minimal distraction and noise to allow for adequate openness, privacy, and security.

Selection and Description of Sample

This study uses purposive sampling, considered by Welman and Kruger (1999) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling, to identify the participants. The participants were selected based on pre-determined criteria and the purpose of the research (Babbie, 1995; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Schwandt, 1997), looking for those who "have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Kruger, 1988 p. 150). The researcher made use of the Stockbridge-Munsee Education Administrative Assistant to identify participants who were: (1) Stockbridge-Munsee tribal citizens; (2) currently enrolled in a Wisconsin college; (3) in academic good standing at their institution; and (4) accrued at least 24 credits. The intent of these criteria is an attempt to identify Stockbridge-Munsee students who have thrived in persevering through their first year in college. The criteria of students having at least 24 credits earned guarantee that the students effectively completed their first year at a Wisconsin college. In addition, most students who have advanced to their sophomore year or beyond have stories to share of their college and life experiences. Additionally, the criteria that participants be members of the Stockbridge-Munsee tribe guarantee the researcher that all participants are American Indian.

Communication with Sample

In order to recruit participants for the study, the researcher gave a personal invitation (see Appendix C-1 on page 239) that describes the study and solicits participation by postal mail, using the names and contact information received from the S/M Education Administrative Assistant. The second method of communication to enlist the study's participants will be information sharing through the Stockbridge-Munsee

Community. This approach recognizes and values the importance of relationships within the community and seeks to locate research within that frame. When the researcher confirms a participant is going to be part of the sample, communication with the sample will include the use of phone, text, face-book, and/or email correspondence.

Data Collection

The specific 'phenomena' (from the Greek word phenomenon, meaning appearance) that the researcher focused on is the strategies that Stockbridge-Munsee students use to persist in Wisconsin colleges employing techniques of document review of the literature to guide one focus group interview and five one-on one interviews. The central research question was: What strategies do Stockbridge-Munsee students employ to persist in Wisconsin colleges? However, Bentz and Shapiro (1998) and Kensit (2000) caution that the researcher must allow the data to emerge: "Doing phenomenology" means capturing "rich descriptions of phenomena and their settings" (p. 104). For this reason, the actual research interview questions and protocol (see Appendix C-4 on page 242 and C-5 on page 245) that were put to the participants. Kvale (1996) draws a similar distinction between the research question and the interview question. Further, it is important to keep in mind that the findings may, or may not, illustrate that the practice of strategy to persist in Wisconsin colleges. In this regard Jon Kabat-Zinn state that "inquiry doesn't mean looking for answers" (cited in Bentz and Shapiro, 1998, p. 39).

'Memoing' (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 69) is a qualitative data source the researcher used to aid data collection including field notes for recording what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the process. It is easy for researchers to be absorbed in the data-collection process and

therefore may not reflect on what is going on so the researcher must maintain a balance between descriptive and reflective notes. Miles and Huberman (1984) stress that memos (or field notes) must be dated so that the researcher can later correlate them with the data.

Nature of Document Review

The researcher utilized the technique of document review of the literature to guide the interview questions. Creswell (2005) believes "a valuable source of information in qualitative research can be documents" (p. 219). There are many variations of format documents can take. Documents can be both public and private records obtained during the research study through materials retrieved from the internet, private and public records, physical evidence, and instruments created by the researcher (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Creswell also stated, "Documents represent a good source of text (word) data for a qualitative study" (p. 219). This approach allows the researcher to broaden the perspective of the research question in qualitative studies.

Document review is where the researcher started collecting data from the literature to gain a deeper understanding of the crisis and to use later as a guide for the interviews. This study used multiple primary sources with data and information pertaining to S/M students and American Indian education collected over a 12-week time span to gain insight into factors influencing the success of S/M students persisting in a Wisconsin college. Documents collected during this study consisted of direct raw data from the S//M education student files and reputable government publications from the U. S. Department of Education.

 Such documents help a researcher "understand central phenomena in qualitative studies" (Creswell, 2005, p. 219). An advantage of using documents is that they are

written from the perspective of the participants. Documents are also ready for review without the need to be transcribed as is necessary with interviews.

"Exploring a text often depends as much on focusing on what is said-and how a specific argument, idea or concept is developed-as well as focusing on what is not said-the silences, gaps, or missions" (Rapley, 2008, p. 111). Rapley (2008) also advised reviewing documents to see how specific issues are structured and organized along with how the text persuade or interpret an issue. The documents that were submitted by the S/M Education Administrative Assistant will be compared with documents retrieved from government publications in order to gain insight on where S/M students fit in compared to the larger context of American Indian Education. Locating common themes in one group that are absent in the other group may create potentially useful and significant findings. Analyzing original documentation allows the researcher to engage with and trace specific fields and paths.

Appropriateness of the technique

Yin (1989) considered documents as a form of data collection for qualitative research. Creswell (1998) agreed as he considered documents to be an adequate approach to data collection in qualitative studies. Documents generate specific truths and the truths evolve into realities that produce outcomes (Rapley, 2008). Government publications outline directions of future policy and/or strategy. These documents are sources to discover and map specific communication because they document past and forthcoming changes in legislation and/or the organization of society, and social institution.

Document review offers the researcher an opportunity to collect information that other methods do not. This opportunity reveals relevant and pertinent data that will guide the following methods.

Procedure

Document review was the first step in the research process, but it was not the primary technique for the study. The document review looked at the Stockbridge-Munsee Education program statistical data including but not limited to last completed semester and overall grade-point averages (GPA) along with a break down identifying the number of years and semesters per college that the S/M student attended in Wisconsin while also receiving a tribal grant. The researcher submitted a request in writing to the Education Administration to receive this data, which is an essential search for pertinent information.

The researcher reviewed government publications from the United States Department of Education. This publication reported statistical data on American Indians in higher education. The data reviewed and retrieved is essential to paint a national snapshot of what Indian Education looks like in the United States.

Nature of Focus Group Interviews

Since the early 1900s several types of group interviews were used (Morgan, 1998b). Focus groups in research help to diverge deeper about a certain issue to find out how people think and feel about that particular issue (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The use of focus group interviews for this study allowed for each participant and the researcher to learn how others experienced the commonality of being a S/M student persisting in a Wisconsin college. The focus group allowed participants the opportunity to be more

descriptive of their experience and to compare and contrast the collective group experience. According to Krueger and Casey (2000), interviews can attain similar results but focus groups offer an interactive factor that can influence participant responses and entice a deeper outcome. The focus groups are scheduled to last a maximum of two hours to provide an opportunity for other participants to hear each other's journey through the process.

Often, individuals in a group setting influence one another by responding to ideas and comments made by others, Krueger and Casey (2000) stated, "The intent of the focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants" (p. 7). Moderators should use set questions that are more general in nature in the beginning and more specific as the focus group proceeds. Using set questions allows for higher level of assessment and better consistency (Krueger, 1997). "The questioning route produces more efficient analysis because it minimizes subtle differences in questions that could alter intent" (p. 12). The questions will be grouped into four categories: opening, introductory, transition, and key/ending. The questions are designed to gain an understanding about how the participants feel and think by interacting with them through dialogue to uncover their attitudes and perceptions regarding their persistence while attending a Wisconsin college. The questions will follow a semi-structured questioning route format with the aim of fostering consistency in questioning as well as questioning across the different groups.

Appropriateness of the Technique

Focus groups can produce large amounts of data in a short time span. One of the unique features of focus-group interviews is its group dynamics; and so, the type and range of data generated through the social interaction of the group can be more beneficial

to the study than one-to-one interviews (Thomas, MacMillian, McColl, Hale, & Bond, 1995). The distinctiveness of a focus group is its ability to generate data based on the synergy of the group interaction (Green, Draper, & Dowler, 2003). For the purpose of this study, focus groups will be used to gain insight, confirm and clarify the essential questions for the one-to-one interview while also adding findings to the gathered data. Using an indigenous frame where one is collecting information as a group versus individually gives a sense of community which allows the participants to share and learn from each other experiences. This creates a space in which the participants are giving back to each other and their community while informing this study.

Development of Reliable/Valid/Trustworthy Materials/Instrument(s)

The validity of the study is guided by a phenomenological research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students persisting in Wisconsin colleges. Internal validity resides in the framework which was developed through an extensive literature review. Establishing validity in qualitative research according to Guba and Lincoln (1985) expands over four criteria for examining the reliability of qualitative research such as; credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Next the credibility criterion of the research is described.

The researcher addresses credibility criteria with self-regulation by asking for participant feedback (member check) from the one-to-one interviews which allows a person to control his or her response or behavior when confronted with externally imposed stimuli. "Feedback is an externally imposed control that works with a person's self-regulatory capability in order to adjust behavior" (Burney, 2008, p. 131).

Participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy before being using it in the study. Next the transferability criterion of the research is described.

The researcher addresses transferability criteria by describing the context of the research and the assumptions at the heart of the research. The context of the research is to look deep into the experiences and strategies, which were employed by the participants to help them to persist in college. It is also to explore their suggestions regarding barriers that may hamper success in achieving educational goals. The participants must be currently attending and have successfully completed 24 or more credits at an accredited College in Wisconsin. The data was examined, analyzed, and interpreted using Brayboy (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) and as a lens to evaluate Stockbridge-Munsee student stories about their education experience while attending college and earning credits. The following assumptions listed below are important to this research:

1. The researcher's relationship and understanding with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community and culture will assist with participants feeling comfortable with self-disclosure and while fostering the belief that their stories will make a difference and be secure.

2. All research participants will give truthful answers.

3. Contrary to assumption three and four the researcher's role as the Director of Education and Cultural Affairs might instill fear of retribution which may influence their responses.

4. A phenomenological study is the best approach of research because the focus of this study resides in complicated lived experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students while attending a Wisconsin college.

5. This study would bring in more awareness to faculty, staff, deans, and chancellors in serving and meeting the needs of Stockbridge-Munsee students to persist in college to gain a degree.

6. This study will assist in developing a strategy guide resource that will be useful for Stockbridge-Munsee students' academic success in higher education.

7. Tribal college experience will be different from predominately white institutions College experience.

These parameters and assumptions enhance the transferability by thoroughly describing the research context and the assumptions that are at the heart of the research. In regards to external validity, other researchers can make decisions about the transferability of the findings. Next the dependability criterion of the research is described.

The researcher addresses dependability criteria by utilizing the narratives from the participants own stories as data. In American Indian traditions oral stories is used as a mode of transmission of culture and knowledge. Central to Brayboy's (2005) TribalCrit Theory is engaged listening while allowing others to talk to hear stories. When stories are heard, they show the hearer the way to explore the range and variation of possibilities of what can happen and has happened (Basso, 1996, 2000; Battiste, 2002, Burkhart, 2004; Medicine, 2001; Williams, 1997). Reporting findings using the participant's stories can erect individual truth, comparing experiences with others. Reporting the participants own voices to affirm their own associations to the study is a truthful way to

report research (Cleary & Peacock, 1997). Next the conformability criterion of the research is described.

The researcher addresses conformability criteria by providing findings from one method of data collection to be verified in another method which helps to support the findings of the study. As the themes begin to become evident, the researcher emails a draft to their committee members who all hold a PhD and are instructors at universities to verify the findings. One of the committee members is also the researcher's mentor who is an expert in Indian Education research and policy. These peer reviews provide the researcher with an additional resource to ensure that the findings are accurate and non-biased. Next the trustworthiness of the research is described.

The research addresses trustworthiness by employing a phenomenological research design utilizing triangulation which is to incorporate multiple types of data collection and methods that when utilized jointly help to answer the research question. The document review allows the researcher to examine the direct raw data pertaining to the larger context as it pertains to American Indian Education and then narrows it down to S/M students specifically. The Focus group helps to gain further insight into how S/M students are persisting in Wisconsin colleges. One-to-one interviews offer a way to gain details on specific individual problem solving techniques used for persisting in Wisconsin colleges. Lastly, the one-to-one interviews provide member checks by giving feedback, interpretation, and insight.

Connecting the above methods for data collection, a comprehensive review is conducted using rigorous standards for research, which allowed the researcher to determine the effectiveness of implementing an explanation that is culturally specific to

American Indian students persisting in college. Rich, thick description is used to help keep narrative interpretation close to actual data through participant quotes and field notes. Peer review is utilized in analyzing interview data. The researcher consciously used both descriptive and interpretive validity throughout the study to keep the reporting of findings factually accurate and to reveal accuracy in meaning given by participants.

Nature of One-On-One Interviews

Interviewing is a general style of inquiry. Describing experiences in a narrative form is a significant way throughout recorded history that humans used to make sense of their experience (Seidman, 2006). Storytelling is an important and valued way of teaching and sharing in American Indian Culture. When individuals tell stories, they select the most meaningful experience from their memory. The process of selecting and sharing the details of a meaningful experience, results with reflecting on the experience to give the story order and meaning. Quality interviews use this process to provide a rich in-depth story that is helpful in understanding lived experiences. The planned interview format originates from a methodology that allows an appreciation of the participants' experience and the importance of their experience to emerge (Seidman, 1998).

During the interview, the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent is complex because both individuals bring biases, predispositions, and attitudes that can shape the data collected. "To be a good interviewer one should learn and approve upon through practice being sensitive to verbal and non-verbal messages while being a good listener and refraining from arguing" (Merriam, 1998). The quality of data gained maybe influenced by the respondent's health, mood at the time of the interview, or motive for participating in the interview (Merriam, 1988). It is important to remember that the

information gathered through interviews is the personal viewpoint of the respondent, which could lead to alteration or overstatement. For the purpose of this study, interviewing will provide the researcher with the individual's interpretation of the experience and how they problem solved through it to remain in college.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) discussed the strategy of responsive interviewing which included a complex balance of main questions, probes and responding to what the interviewee shares with follow-up questions. "The main questions focus on the research questions, probes help to bring out more information to give the interview a more natural conversation flow while follow-up questions help to seek details allowing the interviewer to pursue points of interest" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The researcher plans on asking 15 interview questions grouped into four categories followed up with probes to gain a better understanding of the participants' experience.

Interview questions should be prepared in advance, but may change during the course of the research project. The careful selection and order of the questions helps to reassure that the data allows the researcher to answer the research problem (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Probes can be oral or body language (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) with using prolongation, explanation, concentration, illumination, navigation, progression, proof and lean probes to control the conversations will help get the interviewee to develop their thought, to revert interviewees back to the topic, or to attain precise information. To have a collection of exploratory questions assure that the conversation will move in ways that help the researcher collect adequate information.

Self-regulation in asking for participant feedback (member check) from the one-to-one interviews allows a person to control his or her response or behavior when confronted with externally imposed stimuli. "Feedback is an externally imposed control that works with a person's self-regulatory capability in order to adjust behavior" (Burney, 2008, p. 131). Participants will have the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy before being using it in the study.

Appropriateness of the Technique

Qualitative interviews are important for multiple reasons. Weiss (1995) recommends qualitative interviewing to develop detailed descriptions, to combine different perspectives and to describe a process while identifying variables and framing hypotheses. In this study, the researcher used qualitative interviews to help develop detailed descriptions of Stockbridge-Munsee Student's experiences while persisting in a Wisconsin college. Weiss (1995) suggests, "Interviewing gives us access to the observation of others" (p. 1). He also notes that researchers can learn "About people's interior experiences" and "what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions" (p. 1). Individual stories will give a deeper understanding of the study.

In qualitative research, the most common form of interview is the person-to-person encounter "in which one person elicits information from another" (Merriam, 2009, p. 88). In education, Merriam states, "interviewing is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies" (p. 86). The multiple participants in this study require the researcher to have a systemic method of organizing the data around common themes. Interviewing allows an individual's unique experience documented as a personal story.

Data Collection Procedures Applying to Both the Focus Group Interview and

One-On-One Interviews

The researcher utilized the document review of the literature to guide an unstructured in depth phenomenological interviews in the form of one focus group interview and six one-on-one interviews with Stockbridge-Munsee students holding a minimum of 24 credits earned prior and now persisting in Wisconsin colleges. The questions were "directed to the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the theme in question" (Welman & Kruger, 1999, p. 196). According to Bentz and Shapiro (1998), Husserl called it bracketing when the inquiry is performed from the perspective of the researcher. Bracketing (Caelli, 2001; Davidson, 2000; King, 1994; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996) in this studied entailed asking the participants/informants to share their experience with higher education and how did they strategize to persist in Wisconsin colleges. Data about how participants "think and feel in the most direct ways" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 96) was obtained. The researcher focused on "what goes on within" the participants and got the participants to "describe the lived experience in a language as free from the constructs of the intellect and society as possible". This is one form of bracketing. There is also a second form of bracketing, which, according to Miller and Crabtree (1992, p. 24) is about the researcher that "must 'bracket' her/his own preconceptions and enter into the individual's lifeworld and use the self as an experiencing interpreter". Moustakas (1994, p. 85) points out the "Husserl called the freedom from suppositions the epoche, a Greek work meaning to stay away from or abstain". According to Bailey (1996, p. 72) "the informal interview is a conscious attempt by the researcher to find out more information about the setting of the person".

The interview is reciprocal: both researcher and research subject are engaged in the dialogue. The researcher experienced that the duration of the one-on-one interviews and the number of questions varied from one participant to the other.

Kvale (1996) remarks with regard to data capturing during the qualitative interview that it "is literally an interview, and interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest," where researcher attempts to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning of peoples' experiences" (pp. 1-2). At the root of phenomenology, "the intent is to understand the phenomena in their own terms – to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the person herself" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 96) and allowing the essence to emerge (Cameron, Schaffer, & Hyeon-Ae, 2001). The maxim of Edmund Husserl was "back to things themselves!" (Kruger, 1988, p. 28).

The researcher audio-recorded, with the permission of interviewees, all interviews (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bailey, 1996). Each interview was assigned a code. The interviews were recorded on a 4 GB SD-Card. As soon as possible after each interview the researcher downloaded and saved the recording on Google drive before emailing it out to be transcribed. Then the researcher listened to the recording and made notes, transcribing key words, phrases and statements in order to allow the voices of the research participants/informants to speak. Easton, McComish and Greenberg (2000) advise that equipment failure and environmental conditions might interfere with conducting research. They suggest that the researcher must be prepared by checking and rechecking that the recording equipment functions well and that spare batteries, SD-

Cards, and so on, are available. This includes ensuring that the setting is free from background noise and interruptions.

Field notes are a secondary data storage method in qualitative research because the human mind tends to forget quickly, so field notes by the researcher is important in qualitative research to retain and organize data gathered (Lofland & Lofland, 1999). This suggests that the researcher must be dedicated to record, after each interview, as comprehensively as possible, but without judgmental evaluation, for example: "What was helpful? Why was it helpful? What was challenging? How did you overcome that?" In addition, Lofland and Lofland (1999, p. 5) emphasize that field notes "should be written no later than the morning after". Besides dedication, field notes also involve "luck, feelings, timing, whimsy and art" (Bailey, 1996, p. xiii). The method followed in this study is based on a model or scheme created by Leonard Schatzman and Anselm Strauss supplemented by Robert Burgess. Four types of field notes were made:

- Observational notes (ON) – 'what happened notes' which the researcher views important enough to make. Bailey (1996) stresses that when making observations that one uses of all five senses.

- Theoretical notes (TN) – 'attempts to derive meaning' from the researchers thinking and reflection on experiences.

- Methodological notes (MN) – 'reminders, instructions or critique' to oneself on the process.

- Analytical memos (AM) – end-of-interview summary or progress reviews.

At this point in time, it is essential to note that field notes are already "a step toward data analysis." Morgan (1997) examination that of field notes refers to it as a means of

incorporating perception and interpretation by stating it is, "part of the analysis rather than the data collection" (pp. 57-58). Keeping in mind that the "basic datum of phenomenology is the conscious human being", or lived experiences of the participants in the research (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 98; Heron, 1996), it essential for the researcher to focus on preventing the data from being prematurely categorized or 'pushed' into the researcher's bias about the possible contribution of strategies used by Stockbridge-Munsee students to persist in Wisconsin. Utilizing field notes in the research process forces the researcher to further explain each interview setting (Caelli, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Boyd (2001) considers two to 10 participants or informants as sufficient to reach saturation under a phenomenological study. There were 34 potential participants who received a recruitment letter, five participated as part of a focus group and five additional students participated in a one-on-one interview. From this 29.41% of the total participant population participated in the study. In addition to the two interview styles, the researcher conducted document analysis from data collected from the S/M Education office and the U. S. Department of Education government publications. The purpose of collecting data from three different kinds of informants is a form of triangulation. Data triangulation to contrast the data and validate the data if it yields similar findings (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bloor, 1997; Holloway, 1997). Data-collection interviews and analysis continued until the topic was exhausted or saturated, that is when interviewees (subjects or informants) introduced no new perspectives on the subject.

The researcher created a folder with sub-folders for the various interview and filed the following hard copy documentation:

- The informed consent agreement.

- Researcher's notes made during the interview.

- The field notes made after each interview.

- Any notes or sketches that the participant made during the interview, which the participant gave to the researcher.

- Any notes made during the 'data analysis' process, e.g., grouping of units of meaning into themes.

- The draft 'transcription' and analysis' of the interview that the researcher presented to the participants for validation.

- The confirmation of correctness and/or commentary by the participant about the 'transcript' and 'analyses' of the interview.

- Any additional/subsequent communication between the participant and researcher.

Data storage includes audio recordings, field notes and filing hard copy documentation. The interview transcription and field notes were also stored electronically on multiple hard drives.

Procedures for Focus Group Interview and One-On-One Interviews

Incorporating Development of Materials for Interview

Several procedures for the interviews and focus groups overlapped. The two will be delineated for the purposes of clarity when appropriate. The researcher submitted a written request to the S/M Education Administrative Assistant asking for the names of S/M students currently attending a Wisconsin college along with background information including; enrollment number, date of birth, address and telephone number, college

attending, total credits earned and total GPA. From the 36 names given two were eliminated as one was attending college outside of Wisconsin and the other was the researcher. The researcher mailed out a personal invite (see Appendix C-1 on page 239) to all eligible 34 participants from the list to participate. The researcher received five responses of interest from the recruitment letter and an additional five responses of interest after contacting potential participants by phone for a total of 10 individuals interested in participating in this study. The one focus group interview was set for Saturday, October 26th at 1:00 p.m. in the Education buildings conference room to accommodate eight of the 10 interested participants. The day of the focus group interview three participants called the researcher that they were unable to attend as two were sick and one was not going to be in the area. Originally the researcher planned on conducting one-on-one interviews from the participants in the focus group interview, but instead conducted the one-on-one interviews on various dates and times with the remaining five interested participants that were unable to attend the focus group interview.

The researcher ensured that the interview space was always comfortable with minimal noise and distraction. The researcher also checked and rechecked to have extra batteries and that the recording equipment was working correctly before each interview. However, when the researcher stopped the recording for one of the one-on-one interviews, it was found that the recorder was on pause and did not record the interview. The researcher immediately asked the participant if they would mind redoing the interview. The participant was willing and the researcher was able to attain a recorded interview.

The researcher took on the role of host before the interviews started by providing all participants with refreshments (coffee, tea [hot/cold], and soda) and snacks (pretzels, Colby Jack Cheese sticks, and donut holes). This also included providing tissue and cough drops. The researcher greeted and welcomed all participants which included introducing those who did not know each other in the focus group interview. The one focus group interview lasted two hours and the series of one-on-one interviews went from six to 15 minutes in length.

Unique to the focus group was that the researcher's mentor was also there to be the second set of eyes to take notes on what the researcher may have missed. Also, the focus group was initiated with a cultural focus to address and honor all belief systems. One of the participants was asked prior to the interview by the researcher in an American Indian traditional way by providing a tobacco tie to open the interview in a traditional way of a talking circle. It started with the selected participant explaining that the researcher gave her tobacco and she took that tobacco to the river and said a prayer with it to open the minds of the participants to share in a good way. Then all participants were invited outside under the covered entrance to be 'smudged' which was done by burning sage in an abalone shell. While outside the mentor 'smudged' the participants by using an eagle feather to direct the smoke from the burning sage toward each participant. The intent of smudging is to cleanse the mind and spirit. This helps to stifle the outside noise and static, so that an individual can be more focused on the topic being discussed. Then the researcher did a Christian prayer for those participating who may not be connected to the traditions of American Indian culture.

Unique to the one-on-one interviews were the site locations which were selected by the participants and distributed as follows; two were in the researcher's home at the kitchen table and three were at the education building (two in the conference room and one in the researcher's office). The schedule was also set by the participants and took place on various days and times with no more than two interviews being conducted in a 24 hour period.

The researcher developed reliable, valid, and trustworthy instruments and ensured that each participant signed and dated an informed consent form (see Appendix C-2 on page 240) along with a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C-3 on page 241) before starting the interview and audio recorder. The researcher followed the protocol and questions for focus group interview (see Appendix C-4 on page 242) and for one-on-one interview (see Appendix C-5 on page 245).

At the end of each interview the researcher gave the participants a thank you card with a gift inside. The gift was a $10.00 gaming coupon from Mohican North Star Casino for those 21 years old or older and for the ones under 21 the gift was either a $10.00 coupon to the Longhouse restaurant inside the casino or one free meal coupon from Pine Hills Golf Course. Initially the researcher planned on solely transcribing both interviews, but instead immediately downloaded the recording to a hard drive and then emailed it to a transcription service.

Explicitation of the data

Following Hycner (1999), this section uses the concept of 'explicitation' as an alternative to 'data analysis'. The "term [analysis] usually means a 'breaking into parts' and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon investigation for the

constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context for the whole" (p. 161). Coffey
and Atkinson (1996, p. 9) consider this explicit analysis as the "systematic procedures to
identify essential features and relationships". It is a process for converting the data from
one's interpretation. Explaining the term explicitation is for one to use a simplified
version of Hycner's (1999) explicitation process. This explicitation process has five
'steps' or phases, which are:

1) Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.

2) Delineating units of meaning.

3) Clustering of units of meaning to form themes.

4) Summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it.

5) Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a
   composite summary.

Bracketing and phenomenological reduction from which Husserl created the term
reduction and is regarded by Hycner (1999) as adverse, because it has no relevancy to the
methodology of natural science. Instead it is through human error of over analysis,
removal from the lived contexts of the phenomena and even more detrimental reducing
phenomena to cause and effect. Phenomenological reduction "to pure subjectivity"
(Lauer, 1958, p. 50), but rather is an intentional and fixed by the researcher to the
phenomenon within itself and its meaning (Fouche, 1993; Hycner, 1999). It further
points to a suspension or 'bracketing out' (or epoche), "in a sense that in its regard no
position is taking either for or against" (Lauer, 1958, p. 49), the researcher's own
assumptions and not allowing the researcher's own implications, explanations, or
concepts to enter the informant/participant unique world (Creswell, 1998, pp. 54 &113;

Moustakas, 1994, p. 90; Sadala & Adorno, 2001). This is a different formation of the

term bracketing used when interviewing to bracket the phenomenon researched for the

interviewee. Here it refers to the bracketing of the researcher's perception (Miler &

Crabtree, 1992).

Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) suggests for the researcher to listen over and

over again to the audio recording of each interview to become familiar with the words of

the interviewee/informant in order to get, the 'gestalt'. Zinker (1978) explains that the

term phenomenological involves a practice, which emphasizes the unique experiences of

research participants. The here and now scope of those personal experiences give

phenomena proximal closeness.

Delineating units of meaning is a vital process where the researcher 'isolated' the

researched phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Holloway, 1997; Hycner, 1999). The

researcher made a large number of decisions while consciously bracketing their own

assumptions in order to avoid wrong subjective judgments.

The researcher created a list of units with appropriate meaning from each

interview and then carefully inspected and removed the repeating units (Moustakas,

1994). The researcher looked at the content factually, counting the number (the

significance) of times a meaning was mentioned and how (non-verbal or paralinguistic

cues) it was stated. Also, noting that the meaning of two similar units may differ in terms

of value or order of events (Hycner, 1999).

Clustering of units of meaning to form themes is the process where the researcher

brackets their assumptions with the list of non-redundant units of meaning in order to

remain true to the phenomenon. The researcher accomplished this by meticulously going

through the list of units of meaning to draw out the real meaning of the units within a holistic context. Hycner (1999) adds that this process requires that the researcher utilize more judgment and skills. Colaizzi speaks to the researcher's 'artistic' judgment by stating "Particularly in this step is the phenomenological researcher engaged in something which cannot be precisely delineated, for here he is involved in that ineffable thing known as creative insight" (as cited in Hycner, 1999, pp. 150-151).

Clusters of themes are created by grouping units of meaning together (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994) and the researcher identifies significant topics, also called units of significance (Sadala & Adorno, 2001). Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) both stress the importance for the researcher to review again the recorded interview (the gestalt) and to make a list of the non-redundant units of meaning to obtain clusters of appropriate meaning. The researcher found that the clusters were interrelated which was expected because of the subject and experience. Cross-examining the meaning of the various clusters the researcher was able to identify central themes, "which expresses the essence of these clusters" (Hycner, 1999, p. 153).

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) and King (1994) all agree that since the 1980s computer software has improved the support for qualitative analyses. However, "there is no one software package that will do the analysis in itself" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 169) and the understanding of the meaning of phenomena "cannot be computerized because it is not an algorithmic process" (Kelle, 1995, p. 3) the researcher did not utilize software because computer software does not help with doing phenomenology.

Summarize each interview, validate and modify which Ellenberger (1958, p. 116) summarizes the themes taken from the data in a holistic context as follows:

> Whatever the method used for a phenomenological analysis the aim of the
>
> investigator is the reconstruction of the inner world of experience of the subject.
>
> Each individual has his own way of experiencing temporality, spatiality,
>
> materiality, but each of those coordinates must be understood in relation to the
>
> others and to the total inner 'world'.

At this juncture the researcher employed a 'validity check' by returning the transcripts to

the informant to determine if the essence of the interview was correctly 'captured'

(Hycner, 1999, p. 154). Any identified changes are completed as result of this 'validity

check'.

General and unique themes for all the interviews and composite summary occurs

once the researcher completed the process outlined in points 1 through 4 for all the

interviews, the researcher looks "for the themes common to most or all of the interviews

as well as the individual variations" (Hycner, 1999, p. 154). The researcher is careful not

to cluster common themes if significant differences exist. The researcher brings out the

unique voices that are important to the phenomenon researched.

The researcher wraps us the explicitation by writing a composite summary, which

consists of the context or 'horizon' from which the themes emerged (Hycner, 1999;

Moustakas, 1994). According to Sadala and Adorno (2001, p. 289) the researcher then

"transforms participants' everyday expressions into expressions appropriate to the

scientific discourse supporting the research". However, Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.

139) highlight that "good research is not generated by rigorous data alone. . . [but] 'going

beyond' the data to develop ideas". No matter how small themes are highlighted and

explained from the qualitative data.

Role of the Researcher

American Indian researchers are few and far between. As one of them, it is the researcher's goal for others to take one seriously as an advocator of Indian Education and TribalCrit compels us to be active change agents. It is important for the researcher to be able to move though mainstream society using ones scholarly abilities while at the same time being humble in American Indian culture by always respecting where one comes from. The researcher's role will be one of insider-outsider meaning that the researcher has direct access to the participants information however is following the outsider approach to protect the integrity of the study.

Qualifications

The researcher holds dual citizenship as a citizen of the United States of American and as a citizen of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians. Stockbridge-Munsee is one of the 11 federally recognized American Indian tribes residing in Wisconsin. As a citizen of this tribe, the researcher is appreciative in knowing that one's ancestors are born from of a society of survivors that persisted through eight historical moves. Today, the researcher worked for Stockbridge-Munsee Community for a total of 22 years with the last eight years as the Director of Education and Cultural affairs. The position is responsible for supervision over areas such as higher education, job training, head start, library/museum, and school liaison positions. As the researcher moves forward in their doctoral program she began to realize that although she has attained many degrees in higher education according to mainstream society that she still feel like a young Indian girl from a small rural town called Morgan Siding in her first year of college.

The researcher lives to serve and serves to live for growth in Indian education. The researcher's family always supported education and regularly talked about the importance of education so she could be anyone she wanted to be when she grew up. This influenced her to be motivated toward promoting and advocating for Indian education. The researcher believes that education for American Indians is an essential factor in preserving tribal nations to persevere through adversary in this century and the centuries to come.

Biases

The researcher is familiar with how American Indian students have the same issues today that they did when they themselves were in an undergraduate program. This study is important professionally and personally to the researcher as one has made it their life's work to help American Indian students enter and persist in college to attain a higher education degree. The researcher is zealous about this topic because research on it may be able to show colleges the way Stockbridge-Munsee students think and need from the institution. In turn, the institution can use these understandings to improve services for S/M and all students. The importance of this topic is enhanced by the fact literature existing on American students in higher education is lacking.

Responsibilities

It is the researcher's professional and personal goal to continue learning and researching American Indian education. The researcher sees this study as a stepping stone for future projects and others who care about Stockbridge-Munsee students. The intent of the study is to contribute to Mohican people as it is part of the researcher's journey to do so. The researcher's ancestors laid the groundwork for one to pick up and

move forward in the work of Indian education and research. For centuries, non-Natives studied American Indian people, but one considers it to be crucial that American Indian researchers take the lead in research that involves American Indian people. Being an American Indian researcher gives one the natural experience and knowledge of American Indian culture, but will also have the intellectual challenges of studying in predominately white colleges. To have the opportunity to combine both worlds is truly a blessing.

Timeline

The timeline for this study resides on the impacts and perspective of Stockbridge-Munsee Students experiences while attending a Wisconsin college prior to and during the 2013 fall semester.

Time Span

The dissertation process began in its current form in June of 2012 at the summer institute with discussion relating to possible topics of interest to the researcher. The research questions were developed and the literature review began during the fall of 2012 and the spring of 2013. The summer of 2013 was spent developing the proposal, which was submitted to the committee in July of 2013. The proposal was approved in September, and they study and data were collected from October – November of 2013. Analysis and writing of the report proceeded through the rest of 2013 and the beginning of 2014. The dissertation was submitted to committee in February of 2014 and defended Friday, June 13th 2014.

Chronology of Events and Procedures

Table 3

Chronology of Events and Procedures Undertaken

June, 2012 – June, 2013	research question developed, conducted extensive literature review
January, 2013 – June, 2013	research design
May – June, 2013	study site approval
August 28, 2013	Successfully defended proposal
September 4, 2013	IRB Approval
September 20, 2013	recruit participants for study
October 26, 2013	Conduct focus group
November, 2013 – January, 2014	Interview participants transcribe interviews ask for feedback analyze data from documents analyze data from interviews analyze data and cross referenced data

Summary/Coherency of Design

Validity/Trustworthiness

Utilizing indigenous knowledge and culture within Stockbridge-Munsee students to persist in Wisconsin colleges and how does that shape their view of higher education. Schurink, Schurink, and Poggenpoel (1998) emphasize the truth-value of qualitative research and list a number of means to achieve truth. In this study, the phenomenological research design contributed toward truth. The researcher bracketed themselves consciously in order to understand in terms of the perspectives of the participants interviewed phenomenon of the study that is "the focus was on an insider perspective" (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p. 70). The audio recordings made of each interview and again bracketing the researcher during the coding of the interview further contributed to truth. Thereafter subjects received of copy of the text to validate that it reflected their perspectives regarding the phenomenon that was studied.

The research design of this study incorporated multiple types of data collection and methods that were utilized jointly to help answer the research question. The document review allowed the researcher to examine the direct literature pertaining to the larger context as it pertains to American Indian Education and then narrow it down to S/M students specifically. The focus group helped to gain further insight into how S/M students are persisting in Wisconsin colleges. The one-to-one interviews helped to provide member checks by giving feedback, interpretation, and insight. Lastly, the one-on-one interviews offered a way to gain details on specific individual problem solving techniques used for persisting in Wisconsin colleges.

Connecting the above methods for data collection, a comprehensive review was conducted using rigorous standards for research, which allows the researcher to determine the effectiveness of implementing a strategy guide that is culturally specific for American Indian students to persist in college. Rich, thick description will be used to help keep narrative interpretation close to actual data through participant quotes and field notes. Peer review will be utilized in reviewing the interview data. The researcher consciously used both descriptive and interpretive validity throughout the study to keep the reporting of findings factually accurate and to reveal accuracy in meaning given by participants.

Triangulation

According to Stake (2008), "Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (p. 133). The study incorporated document review, focus group, and one-on-one interviews as a triangulation method to ensure data

trustworthiness. The narratives are a strong source of data because the manuscripts recorded from the focus and one-on-one interviews conveyed the participant's thoughts, experiences, and stories.

Findings from one method of data collection are verified in another method which helps to support the findings of this proposed study. As the themes begin to become evident, the researcher met with colleagues to verify the findings. These peer reviewers provide the researcher with an additional resources to ensure that the findings are accurate and non-biased.

Limitations

During the study participants were interviewed under the belief that the researcher understood their meaning because the researcher is also a Stockbridge-Munsee member, which may result with the participants not feeling the need to explain their thoughts thoroughly. Having a prior inclination that this may occur allows for the researcher to encourage participants to expand on their thoughts when the researcher senses that this happening. The researcher further investigated by asking follow-up questions and reminding the participants to tell more of their thoughts for further clarification. Plans for sustaining impartiality are essential in such instances, in addition to understanding and kindness with the participants.

Summary and Forecast

Chapter Three describes the research design of a qualitative study to be conducted, with meticulous attention to methodology and technique using document review of the literature and data collection. The chapter detailed document review, focus group interview, and one-on-one interview. The process, procedures, and questions for

the focus group (see Appendix C-4 on page 242) and for the one-on-one interviews (see

Appendix C-5 on page 245) worked to validate the significance of the research project.

In the next chapter, the findings reveal strategies that Stockbridge-Munsee students from

Wisconsin college use in order to persist in higher education.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH RESULTS

Presentation of Approach

The purpose of this study was to explore Stockbridge-Munsee students' experiences and strategies relating to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges by uncovering barriers that come up in college while describing problem-solving strategies for success. The research question is:

1. What were the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students who persisted to succeed in Wisconsin colleges?

   • Which experiences were perceived as positive?

   • Which experiences were perceived as negative?

   • Which experiences were perceived as strategic?

The research approach employed in the study was qualitative in nature. A phenomenological methodology was used to understand and explore Stockbridge-Munsee's voices, stories, and experiences as perceptions of experiences related to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges to earn at least 24 credits. Data collected consisted of a document review, a five member focus group interview, and five one-on-one interviews.

The study also included a literature review of related research question(s)/hypotheses guided by the larger context of Indian education to find where Stockbridge-Munsee students fit in this larger picture. This chapter presents a summary of data generated by the study design as follows:

1. An introduction of the research site

2. A summary of the focus group participants, interviewees, and document analysis

3. A summary of findings from collective focus group participants and interviewees as they relate to research questions

4. The identification of primary and secondary themes

Presentation and Summary of Data

Description of Site and Sample

Descriptive data about sites(s)

The chosen site for the focus group interview was at the Stockbridge-Munsee Education Building in the conference room located on the reservation. This site was chosen because it is a neutral location that was familiar to all participants. The participant selected the site for their one-on-one interviews, which took place at the following sites: two in the researcher's home at the kitchen table and three in the S/M Education building with two in the conference room and one in the researcher's office. It is within the cultural norm for citizens of Mohican Nation to feel a sense of place at another member's kitchen table to have an open discussion which shows trust and respect for one another.

Descriptive data about sample

The researcher summarized the descriptive details about the sample to keep the participants' identities confidential. This is necessary because the Stockbridge-Munsee community is small and to provide specific individual details could possibly identify the participants. To identify the participants the research employed purposive sampling with pre-determined criteria and the purpose of the research. All of the focus group participants and interviewees were: (1) Stockbridge-Munsee tribal citizens; (2) currently enrolled in a Wisconsin college; (3) in academic good standing at their institution; and (4)

accrued at least 24 credits. The intent of these criteria is to identify Stockbridge-Munsee students who have thrived in persevering through their first year in college. Ten participants or 29.41% of the 34 potential participants meeting these four criteria participated in the study.

The participants completed a demographic questionnaire prior to each interview and the remaining part of this section is the data from their responses. Their responses were tallied for the areas of parent's status, father's education, mother's education, and marital/children. Six of the ten participant's parents are married, two are divorced and two were never married; seven of the ten participant's father's have a high school diploma, two have no high school diplomas and one is unknown; seven of the ten participant's mother have a high school diploma, one no high school diploma, one associates degree, and one bachelors degree; and four of the ten participants are single with no children, two are married with no children, three are married with children, and one is divorced with children. The participants consisted of four males and six females between the ages of 19 to 61 years old. All of the participants graduated from high schools not physically located on the reservation. Table 4 delineates this narrative information into a table format.

Table 4

Demographic Information Representing the Participant's Background

Gender	Age	Marital Status	Children	Mother's Education	Father's Education
Male	28	Married	1	HS Diploma	HS Diploma
Female	49	Divorced	1	HS Diploma	HS Diploma
Female	61	Married	4	HS Diploma	HS Diploma
Male	22	Single	0	HS Diploma	HS Diploma
Female	20	Single	0	HS Diploma	HS Diploma
Female	20	Married	0	HS Diploma	No HS Diploma
Male	19	Single	0	Bachelors	HS Diploma
Female	52	Married	2	No HS Diploma	No HS Diploma
Female	19	Single	0	Associates	HS Diploma
Male	38	Married	0	HS Diploma	Unknown

Three out of the four high schools that the participants attended were located in a

rural area that served American Indian students from the boarding reservations and one

high school was located in a metropolitan area that served a diverse population of

race/ethnicity of students. The students were enrolled in a variety of institution types,

academic fields, residence, and academic status. Five participants attended public, three

private, and two tribal colleges located in Wisconsin. There was a diversity of majors

from areas of history, accounting, sociology, education, health-related sciences, and

management. None of the participants reported living with parents; six of them hand

their own place and four lived on campus. The total number of college credits earned at

the beginning of the fall semester ranged from 39 to 171. All of the students who were

interviewed in the fall semester returned to college for the spring semester.

The Stockbridge-Munsee students who participated in this study varied in their transitional experiences and perceptions of their college challenges. The five focus group interviewees personal definition of academic success were; "getting as much out of it as you possible can", "just not quitting", "more than simply knowing something, you actually have to understand it, "to better yourself", and "you do need to get it". Also, three of the five would recommend their current Wisconsin college to other Stockbridge-Munsee or American Indians students. The remaining two also agreed, but with stipulations. The five one-on-one interviews generally all stated that there experience at college this far was good and positive, but with challenges.

Figure 5 is the "Many Trail Model" which explains the essential factors associated with the pathway to persistence for Stockbridge-Munsee students who earned a minimum of 24 credits while attending a Wisconsin college. The model incorporates McAfee's (1997) "Stepping Out Model" which employs red arrows to reveal reasons for stepping out and green arrows to reveal reasons for stepping in. This model employed six persistence subject indicators that described factors both relating to not having (stepping out) and then having (stepping in). Brayboy's (2005) "TribalCrit Theory" in which colonization is at the center of his nine tenets and is incorporated as part of the left side of the outer circle which depicts how these students work towards balancing two worlds within themselves through the use of their individual characteristic strength. In addition, this area highlights the difference between predominately white colleges as it relates to colonization and its linear focus on self compared to tribal colleges as it relates to tribal identity and its circular focus on the whole (holistic). HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) "Family Education Model" is incorporated under family/social responsibility as an

indicator for stepping out or in while wrapping things up with Secatero's (2010) "Corn Model" which incorporates the physical, mental, and social health of education under the indicator of life imbalances. This pathway is symbiotic because it is constantly moving. Students may step out of college because of not having the essential components necessary to persist. While overtime students may step in to college because of having built within themselves the essential components necessary to persist and reach degree attainment.

All areas of the "Many Trail Model" overlapped with findings in the literature review except for two vital areas. One is the connection of culturally responsive teaching and curriculum in high schools as an opportunity to open fixed mind sets while simultaneously putting a close to issues associated with discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice which is found under college readiness. The other is the need for more traditional language and cultural programming for building and sustaining Mohican Nation which is found under Stockbridge-Munsee (S/M) Community. These two vital areas are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Figure 5

Stockbridge-Munsee Students Building Mohican Nation through Persistence in Wisconsin Colleges

Stockbridge-Munsee Students Building Mohican Nation through Persistence in Higher Education

← TRIBALCRIT THEORY →

Reasons for Stepping Out or In

Institutional Support

College Readiness

Enters College

Not having/having Indigenous knowledge and culture throughout the institutional environment such as: policies, resources, college programs, campus/staff presence, student services, and student organizations.

Not having/having culturally responsive teaching and curriculum, academic skill building, higher expectations, and advanced placement courses throughout the high school years.

Financial Aid

S/M Community

Not having/having needs that are met, timely resources, and financial aid at the beginning of a semester.

Not having/having cognitive recognition for: the need to sustain and advance traditional language, culture, and history into academia; historical trauma from the boarding school experience; degrees not correlating to status; and feelings of ambivalence among family, community, and nation.

Colonization

Linear: Focus on Self

Predominately White Colleges

Circular: Focus on the whole (holistic)

Tribal College

Tribal Identity

CHARACTERISTIC
- Balance two worlds within themselves
- Strong motivation, engagement, and determination

STRENGTHS
- Resourceful and Clever
- Strong support network

Family/Social Influence

Life Imbalances

Degree Completion

Not having/having the understanding for: a strong innate desire and need to take care of children, elderly parents and/or grandparents before self; a tight and close connection to family and home which can lead to one being severely home sick when going away to attend college; and the personal value of attending and being part of traditional ceremonies and/or community happenings.

Not having/having time management, budget/fiscal responsibility, commitment, and discipline skills, good health, and encouragement.

Adapted from Edwin Martin's (1965) "Many Trails" design.
Bowman, 2014

In the next section an in depth description of each student's experiences as well as a brief explanation of stated obstacles and support will appear in the findings related to the research question.

Findings Related to the Research Question

Employing coding techniques, the data were divided into major categories created from the interview questions, the literature review, and the data itself (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Word documents were created identifying each of the major categories, which were first generated from the interview questions. Topics suggested by the literature review were then added, and finally, when neither interview questions nor the literature review applied, further categories were generated directly from the data. Table 5 delineates the initial seven categories and the basis of their inclusion which is further explained employing the participant statements in the next section to show how the findings fit these categories.

Table 5

Initial Organization of Data into Seven Categories

Category	Source of Category
1. College Readiness Experiences 2. Experiences with Institutional Support 3. Tribal Community Experiences	Literature review; Data from focus group and interviews; Research question
4. Financial Aid Experiences	Literature review Data from interviews Research question
5. Characteristic Strengths 6. Experiences with Life Imbalances 7. Experiences with Family/Social Influence	Literature review; Data from focus group and interviews; Research question

After initial categories were created according to Hycner (1999), sub-categories were developed and quotes from the participants were distributed among pertinent topic

and subtopics. Common factors or findings were identified within each category when multiple quotes pertained to a specific sub category or topic. In this section, findings organized by categories are presented in relationship to the research question. An explication of the common factors and a summary of themes generated from the factors will follow the initial presentation.

Findings Related to Research Question: What were the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students who persisted to succeed in Wisconsin colleges?

- Which experiences were perceived as positive?

- Which experiences were perceived as negative?

- Which experiences were perceived as strategic?

The questions from both the focus group interview (see Appendix C-4 on page 242) and one-on-one interviews (see Appendix C-5 on page 245) were designed to draw out deep rich dialogue describing experiences and perceptions regarding the participants' persistence while attending a Wisconsin college. Continuing with keeping the participants' identities safe and confidential the descriptive responses were mixed within significant categorical subject areas. The participants are delineated with the precursor of 'FG' representing focus group or with the precursor of 'I' representing one-on-one within each category. All seven categories, referenced to in Table 5, related to perceptions of student experiences that impacted persistence. These categories include experiences related to the following: 1) college readiness; 2) institutional support; 3) community; 4) financial, 5) characteristic strengths 6) life imbalances; and 7) family/social

responsibilities. Identification of experience and strategy used to persist are included in each category.

Experiences related to college readiness addressed high schools and their important role in preparing students for college readiness. Even though the literature review did highlight "valuing diversity through culture-based curriculum" (Cornelius, 1999, p. 37), it did not address the connection between teaching culturally responsive teaching and curriculum in high school to persisting in higher education. However, this connection did show up in a focus group interview by two participants and was perceived as negative.

Participant FG-3 shares how one of his college professors "said that people won't admit it but that they brainwash the youth all the time". This made him think about when he was in grade school and how he never heard anything negative about the United States. All he remembers hearing is that the United States is the greatest and freest country in the world where all cultures are accepted. He goes on further responding to this phenomenon by saying, "It is like no we are not [accepting of all cultures]. Like everyone hates each other. Like white people [do not] even like white people. Like Italians are white people but they get discriminated against because they are not white." The complexity of discrimination is hard for American Indian students to grasp and is interwoven throughout the remaining sections of this chapter. Participant FG-3 adds:

> Everything I knew about my tribe especially prior to taking [a Mohican ethno-history] course, I had learned on my own or my mother had taught [me]. I had learned from an outside source. Looking back on the [high] school, I [cannot]

remember them ever even mentioning Stockbridge. It is not that we are in

another part of the state or nothing.

Participant FG-3 further describes how he discovered that his advanced American

History high school class textbook was not complete or accurate while befriending a

foreign exchange student from Germany and how he was:

Telling him it makes me laugh that I go to school where the only book that I was

ever going through that ever mentioned anything about Native Americans was in

a negative way. They had mentioned us about fighting them, [yet did not]

mention that we were defending our land. They said we are fighting them. So it

made it sound like we were attacking them to get that place but we were already

there. I told him I think it is a big problem with our government hiding that

because he said in his books in Germany there are huge, huge, chapters, and parts

about what happened to the Native American people here.

However, he shares that in Germany it is the opposite in their textbooks as, "they don't

put the Holocaust in their book but they put all the stuff that happened here [to American

Indians]. We put all of their dirt in real history, but we don't put our own and they do the

same." He adds:

People died in Holocaust, like 6 million Jews, right. I read a thing but I [do not]

know how accurate it was. "I [do not] remember what the source was exactly but

recent estimates but there was anywhere from 50 to 100 million Native Americans

here when they arrived here." They put us down 98% of that number but no one

teaches it.

He feels that what happened to American Indians in the United States was just as if not

more devastating to American Indians as the Holocaust was to Jews in Europe, yet no one

seems to care or want to make things right. Even though there are well written accounts

about the holocaust in popular books such as: "The Diary of a Young Girl" by Anne

Frank, "Number the Stars" by Lois Lowry; and "Schindler's List" by Thomas Keneally,

yet there is little written about killing the life way of American Indians such as: the

massacres that came in the form of war, induction of deadly diseases and government

laws; multiple removals to lands that were inhabitable; and cultural/traditions, family,

education and living degradation for the purpose of assimilation/colonization to the ideals

of mainstream society. He further explains that "They [people] do not consider how

many people [American Indians] were even here, how many people [American Indians]

were murdered for no reason. Stuff like that. I just think that is awful." Later on in the

focus group interview he gives a specific example regarding his history book that

included "a chapter about the Mormon religion and the Massacre at the Meadows." In

this event roughly "300" Mormon followers tried leaving the organization "because they

thought the leader was crazy." However, after they left they were followed and killed in

the middle of night by the rest of the Mormon organization followers. He goes on further

ending his point with:

> They left broken arrows made by them [Mormon followers] there and then went
>
> and massacred villages of Native Americans because that [Mormon person] said
>
> he knew they did it. They [would not] read that [in my high school] because
>
> every class had Mormon kids in it, so they refused to read that. They actually

wrote a letter to the school and the school said they [would not] acknowledge that chapter that they [would not] acknowledge that was a part of history.

Participant FG-5 adds that in her high school they:

Had the chapter on American History and they skipped it when they got to the part about the Indians. They skipped it because it [was not] good they said. They made it sound like what [was] in there [is not] good but they had nothing to replace it, like better knowledge.

Then she counters by explaining her phenomenon of why there is no better knowledge by saying:

We [Stockbridge-Munsee members] don't know our history [and] we fight over the language of Munsee. That has kind of calmed down now, but is the name of our tribe folks, Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican. Because we [do not] know our own history, we fight ourselves over things like that. Not understanding our own.

Culturally responsive teaching and curriculum means to teach the truth. Not teaching the truth diminishes an individual's origin or background, which distorts their identity, purpose, and role within the larger context of things.

This section covers three participants perceived negative experience with limited access to building academic preparedness skills in high school. Participant I-1 shared that he "was not challenged" in high school like his is challenged in college. Participant FG-3 shared that his high school "had in no way prepared [him] for college" because when he first started college he was not familiar with class rules because in "high school [he] had absolutely no class rules." In addition to following class rules other skills such as note taking from lectures and class readings were limited. Participant FG-3 adds:

I didn't even know how to take lecture notes. I didn't really know what to put down, like how they formatted it. It seemed like a lot of teachers would put their outline on. I didn't know how to follow along with it. They don't prepare you for that. They just give you assignments to do. That is how you are graded. There was no critical thinking. Like you didn't pick up any of that. So just a lack of preparation, like they don't teach you anything about it. Like you are just basically showing up and you are just trying to figure out everything on your own your first year.

Participant I-3 shares a struggle that her boyfriend had with reading chapters and taking notes in the first semester because they did not have to do that in high school. "We just like went to class. We got A's and stuff [in high school] but in college you really have to study." Both of these participants attended small rural high schools that did not have the resources to offer as other high schools do. The opportunity to take advance placement courses is improving as small high schools collaborate with area colleges to expand this prospect. However, the selection process in college bridging programs eliminates the opportunity to plant a seed of possibility in students who have limited resources within their daily living unit and contact. Planting this seed engages and exposes students to learn more about the college experience may ignite a goal that they did not think was possible for them which results with the student being motivated to be and do better.

This section covers opportunities to take advantage of college bridging programs and advance placement courses in high school with experiences perceived as both positive and strategic by two other participants. Participant FG-5 describes a college prep program that she attended for two summers prior to attending college. This program

"taught [her study skills that she did not receive] in high school [like] how to review your notes an hour after class and then later on that day and then tomorrow. But once you got it, don't go back and review those same notes. Start where you left off." She also develop "good note" taking skills which was useful later on to her and her friends in a Science course.

Participant I-1 adds that **"**taking a few college classes in high school really helped." The advance placement courses helped prepare him for the "science field that he was going into." He also felt that it helped him "to [get] a little taste of what college would be like." He explains that these courses helped him to build "self-responsibility" skills that high school classes did not. He adds that these courses also helped to build the discipline to study "because no one would be there [at college] to tell you do your homework [and] to study good and [to] sit down and do it yourself [because] you have to take the initiative to do that [in the advancement placement courses and then in college]." Going to college prep programs and taking advance placement courses in high school helped these participants to build their academic skills, which gave them a deeper insight into the academic rigor and expectation of college. Next the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered under institutional support are covered.

Experiences related to institutional support for this study is separated into two areas which are tribal colleges and student services (culture shock, campus climate, racial discrimination, American Indian student organizations, college programs, and faculty/staff). Next the positive and negative perceived experiences that Stockbridge-

Munsee students encountered while attending the same tribal college in relation to institutional support are shared.

Tribal colleges focus centers on American Indian culture and this means that for the most part they are flexible and adaptive to meeting their student needs and commitments to their families. Participant FG-4 shared his perceived positive experience by saying:

> They are very understanding if someone has a kid or someone has a job, they
> know that person is going to be a half hour late for their class [occasionally]
> because of that. They are okay with it. I know when my baby was sick one week
> and I called my professor and they are you know it is not a problem at all. Just
> email me and I will send you what the homework was and stuff. It was no issue.
> I was able to take my baby to the hospital to make sure she was okay. I feel like
> where I go to school they are very understanding about that.

However, ten years earlier he had an opposite experience perceived as a negative. His grandmother became terminally sick and she passed away within the first or second week of the fall semester. He attempted several times to contact his advisor by leaving messages and emailing others about his situation because he knew he had to do something, but he couldn't find the will to go or be on campus. He states:

> Nobody ever got back to me until after the withdrawal date was over and I had
> gotten incompletes in five classes that I [was] in, [so] basically zeros in
> everything. It always bothered me that I needed help and it didn't matter what the
> circumstance was, they just kind of well I am too busy with this. I felt like I just
> fell through the gap.

Falling through the gap impacted his GPA. He describes the impact as:

> I lost a lot of my GPA. When you get a bunch of zeros, the next semester you
> come and get all A's and you are going to be a 2.0 student at best. So it really
> affected [me] a lot. My grade point average now is finally over a 3.0, but it took a
> few years of going back to school [tribal college] to build it back up. There was
> nothing I could do about those classes. At that time, I paid for my own schooling
> at that point in my life. It was kind of like $3,000 just went down the drain
> because someone didn't talk to me.

Weighing out these opposing experiences he now describes his tribal college experience as "look[ing] at things through a new perspective for myself and for other people. I am really blessed with the learning experience so far." Overall, this participants experience with a tribal college is perceived as positive.

Even though tribal college's central focus is on American Indian culture the climate is of diversification as they serve students and faculty of different cultures. Participant FG-4 remembers being taught by professors who say that one doesn't really know another unless they have lived their experience. He goes on to describe an experience perceived as negative that he has had with different cultures within his tribal college by adding:

> I hear people all the time say well do you think this way and I think this way and
> it is real easy to understand why you do it. I guess I don't agree with that at all.
> People can't understand why people get so upset when someone at my school sees
> paper on the ground outside why someone won't go pick it up. They are like well
> they pay people to do that.

Central to American Indian culture is respecting mother earth and part of this natural role is cleaning up the earth by picking up paper seen on the ground and not leaving it for someone else who gets paid to pick it up.

Participant I-5 shared a perceived positive experience in how he learned a lot, that the curriculum is current and relevant to American Indian history and issues, and how it gave him the opportunity to travel. He shares that it "broadened my [his] world view [which] include[d] a trip to Chiapas, Mexico where we met with the indigenous people down there [Mexico] and traveled around the different villages and whatnot. It was very interesting to see how the indigenous people are treated down there [Mexico] by their government verses how we are treated." In addition, he "really liked the fact that I[he] knew all the professors by name. The professors really took the time to work with you and talk with you and work through any issues that you were having. The smaller class sizes were definitely a plus". He goes on to share why he decided to transfer from this tribal college to a state college because he became "disheartened by the fact that I saw people passing classes that weren't working quite as hard as I was. So I kind of felt like well and they are earning the same degree that I am." This experience results with him transferring to a Wisconsin public college.

Participant I-4 also shared a perceived positive experience in that she transferred from a state college to this tribal college because "of being homesick [at her state college] and there were better scholarships and grants offered at the [tribal college]". Participating in the fellowship program that is administered by the tribal college motivates her to meet its 3.0 GPA requirement, "with all B's every semester for every class". She describes an issue she had because not much of her classes from the state

college were transferring over to the tribal college and how a faculty member from the tribal college advocated on her behalf because she "wasn't sure of the [credit transfer] processes of how to go about it". Next the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered while attending a Wisconsin college under the area of student services in relation to institutional support which included covering six subjects under the subheadings; culture shock, campus climate, racial discrimination, American Indian student organizations, college programs, and faculty/staff.

Student Services is at the center of a universities mindset that directly impacts how they serve their students. The majority of the participants felt that their colleges did well recruiting and getting them started, but then they were left alone to navigate through the process, which was perceived negative by three participants. Participant FG-4 states:

When you register for classes they come and help you lay it out as what you need toward your major. Stuff you really don't have to take. I think after that point though there is a big rift if they have a question or you have a question, I don't think that they are there after that.

He further explains an example of what he means by saying:

We have registration is already in a week for someone that has been there for a few years. I sent a message and actually stopped in an office to try to set up a meeting. They said they would try to get back to me and three weeks later I still haven't heard anything. So I think on that aspect it is pretty sad to think that my future, I still need that group to be a part of it until I am done with school. I think that there are other people that I know still have no clue what they are going to

school for and there is not someone there to help them give them direction. If anything, they just sign them up for classes and they walk out of the office. So you kind of feel like they are all for the recruitment and getting you in.

Participant FG-5 adds that she thinks this "is a problem for a lot of people is that they [universities] expect you to know all the rules when you go in and people just don't because you just don't have, maybe somebody whose parents were in college they would know you have to contact this office or contact whoever the person is, the registrar because I don't think they still are very helpful at schools**."** She goes on to share a remembrance from when she was an undergrad student and how it "took me [her] three years to realize [that] you have to have that [FASFA] in every year before March in order to get your financial aid. Those are simple things but if you don't explain that to a new student, you [they] don't catch onto that. [For example a student may say] oh I did that. [But they need someone to tell them] no, you have to do that every year. It is the basic things that students need to learn."

Participant FG-1 adds that "There is nothing wrong with holding hands when they [college students] are freshmen to get them started. I think we have an attitude of I am not going to hold your hand. You are grown up now. Well you may not have that kind of experience. You don't have that world view. You don't understand that." She goes on to share a personal example from when she was an undergrad student by sharing that "one of the last classes I had to take was like a world music class. It was really hard and people are like well that is a 300 level class and I am like I have no idea what a 300 level class is. But apparently something I should have known but didn't**."** Leaving students

alone to navigate through an institutional system that is foreign to them creates barriers that make it difficult for them to persist in college.

Participant I-1 shared a perceived positive experience that his college has many resource tools on campus for students to use such as tutors and a "writing lab and they will go over your papers. That helped a lot with my [his] English classes because I am not that good in [writing]." The participants shared that knowing what to expect class wise from their professors and opportunities to travel are things they liked, but what they disliked were the "red tape" that an individual has to complete in order to start college which participant FG-3 perceived as a negative experience by saying that this is, "very discouraging for people**."** This section covered the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered under the finding of student services. Next, the positive and negative perceived experiences of campus climate within the larger context of student services under institutional support are covered.

Many of the participants experienced the challenge of adjusting to their campus climate which added to the feelings of being homesick and struggling to socialize. Student Services influences the climate on campus and the campus climate impacts whether a student feels accepted or not on campus. A strong student services that embraces and nurtures an authentic and contemporary representation of American Indian people campus wide, lessens the feeling of exclusion for American Indian students when entering a predominately-white institution. If no buffer is implemented these feelings can at times be an assault on a student's persona (Martin & Thunder, 2013).

Participant I-1 describes how in his first semester of college he was overwhelmed with being homesick and how that was perceived as a negative experience by saying:

It was really hard because I have always lived on the res and going somewhere so different, it was so bright, so loud. It was just a big change. One of the biggest things is that I knew everyone on the res and I didn't know anyone in the city. In the city no one is going to come up to talk to you so you have to make the initiative to talk to them. That was a big change. You kind of feel a little lost like you are just this one person in a big place, going from a big place where everyone knows you and you know everybody just to being this one little ant in a big pile of sand.

He goes on to share how his college puts on an "inviting" façade when they were in the process of recruiting him but when he arrived on campus the other "people are kind of stand offish and they seem like they have their nose in the air." He wasn't used to this type of unfriendliness because on his reservation everyone is nice. On his reservation everyone says "hi" to everyone even if they only met you once, but that is not how it is on campus. On campus even though you met them once most people won't tell you "hi" until you get to know them more intimately. He found this to be "offensive, like they seem insincere" to him. He goes on further by describing the differences he sees at his college compared to other colleges by saying:

It is kind of not the friendliest school. I've been to [other colleges in the area] and they are much more friendly there. Unless you know that person at [my college] they won't stop on the street and say hi to you. At [the other campus] you can be out and about and people will stop and just visit with you which is really different from [my college]. But [my college] is a really different social environment than

a state school because it has a prestigious label on it so everyone thinks they are kind of up there. [The other college] is more down to earth I have noticed.

Participant I-2 adds, "It was hard at first freshman year like having to go out on my own and away from my family. [Also] trying to socialize makes everything hard**."**

Participant I-4 shares an experience perceived as strategic when she transferred from a state college to a tribal college. She believed that the change to an American Indian focus helped her to be less homesick because what she "learn[ed] at the tribal college is based around reservations and tribes and Native American studies [which connected to who she was and where she was from]. At [her state college], I didn't see too much of that." Next, the positive and negative perceived experiences of culture shock within the larger context of student services under institutional support are covered.

Culture shock is common among first year college students, but for American Indian students it is more complex. Participant FG-5 describes her negative perceived experience with culture shock on moving in day at her first undergrad college by saying:

> I had never seen so many people together because I had been going to summer school. There are not many [students] there. So that was different being from res. I lived in a dorm and one of the girl's mothers came in wanted to measure the room for a carpet. I am like "carpet?" I am lucky if we get a rug by the bed. It is just so different. Just going to have decorations. I went with my little bag of clothes. It was just a culture shock.

Participant I-2 adds that that she and her friends had experienced culture shock in their first year of college, but questioned "if it is just [a] freshmen [thing] or if it is more of a Native American thing, but we [American Indian] just really don't really like leaving our

families." Next the positive and negative perceived experiences of racial discrimination within the larger context of student services under institutional support are covered.

Colleges are against racial discrimination, yet micro-aggression continues to occur on college campuses. This section covers three participants' perceived negative experiences with racial discrimination. Participant FG-3 shares what he "dislike is ignorant people [and] having to always explain my culture to somebody, always having to explain myself to somebody." He adds that he also dislikes it when someone finds out that he is American Indian because he receives an reaction which he describes as being an:

> Expectation like oh wow you are actually in college. Like it is just that
> expectation that because you are Native you are expected to fail. You know what
> I mean. It is the most impressive thing ever that you are in school. All I am
> thinking is that I know a lot of people that are educated like a good chunk of
> people that I know are all educated. You still have to break through the barrier of
> the stereotypes people still hold.

He adds that when he is in social environments meeting new people they always ask him about his nationality because he obviously does not look white. When he responds that he is American Indian, they start telling jokes almost immediately even though this was the first time they talked. He does not get angry about the jokes, but he does let them know what the real deal is. He shares that:

> If I am offended by something someone says I will let them know in a non-
> threatening way like I am not trying to fight you over it. I will tell them I don't
> appreciate it and they should quit. Even in those in the experiences I have always

found that people are totally oh I am sorry I didn't mean to offend you. They are

totally cool with it.

Participant I-2 adds that she has had other college students ask her "does your house look

like my house" and "what is it like to have a culture." She goes on to say how a good

friend of hers was teasing and calling her "Pocahontas", but she did not find it amusing

so she told her friend and she stopped calling her "Pocahontas".

Participant FG-1 experienced discrimination while attending college, but she

expected it because she felt it was part of the times. However, she continues to

experience discrimination but now it is more subtle describing that:

Teachers just don't expect you to succeed if you are a person of color. Just for

them to be surprised that I do well. That is discriminatory in itself. It kind of

bothers me but it is just something you have to kind of deal with I guess.

She shares that when she was doing her clinical in a hospital that she was assigned to an

American Indian patient because she was American Indian. However, she did not need

this diversity training as much as her white peers because she is American Indian. She

describes her experience with "subtle racism" from the standpoint of "being the only

Indian in the class" by saying "A lot of time when you do speak up they don't know what

you are talking about so they don't engage in a conversation because they think you are

crazy or don't know what you are referring to. It makes it difficult for you to learn

more." Participant FG-4 adds that he never experienced discrimination from teachers,

but seen it between how students act in different ways to students of another race or

ethnicity. For example he describes how a non-native girl in one of his college classes is

dating an American Indian man and how she cannot understand:

For the life of her why he always likes to go home and visit his mom and dad

every day. He goes home every day to visit with his mom or he calls her at night.

Like she can't figure out why there is such a bond there with family. It is so

funny in class because some of these other girls [American Indian] try to argue

with her about it but they don't explain like anything culturally. They just say

that is the way we are to her like as opposed to really help her get some type of

grasp on it.

Next the positive and negative perceived experiences of American Indian student

organizations within the larger context of student services under institutional support are

covered.

Most of the participants shared that culture focused student organizations within a

college helped them to find their sense of place. However, they cautioned for institutions

to stay away from absorbing the American Indian student organizations into a

multicultural organization because then the commonalities in culture and values are

decreased and so are the efforts.

Participant I-1 describes a two in one experience, which is perceived as both

positive and strategic from his participation in the American Indian student organization

on campus and how this helped him to make friends and how "they are Native American

too so it helps a lot". Participant FG-5 describes a perceived as positive experience with

her cultural student organization experience while working on her undergrad degree as

being positive "because we had that strong Native American club and we had family. We

would get together at each other's home and we had kids and we would have feasts. We

did a variety of things together, so that kept being away from home easier." Fun Club

activities included supporting American Indian students to win homecoming king and queen along with decorating a winning float in the homecoming parade. "We were a family so I think for those who have to go away to school, that is where those organizations are really important because that is family away from home. And family is so important to us [American Indian people]." However, in her graduate program she regularly attends a satellite location and rarely goes to campus, so she is not aware of any cultural events or organizations on campus. Participant FG-2 adds that at her college "It seems like they try to keep you in the loop based upon your nationality, what groups or clubs or backings you might need via email or bulletin board. It seems like they reach out."

Participant FG-3 adds an experience perceived as negative in that he feels the American Indian student organization at his college could do more information sharing or advertisement "because I [he] actually didn't know there were any Native American groups on campus until late last year maybe like the year before." Next the positive and negative perceived experiences of college programs within the larger context of student services under institutional support are covered.

It is vital for college programs to be created for the individuals they are intended to serve. The majority of the participants either chose or would recommend their perspective Wisconsin college because of how their programs were set up. Participant FG-5 experience is perceived as positive as she relates how she understands things better in her graduate program because of her prior higher education experience. She like how her program is set up for adult learners with evening classes from 6pm to 9:30 pm over a 12-week period.

Participant FG-1 experience is perceived as both positive and negative as she adds that she chose her program at a private Christian based school because the state colleges had eliminated the Master degree nurse practitioner program that she was interested. What she does not like it that Christianity is interwoven throughout the curriculum. However, she expected it because it is a Christian based school, she related:

A lot of that [Christianity] comes through in their teaching. My spirituality isn't really entwined with the Christian religion [so] at first it was kind of offensive to me, now I am better at ignoring it. For the program I am in it is okay because it is more of a science based program. I don't know that I would recommend it for anything else though.

Additionally, she stated that she likes the program because it offers "online classes" and she does not "have to travel". However, she misses the "interaction and bouncing things off of" others and that she tends "to procrastinate [and] not do things until they are due."

Participant FG-5 experience is perceived as positive as she recommends her undergrad college because they have "Native instructors there" However; even though her current graduate program is about diversity and "diversity is taught in every class I have taken." She questions whether they truly "understand diversity". She goes on to say that she chose her program at a private college because her first choice was a state college that required taking the GRE as part of its entry requirements and that "Oh truth, I was just coming out of a full long year of major anxiety and depression and when Point said I had to take a GRE, I look at the book to study and said I can't handle it."

Participant I-5 experience is perceived as negative as he had transferred this semester from a tribal college to a state college found "it quite appalling" that there was no mention of tribal governments in his courses because Wisconsin has 11 federal recognized tribes and some of the graduates may work for tribal nations and they will have no "idea of how to work with a tribe." Participant FG-3 adds that he did not like "The fact that all the tests are in the same week." Next the positive and negative perceived experiences of faculty and staff within the larger context of student services under institutional support are covered.

University faculty and staff can influence a student's college experience. Participant FG-5 experience is perceived as starting out as negative, to being strategic, to ending as positive. She was in a two part internship with two different faculty members. The first one never came out to visit the site she was interning at and this made her "upset" and feel "like [a] second class citizen because she visited every other sight but mine." When it came time for the second faculty member to take the lead she then asked the faculty member if they were going to come to her site or do everything by phone as the first faculty member did. This faculty had a different approach and responded "oh no, I will be there". The participant responded by telling the faculty "good, that is important to me." In addition, she shares how she "had really important people in my life who were working at [the university I was attending in my undergrad]. [They] tried to tell me that I could get an apartment and I could go to school, even though pregnant."

Participant I-5 experience is also perceived as starting out to be negative, to being strategic, to ending as a positive. A faculty member at a state school course assignment required him to work with a partner around a field research project that required. He felt

that he did the majority of the workload because he did most of the writing, which he would submit to his partner and his partner would do the editing. Then with no prior dialogue or notification to him, his partner decided to complain to the instructor that he was not doing anything because they were not progressing to the point where the partner thought they should be. When mid-term grades were posted I received an "F" and my partner received a "B". He goes on to share how he strategically problem solved this negative situation so that it ended as a positive by stating:

> I immediately went to the professor and addressed him by saying you can't give me an F without discussing this with me first. I also made the department chair aware of the situation because that is how UW's procedure works. You go to the professor and then if it doesn't work out there you go to the department chair and then you progress up to the dean of students. But we were able to get it resolved and my F was changed to a B.

Participant I-5 effectively worked through strategically to improve a negative experience.

Participant I-3 experience is perceived as positive as her dorm room hall director "was really like involved and he would send me a lot of emails to make sure that I was getting along fine and [asking] are there any resources that he could link me up with which is really helpful." This section covered the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered with building skills for academic preparedness. Next the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered under community are covered.

Experiences related to community in American Indian communities are deeply rooted in culture and traditions. This sometimes includes respecting one's natural ability

and skills over their academic ability and skills. The historical trauma from boarding schools and other education policies and practices has tarnished the capability, values and appreciation for higher education in tribal communities. This section covers historical trauma from the boarding school era, local community, and racial discrimination within surrounding communities. Participant FG-5 experience is perceived as negative as she shares her thoughts of intergenerational trauma from boarding school experiences where American Indians were taught "punishment, shame, and fear" were abused "physical and sexually" including mentally by "cut[ting] their hair off, took the ceremonies, took the language, punished them for speaking the language, and at Carlisle [One of the first American Indian Boarding Schools] the theme or the motto was "kill the Indian, save the man." So they really worked hard at us." This experience is evidence of historical trauma and colonization going deeper than killing the life way of American Indians to interfering and transforming one's ability to live out their original purposeful design for which they were born to fulfill. She connects and highlights that the impact of this trauma is still present today because "so many of our Indian people are stuck with that blaming." However, she provides a resolution to start the healing process through forgiveness. She explains, "It is about how we value ourselves and what we can do to forgive so we can move forward in our lives." Participant FG -1 adds, "That is part of the intergenerational trauma that you talked about. You guys remember maybe something that happened to your parents and grandparents that you still feel that way. You feel the way they felt."

In addition, the participants shared their experiences within the local community. Participant FG-5 experience perceived as negative that her community "push[es]

education in words and they provide some money but when you come back you kind of get it thrown at you because just because you have an education, you know more than me. We are cruel to ourselves." Participant FG-1 further describes an experience perceived as negative by saying:

> I think a lot of people feel like it is relates back to historical trauma I think because you always have white people telling us what is best for us and they were always educated so that when Native people come back they kind of get that thrown back at them.

Participant I-5 adds:

> I really think that I have run for tribal council a number of times and I have always talked about wanting to really push our Native youth in going to college. But yet I notice that the older generation tends to not believe in it. They would rather see work experience verses say hiring someone with a degree. They would rather hire somebody with actual experience. I think we have to somehow change that view somehow.

Participant FG-5 relates:

> It brings to mind that as a communal community, as a tribal community, there is also that sense that the crabs in the pail. It is not always that easy to pull up and want to do more because we all want to be average. Nobody is better than anybody, nobody is less than anybody. That is the way I was raised.

Participant FG-3 shares how other community members imply that he is "white because I was in college or that I was always acting like I was better than everybody else around here because I was in college." Participant FG-4 adds that he has "heard that before too."

When he has to leave a social event and he says he has "to go because you have to go a do a paper. He hears, "you are acting like a white man and all this stuff because I did leave the reservation."

Participant I-1 experience is perceived as positive as he sees his community as a place of opportunities because even though there are some barriers in his community, "they are not as bad as other places." He relates:

> I feel that every one of our children should go to school because they don't have as many barriers as other Native American students. We have a really good community and it is not the healthiest but I think it is a very healthy community to grow up in. Kids should take more advantage of that, like pursue what they want to because a lot of American Indians don't have the luxuries that we have. We are a very fortunate tribe.

He goes on to compares his community to that of a friend from another reservation who does not have it as fortunate as him. He adds:

> She kind of had a rough time because it is kind of rough out there but compared to mine it wasn't really rough because I never grew up in an environment like that. I always had a good [life] and everything like that. So my younger year struggles aren't as much that she might [have had]. That was one thing. [In] her community like a lot of kids don't pursue, a lot drop out. There are a lot in our community too but it is not as bad as out there, because they don't really have jobs or anything like that where up here we kind of have a casino and we can support ourselves where out there they don't have nothing to do. So they can't

really provide for themselves whereas we can which really helps us I think in the

long run.

Participant FG-2 experience is also perceived as positive as she didn't have the same

experience and maybe it was because she grew up in or near major city in Wisconsin.

She also felt that she assimilated more easily into main stream society because she does

not have the typical American Indian traits of the other focus group participants. She

explains that when others do find out that she is American Indian "they are more in awe

[and] want to know more", so she feels fortunate that she has not experienced what the

other focus group participants have faced. However, she goes on to say:

> But in the same token, it is really sad because I have had girlfriends who are from
>
> Serbia and Greece and they have had the same roadblocks and troubles which if
>
> you think about it is really sad. It is just not encompassing other races and what
>
> makes people think they are better than someone else to enforce their ways or
>
> values. But I said I have been pretty blessed. I have had multicultural friends and
>
> I guess we are all in the same boat at some point.

The perceived negative experiences within local communities as shared earlier in

this section are different from that of the surrounding communities. Within their

surrounding communities three participants describe experiences with racial

discrimination that were all perceived as negative. Participant FG-4 remembers an

experience had had approximately ten years earlier when he went to another community

to pick up a friend at a state college. He relates:

> She was sitting with a group of friends. I pulled up there and I started talking to
>
> her and one of her friends says you are a Native American, right? I am like yeah.

She said how did you get here. I kind of looked at her and I said I took 41 down the road. No, she said, like how did you get out. She is like don't you have a big fence around your reservation like you guys are staying there. At first I thought she was kidding like I had a big smile on my face. I am like oh absolutely we have barbed wire around and everything. I finally thought well she is serious and like no, our reservation is nothing like that at all. A lot more trees and a lot better for people. That is about it. Most of girls sitting there thought the same thing. They actually thought we were quarantined off because they have never seen a Native American at their school even. Right in Oshkosh which you would think isn't that far from Green Bay where some Oneida people live.

Participant FG-5 adds:

I had to go through that whole discussion with a girl from Appleton. Do you live in Teepees? Do you live in your own log cabin. It was all the old stereotypes. I said where did you grow up? And she said Appleton. I just shook my head at her. But I always through the years proceeded to try to educate people.

She goes on to share that "racism is alive and well" in the county that she lives in and relates:

They [the county] have learned to be a little bit more subtle about it because in general the Caucasian population is driven by economics and we have money now but when we didn't, we were all shoplifters. We still have Native people who do that. It is not that we are without sin here but somebody just posted something on Facebook about a racist kind of thing that happened. I think when I get upset is when someone else normalizes it and says oh that happens to this group or this

group or this group. No this happened to me because I was an Indian. It might
have happened to your grandma once and she came from Germany but they
[mainstream society] take away from our feelings and from our experience when
they try to normalize it. Underneath all that, we are all human beings. We have
things in common for sure.

Participant FG-4 adds that it is "really a good point about how they make it normal." He refers to how his father-in-law's curiosity in the American Indian history and culture, does not come from a good place. He uses his curiosity to manipulate what he finds on the internet to feed into his racist mindset. He always has to be right and "he generalizes everything that happens to everyone from the tribe." Participant FG-5 adds:

Yes, we share human cultural values with human beings. But this is our country.
We are first nation's people, so maybe we things a little different. We are not
immigrants. We don't have those issues. When people immigrated to this
country, blah, blah, blah. Yeah, well they took over ours. You want to give that
response, but rather than give that response let's just look at it that we have first
nations cultural experience and we need each other in order to succeed in this
world. We are basically a conquered people, but we are not.

Participant FG-1 adds a strategic response:

That is what we live with but how do we cope with that. We accept that racism
exists and sometimes it is a teaching moment and sometimes it is a link and away
moment and sometimes it is we just can't help ourselves and get in your face
moment. I think that is what happens.

This section covered the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered around the subject of community. Next the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered under financial aid are covered.

Experiences related to financial aid for citizens of Mohican Nation includes a tribal grant which supplements costs associated with their higher education expenses. Only one participant talked about financial aid and the experience was perceived as positive and strategic. Participant I-1 explained that he "got $11,000 from my [his] tribe which is really generous and that helps immensely. My financial aid wasn't as good this year but it still helps, probably about $7,000." His college "is really generous too. They give you probably a $20,000 scholarship which leaves me and my family to pay about $6,000 which I feel is totally manageable for my family at least. Because $6,000 a year [education cost] and [when] my total tuition is almost $50,000. That is nothing." Next the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered under character strengths are covered.

Experiences as they relate to character strengths are utilized by Stockbridge-Munsee students to balance two worlds within themselves in order to persist in Wisconsin colleges. This section describes the characteristic strengths from the participant's perspective that motivated those to start college and/or to navigate successfully through the process for an experience that is perceived as strategic by all ten participants.

Participant I-1 relates that when he took on a "big undertaking" by registering for two science classes in one semester which were "anatomy" and "chemistry," This

resulted with him going deeper within himself to find that he needed "to develop better study, management, and time management so that I am able to study and get good grades that I want." He adds that he does not "work well under pressure" and if he does not balance his workload to a manageable size he becomes a "panicky person", so he plans ahead. He adds, "I like doing it in advance because then I can get several drafts, going through and I can edit them or maybe have my professor look at them. I like doing stuff ahead of time." He credits his motivation as coming from within himself, "my success is in me on my part because I want to be good. You have to want to do good." Participant I-4 adds:

> I would say making friends was a huge strategy that I had because then it makes you want to go class and makes you feel more comfortable while you are in class. Like for instance in oral communications, we had to do a lot of speeches and you don't always feel comfortable talking in front of others, but it made it a lot easier when you befriended the people in your class. All the classes I have had I have done fairly well in.

Participant FG-2 adds, "In regard to studies or whatever, I have just gone right to teachers/professors. I haven't had any issues that were out of the norm or anything. Just bouncing off friends and family" as a positive strategy to navigate through higher education.

Participant I-2 is in college and motivated to do well because she is "interested in it, that I took the time to really read the textbook and go ask questions that I felt were more interesting and try to get inducted to it." To navigate successfully through the barriers she describes a time where she had "classes that were kind of boring, that I just

had to struggle through to try to understand everything. I had to go and talk to the teachers. It wasn't fun for me I[to] ask." For example her:

> Geography class was really difficult because it was partially online and there was just so much work. The information was really dense. It wasn't very interesting stuff. A lot of numbers and having to memorize all that stuff, so I would have to go and talk to the professor and try to find him because he was off and on campus.

Participant I-2 came from a high school that had a "Title VII" program which is American Indian focus and provided a sense of place where she "could just go and chill" to attending a pre-dominantly white state college where "there are like seven Native Americans on the whole campus." This disparity made it difficult for her to "try to fit in." She recommends, "to go and meet people even though they are not the same culture or anything. You just go and find people that you can get along with really. You just have to force yourself to go out there and meet with people. You just kind of push yourself to continue." She also feels it is importing to be "getting involved in the school thing

Participant I-3 describes her first couple of days of college as being "really scary" and "really hard because I got homesick really bad even though I was only an hour away." To get past the strong draw of being home sick and wanting to go home, she said "I just made myself stay and just socializing." She goes on to say that she is normally social and "talk[s] to everybody but seeing so many different people, it was really a big thing." She spent most of the first semester of college "learning the hard way." Her first semester GPA was within the normal range for freshman as she was told, but she wanted to do better. Therefore, in her second semester her new approach included putting her

"own time and effort into it" along with "really push[ing]" herself. To do well in her

college courses she motivates herself with goals that she sets for herself. She relates:

> I set goals for myself for every exam that I have. I usually don't set it until after
>
> the second or third because the first you are really trying to find out like what is
>
> the professor like, how they test you, how they give you the information, if you
>
> really have to read the book or if all their exams are just on their lectures. So I
>
> just set a lot of goals for myself and obviously do the reward incentive afterwards.

Participant FG-4 was intrinsically motivated to go to college. He thinks it is

alright for someone to have "that job" and be in it for "30 years" because "a lot of Native

American people and a lot of other people are okay they don't have that drive to start

here and try to get there." He does not "see anything wrong with the people that decide

that I am making enough money to support my family, pay my bills, I can still put

presents under the tree come Christmas time." However, he is motivated in knowing that

he "want[s] more, not necessarily more money. I do want more knowledge and more

experiences as opposed to anything else." Participant FG-5 further describes FG-4's

perspectives as, "If you want to pull yourself up, it is not that I want to be better than you.

I just want to be better for me for my family."

Participant FG-4 adds that he "started going back to school because I wanted to be

a role model for my cousins, my friends, my daughter, for my nieces and nephews. That

is why I went back to school." He is motivated to do well in college because of the lack

of "Native American business owners, big management positions in big companies." He

describes working for a tribal business for ten years and how the General Manager there

mentors him towards attaining his degree. He describes that he has "always envisioned

myself [being a General Manger] as knowing how easy that would be for me to do." This mentorship gives him the opportunity to work with budgets. His interest includes, "I love golf, I love numbers, working with marketing groups that I worked with before." He sets goals for himself and one is to "be running [a tribal business] [and he] fully plan[s] on reaching them" which serves as a positive strategy to motivate him in moving forward.

Participant FG-3 is motivated to "lead by example and that type of thing led to my decision to go to school and finish school." Also by college itself and when he finishes his bachelor's degree he wants to continue on in higher education. His family teases him by asking "are you going to be a lifetime student?" He admits that it "sounds weird, I don't like homework but I like homework at the same time. I really like just the learning experience in general." He credits his navigation skills to being "usually good at either figuring something out or emailing someone, [and] knowing people in your class." He goes on to say that the tools are available to help students to navigate through college and it "is probably up to the participant at some point to pick up the ball if you need help or whatever" which is a positive strategy that drives his intrinsic motivation to move forward.

Participant FG-3 is driven to be the best he can be because he is grateful for all his ancestors sacrificed so that he could have all and be all that he is today. He describes how this motivation is different from the white American students on campus who are not driven to be the best they can be by saying "I don't want to say necessarily that they are ungrateful in a sense that they are all spoiled brats, but I think they are ungrateful because they don't know how [their] ancestors suffered to make sure they have the opportunity they have. They don't realize how fortunate they are and I think that also leads them to

not be driven to be the best they can be because of what they see around them." He goes on to describe, analyze, and compare the origination of his character strengths to that of other students. He starts with values pointing to that none of his "white friends went to school to get educated, to learn, or to better themselves", instead they were more interested in "how much money they were going to make" after they graduated. He thought it puzzling that his white friends were not "going to school for something they liked" because he "chose something [he] enjoyed doing." His perspective originates from the constant complaining he hears from his white friends about their classes and other academic related issues. He further describes his perspective by saying:

> It is like how can you sit there and go through all these years and pay all that money for something you don't even like doing just to set yourself up for a job that you probably are going to hate doing too.

He goes on to connect his perspective to a book titled "The Fiery Trial" by Eric Foner that he is reading for his African American History course as an example of a character strength that is driven from ones situational experience over ones privileged experience.

> Quotes Lincoln writing in his journal and Lincoln is kind of astounded by the idea that the African Americans were chained up with their families and they seemed so happy even though they didn't have anything, they were so happy because they had each other. They had their values and everything. He makes a note like how can they be so happy when like white Americans have all these things that they want and they complain about their everyday life and they are not happy. I see that a lot at school. Lots of Native students are happy with their families while they just complain about everything.

Participant FG-1 worked in the health field for many years and this motivated her to go back to college "to help the Native community. I figured that was the best way too and that is why I keep furthering my education because I wanted to work in the Native communities to help improve the healthcare situation, health disparities, and that is what I am doing now." Helping her American Indian community is a positive strategy motivating her to move forward in higher education.

Participant I-5 shares how he overcame the barrier of "not having a high school diploma." He relates:

When I walked into here, the education department and spoke with [the GED instructor], I asked him how long do you think it is going to take for me to get my GED. I believe I was 33/34 so I had been out of school for quite awhile. Well it probably will take you about six months or so. I was really, really, really close to turning around and walking out. I am a rather impatient person. Then [GED instructor] said, wait a second, let's have you take a couple of the pre-tests and see where you are at and we will go from there. It turned out I had my GED in two weeks.

He further adds that his first college experience was at a tribal college and during this time "he was always on the Dean's List. I was also a student government president. So I was really involved with just about everything that was happening at the college." Now that he has transferred to a state college he takes the opportunity of "trying to educate the other people. There are some things lacking. Every time we mention something about local government in any of my classes, I always bring up a tribal example." He is

motivated to inform others bringing forward questions and discussions as a positive strategy for motivation in moving forward in higher education.

Participant FG-5 describes how it took her 15 years to attain her bachelor's degree and that is proof that she has "persistence." She enjoys things like "going to school," "reading," and "learning new things." She also motivates herself by telling herself "you are going to get that degree. You are going to stay the course." When she experiences difficulties or questions she states that she will "go to my colleagues, my friends and other people with Master's degrees and Native people" for input. She also talks about how "pride in self" is motivating and "that [it] is culture." She talks about how many times individuals do not recognize nor acknowledge that "our culture is teaching" and how she "always wanted to work for my own people." Having "more skills [academic and cultural] now" result in "opportunities [that] are coming up" and this motivates her.

She remembers that when she first went to college it was an era of activism where she was "very much into my nativeness and that is the time of red power, black power." She credits the fact that she "took advantage of the things that were out there for us" to get started in college. However, part of this era of activism included experiencing "racial discrimination." She became "tough" as a result of "fighting for our people always" this influenced her characteristic strength of courage to grow to the point where "nobody that could put me down or hold me down. I would just bring it right out to their face." However, now that she has "learned [socially academic] skills as to how to do that without being in their face" she is able to do the "job [of] building people up." In a qualitative study by Brayboy (2004) regarding visible and invisible characteristic response from the experience perceived by American Indians on campus reveals that

Visibility can lead to surveillance, marginalization, and ostracism, while

simultaneously having positive consequences that are directly related to strategic

forms of activism, advocacy, and the maintenance of cultural integrity.

Invisibility serves to assist some students in "flying under the radar" in order to

maintain their cultural integrity, but it can also have damaging influences on

students regarding marginalization (pp. 146-147).

Participant FG-4 adds that he does not "feel bitter about anything even the things that

happened to me, myself, actually I have never felt bitter about it afterwards [experiencing

racism]. I am not angry. I came home to where I know my home is. I actually don't

drink, smoke or do drugs. I want my daughter raised that way." Participant FG-1 adds

that she responds to racism relating, "I don't really confront anybody or say anything to

anybody. I talk to family about but I guess my generation is kind of an expected thing."

Participant FG-5 concludes the conversation by saying "I think somewhere in this whole

discussion I lose sight of it, but it is self-worth." Next the perceived positive and

negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered under life

imbalances are covered.

Experiences related to life imbalances are not always planned, yet they do impact

one's persistence in college. Participant FG-5 experience is perceived as negative as

while she was in college she became pregnant and "lived in a very alcoholic marriage and

dealing with the alcohol and pain of all of that stopped me from wanting to do a lot of

things sometimes." She adds that drinking "is common among freshmen because now

they can drink. We lost a few students to drinking because there is no parent there to

watch them.

She goes on to describe how alcohol is part of many of "our Native lives" and that few "can be social" drinkers because "it can just take you [Natives] over the edge. From her life experiences and career she says "it is hard to see this going on over and over again. We are not prone to it anymore than anyone else, but we just don't seem to be able to social drink, not too many people." Next the perceived positive and negative experiences that Stockbridge-Munsee students encountered under family/social responsibilities are covered.

Experiences related to family/social responsibilities are significant as the participants responded with the word 'family' in their response a total of 53 times. The research considered this significant as it was distributed 47 times in the focus group interview collected from all five participants along with six times across three of the five one-on-one interviews. Family/social responsibilities can either be supportive or an interruption to students persisting in Wisconsin colleges. Their experiences were perceived to be mixed between negative, positive, and strategic. Participant FG-2 shares that she "would say it is a family pull" that interferes with students finishing college. She describes it further by saying:

> It is not like being a mamma's boy or anything like that it is just a strong family connection even if you don't live on the reservation, it is just that pull. You miss them. I don't know what it is but we are from people of color and it is the same thing, somebody else's family, or just that help out, just that strong bind.

She goes on to say that "I don't see cultural knowledge so much as just family support. You don't have to go to school but if you do they are behind you, brother, sister, nieces, nephews, folks, and like I said no judging if you don't and no judging if you do." She

dislikes not having "enough time in day for work, a daughter, and aging parents**."** She

acknowledges that "family is just like the key in my life." She goes on describing that "I

talk to my folks every day. My daughter calls me every day. We bounce things off [of

each other]." Her family is "proud" that she is going back to college to complete her

degree and when she comes "home on weekends" they will ask her did "you get your

homework done?" and she said this makes her feel "like I am 16." She shared that her

"elderly parents, or [if] something happens to my daughter" are factors that could impede

her from reaching her higher education goals.

Participant FG-3 describes how he knew of individuals who were from

reservations "that were just fantastic athletes. They had so much going for them. They

would leave school and immediately for a semester [and] they [would] quit. They just

come home and they don't attempt to go back to school because they had that one bad

experience. So I think it is just missing your family is a real big issue." He adds

"another one [factor] is a lack of guidance." He has talked with many "people from this

tribe around my age group" about if they thought about college and he is surprised when

they respond no. I was like what do our parents say. Oh they really don't say anything

about it. He further adds:

> I am not trying to say the parents don't care about them. The parents don't value
>
> education. They don't encourage them to go live the way they should. They
>
> don't encourage them to work to be the best they can be. There is that lack of
>
> guidance. Also a lot of the parents set a bad example for them. They see that
>
> negative behavior and they are like that is totally okay if I live like that. They
>
> don't see the alternative that they could be different.

In regards to home, he goes "home pretty much every weekend." He compares and
contrasts the difference between himself and another student who is non-native about
home. He relates:

> My roommate just wants to stay and go partying and stuff. He is like why do you
> go home every weekend. He can't understand that. I actually like going home to
> my family. Of course you love your family, but they say they love them so will
> see them once a month just to see how they are doing. They don't enjoy being
> home. But I genuinely have fun when I am home. I love being at home. And he
> can't get a grip on that either. He says you have to cut ties. I don't think you
> have to cut ties. That is a big difference.

His "whole family is very supportive, like not just my immediate family, like all my
aunts and uncles and cousins and everything." He is "definitely glad they are supportive
of me and they encourage me in whatever I pursue." He is confident that "nothing would
stop me from getting my degree." He goes on to explain "for me even if something did
happen to my parents, some extreme circumstance, I would still know they would want
me to get my degree anyways." Family is also influences participant FG-4.

Participant FG-4 who is a brother to participant FG-3 agrees with him in that
"something may slow me down. Something happens to my wife and daughter or if I had
to take care of a family member, but I would continue. I know that is the only way to
better myself." However, later on he describes a time earlier in his life when he did step
out of college by saying "to be honest I think after my grandma passed away emotionally
I just couldn't do it. I didn't have the drive for anything. It actually affected me for 4-5
years, didn't have any drive to do it. It took a long time. When I got married and my

wife was pregnant, a year after we got married we had this baby come into our life and I want better for her." He goes on to say "to be honest like he [participant FG-3] said our families are very happy that we are in school and they have always been super supportive of anything I have ever done. Actually within the next year all three of their [our parents] children will have a degree. That is exciting." In regards to family, he has regular contact with his family. He compares and contrasts the difference between himself and his wife who is non-native about family time. He relates:

> Even with my wife she had always said how close her and the family were and when we lived in Appleton and Green Bay, she talked to them like once a month, like on the phone and then we would go see them every couple of months. With my family, I talk to my mom and dad or text my brother, I don't think I go a day without speaking to my family at all if not actually going to see them. That was real hard for her to understand and it makes me laugh sometimes now when we are up here, she is like well I want to make sure I stop and see my parents before we do stuff. I think in her mind it is her thinking that we are getting equal time with families as opposed to genuinely want to actually go and step in their door and see how they are doing.

Participant FG-5 adds "that is a very good example of the cultural values that are different." Everyone is different and different is good.

Participant FG-5 shares that she had no examples of American Indians going to college within her family circle or community and this "was just difficult for me to understand that so I withdrew from school." Instead the examples that she "saw growing up was you get married, have a baby, get a car, get a job, go out on Friday or Saturday

night. That is what I thought life was." However, "now we have examples. We have

had some young women who had to go through that, but they stayed the course and got

their degree." Her family is proud of her and she explains that "My kids are so proud

they want me to walk the ceremonies next May and they want to bead my shawl, so that

is how proud they are." She goes on to say that "I am getting a lot of requests to do

things. My family is very large. I have a lot of nieces and nephews and they are reaching

out to me in a different way." American Indian families support each other by serving as

positive mentors.

Participant FG-1 shares that because she "was the first one in my family to go on

to college" resulted in her son going to college and her family to "value it a little bit

more." She further explains that "They see their parent doing it, the older one anyway.

Not the other one yet. But my brother started going back to school, so I think they think

if [participant FG-1] can do it, I can do it. It normalizes things more. I don't think they

treat me any different." She describes a barrier in how older generations did not expect

"young people" to go "on to school" She agrees with the other participants in that "a

serious illness in my family" could also be a factor to impede her reaching her education

goal. She goes on to share that her and another person "were trying to talk to her [a girl]

about nursing school because she worked at the clinic and through family circumstances

she had a lot of experience taking care of people. And she is like my mom told me I was

never smart enough for that. It just breaks your heart."

Participant I-1credits his "family support" and explains that his "mother would

make me stay like two weeks at a time" before coming home. This way he "had to learn

to be by myself to be more outgoing [to] make friends." He goes on to describe how his cousin helped him to find a sense of place in a big city. He relates:

> My cousin went to [the same college] with me and I would spend a lot of time over there because it seems like at home because she had a family. She had her own place, not like a dorm room, so sterile. It doesn't seem homey so I spend a lot of time over there. I think that is what helped me a lot because I had a place that would seem like home to me.

> Participant I-3 also greed that her "family helped" because "they told me what to do about it [being home sick]." She feels her family supports her and explains how she "just got a certificate for last semester for getting a 3.0 and they were really excited and they hung it on their refrigerator and stuff like that." She also acknowledge that she feels secure and confident because "I know if I am having trouble or if I need help that I can call [and that] either my aunties, my grandma, my grandpa, anybody and they will help me for sure." A summary of the results are shared next.

Summary of Results

A summary of the results collected from data is delineated in terms of themes. Individual themes are identified as strategies used to persist in Wisconsin colleges in relationship to each category. Based on the preceding presentation and summary of data generated by the study, a summary of strategic themes in Table 6 provides information gained from participants regarding strategies, tools, and resources that helped Stockbridge-Munsee students overcome challenges to persist in Wisconsin colleges.

Table 6

Strategies to Overcoming Higher Education Challenges

General category	Strategic Themes	Explanation Summary from Comments	Source
Themes related to High Schools preparing students for college.	1. Culturally responsive teaching and curriculum	Learned from parents instead of in high school.	Focus Group
	2. Academic Preparedness: Skill building and higher expectations.	Would like more college practice and less flexibility in accepting late assignments.	Focus Group Literature Review
	3. Academic Preparedness: Advance placement courses.	These courses prepared students for the academic rigor of college.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
Themes related to the function and atmosphere of universities	4. Assistance beyond recruitment	After a college has recruited you as a student, they are not there like they were in the beginning.	Focus Group
	5. Academic resources on campus	Available tutors and writing labs help students to acclimate to the academic rigor of college.	Literature Review Interview
	6. A welcoming campus climate that gives one a sense of place.	Helps to lessen the feelings of being homesick and the struggle to socialize.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
	7. Culture Shock	College campus was drastically different than the student's home life in which they grew up.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview

Strategies to Overcoming Higher Education Challenges (continued)

	8. Racial discrimination on campus	Isolates students and prevents them from feeling accepted.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
	9. American Indian student organizations	Having the support of A/I student organization provides a safe place for a student to find themselves and their fit within the university.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
	10. College Programs	Work to recruit students by meeting their interest and needs.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
	11. Faculty and staff	Having helpful and friendly faculty and staff helped students to feel at home and welcome. Also, if they were A/I this was a plus.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
Themes related to home	12. Boarding School era	Intergenerational trauma as a result of the boarding school era negatively impacted the community's thoughts of higher education.	Focus Group Literature Review
	13. Local Community	Is supportive; however the fear of the unknown and change can lessen the feel of support within the community at times.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
	14. Racial discrimination within the surrounding community	Experience as a result of stereotyping creates trust issues.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview

Strategies to Overcoming Higher Education Challenges (continued)

Themes related to finances	15. Tribal Grants and college scholarships	Receiving tribal grants and college scholarships are helpful in meeting costs associated with higher education.	Literature Review Interview Document Review
Themes related to attributes	16. Intrinsic motivation	Identified as a result of a strong internal drive, interest, and developed strategies.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
Themes related to balance	17. Holistically healthy	Lessening health risks and stress along with efficient organization and priorities improves academic success.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview
Themes related to family	18. Family	Impacts the what, where, why, and who of every participants college experience.	Focus Group Literature Review Interview

Table 6 above summarizes the strategies, tools and resources that assisted Stockbridge-

Munsee students to endure their challenges while persisting in Wisconsin colleges.

According to the data provided in Table 6, things such as culturally responsive teaching

and curriculum, skill building and higher expectations, advance placement courses,

assistance beyond recruitment, academic resources on campus, a welcoming campus

climate that gives one a sense of place, culture shock, racial discrimination on campus,

American Indian student organizations, college programs, faculty and staff, boarding

school era, local community, racial discrimination within the surrounding community,

tribal grants and college scholarships, intrinsic motivation, holistically healthy, and

family among others influence Stockbridge-Munsee students experiences to persist in

Wisconsin colleges.

Forecast Chapter Five

Chapter Five will present a review of the study and discuss the findings in relationship to the literature presented in Chapter Two in addition to research related to persistence. Chapter Five will also draw conclusions and suggest implications for practice, leadership, learning, and service.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview

This concluding chapter summarizes the content of the prior four chapters and

discusses the findings, conclusions and implications of the study with particular attention

to the study's relationship to the literature. Chapter Five includes the following:

a) A review of the study

b) Research purpose

c) Discussion of themes and their relationship to the literature

d) Discussion of conclusions

e) Implications for practice

f) Implications for leadership, learning, and service

g) Implications for research

Review of Study

This study explored the experiences and strategies Stockbridge-Munsee students'

employed relating to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges by uncovering barriers that

come up in college while describing problem-solving strategies for success. Chapter One

introduced the research by providing a description of the background, purpose, approach,

significance, delimitations and limitations, and vocabulary of the study. This chapter

explains the problem of persistence and success rates of American Indians in higher

education while describing the disparities that exists between these students and other

race/ethnicity groups on key indicators of educational performance. Also discussed was

the tribal critical race theory (Brayboy, 2005) in education along with the multiple

models of student persistence (HeavyRunner & DeCelles, 2002; McAfee, 1997, 2000; Secatero, 2009).

Chapter Two reviewed the theory and research related to the issues of persistence for American Indian students, as well as studies suggesting solutions to improve persistence. This included areas of the past and present history in education, persistence factors (college readiness, institutional support, community, and financial aid), tribal identity, tribal colleges, and Mohican Nation. Other literature explored the experience that American Indian students had with persisting in higher education.

Chapter Three the design of the study through description of a qualitative phenomenological methodology using the processes of document review, focus group, and a series of one-on-one interviews to generate data relevant to the research question. This chapter also described the pre-selected criteria for the sample. Ten students participated in the study with five attending one focus group and five attending one-on-one interview sessions. Both the focus group and interview sessions employed semi-structured questions to explore the students' experiences and strategies to persist in Wisconsin colleges along with procedures for analysis and establishing validity.

Chapter Four presented and summarized data generated by the study design with respect to the studies research question. The organization of the data and the common factors and themes were identified and described.

This final chapter includes a summary of the findings related to the research purpose and reviewed literature. The chapter content also includes conclusions and implications of the study for practice, leadership for the advancement of learning and service, and research.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore Stockbridge-Munsee students'

experiences and strategies relating to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges. The

research then explored the students' voices, stories, and experiences as perceptions of

their experiences related to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges to earn at least 24

credits. The specific research question is:

2. What were the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students who persisted to

succeed in Wisconsin colleges?

- Which experiences were perceived as positive?

- Which experiences were perceived as negative?

- Which experiences were perceived as strategic?

Discussion of Themes Related to Literature

Themes and Literature Related to Research Question

All 18 of the strategic themes indentified in Chapter Four are related to the

research question and described experiences relating to persistence which is delineated

across college readiness, family influence, Wisconsin colleges, and building Mohican

Nation. A wide variety of experiences from Stockbridge-Munsee students with a

minimum of 24 credits and attending a Wisconsin college were reported as being

positive, negative, or strategic in relation to impacting their persistence.

Themes and literature related to college readiness.

According to President Obama's 2014 state of the union address he will work

with congress and on his own so that every American can get ahead to create a better life

for generations to come. In relation to education the focus of increasing the opportunity for college along with increasing college graduation rates President Obama (2014) will work with congress to "redesign high schools to better connect kids with careers or college and equip our kids with the real-world skills they need for a good job" (p. 1). Two themes rise out of this study to inform those who are interested in redesigning high schools to prepare students for college which is the lack of culturally responsive teaching/curriculum and college readiness.

Culturally responsive teaching and curriculum.

Two focus group participants reported how the lack of culturally responsive teaching/curriculum as it relates to the history of American Indians during their high schools years impacted their persistence as they encountered racial discrimination within the surrounding community and on campus. Two comments in particular address this point. Participant FG-3 for instance, stated

> "I [should not] say nobody cares." People do not even know that. Like no one considers that. They do not consider how many people were even here, how many people were murdered for no reason. Stuff like that. "I just think that is awful. I tell people stuff like that all the time."

FG-5 adds that in her high school they:

> Had the chapter on American History and they skipped it when they got to the part about the Indians. They skipped it because it [was not] good they said. They made it sound like what [was] in there [is not] good but they had nothing to replace it, like better knowledge.

None of the studies described in Chapter Two specifically discussed the connection between the lack of culturally responsive teaching/curriculum in high school to persistence in college.

When a high school curriculum is not culturally responsive it prevents the opportunity to shut down racial discrimination and prejudice that a student learns in other environments. This then leads to stereotyping and racial micro-aggression actions that continue into the student's adult life. David Bohm a leading quantum theorist further describes this through the purpose of dialogue in one of his three types of incoherent thought as a, "thought that denies that it is participative" (as cited in Senge, 2006, p. 224). Senge (2006) adds "Our 'mental model' determines not only how we make sense of the world, but how we take action" (p. 164). A significant and unique connection not found in the literature review, but rather a finding that arouse out of this study is that when a student believes a racial bias is true about a particular race/ethnicity than that belief turns into an "active agent" that drives a negative perception that influences how a student behaves and interacts with other students who are part of that race/ethnicity when they meet up for the first time in college. This has the potential to negative effect a minority student's ability to feel safe and welcome on campus which then can diminish the universities work towards promoting a positive campus's climate. In a mixed method study by Huffman (1991) focusing on campus racism found three findings "First, campus racism almost always takes the form of verbal derogatory racist comments. Second, these racial slurs are usually directed at Indians in general rather than an attack on the individual. And third, fellow students are typically the source of negative racial comments" (Huffman, 1991, p. 4). Four comments in particular address this point.

Participant FG-3 stated that what he "dislikes is ignorant people [and] having to always explain my culture to somebody, always having to explain myself to somebody." He also motioned the "expectation that because you are Native you are expected to fail." You still have to break through the barrier of the stereotypes people still hold. Participant FG-4 shared an experience he had when he pulled up to pick up someone on campus on how one of her friends told him "don't you have a big fence around your reservation like you guys are staying there." Participant I-2 adds that she has had other college students ask her "does your house look like my house" and "what is it like to have a culture." She goes on to say how a good friend of hers was teasing and calling her "Pocahontas", but she did not find it amusing so she told her friend and she stopped calling her "Pocahontas". Participant FG-1 adds a comment "Teachers just don't expect you to succeed if you are a person of color."

Culturally responsive teaching/curriculum can infiltrate and change one's mindset for the betterment of all. Senge (2006) reports, "The problem with mental models arises when they become implicit – when they exist below the level of our awareness" (p. 166). Therefore, working toward diminishing the prejudice and racial discrimination mind sets of high school students decreases the potential of action or reactions of stereotyping and micro-aggression on campus for all racial/ethnic groups to feel welcome and at home.

Teaching culturally and accurate curriculum is culturally responsive education. A summary from the University Of Northern Iowa Department Of Education (n. d.) denotes that culturally responsive teaching is validating, comprehensive, empowering, transformative, and liberating. It is validating because it employs cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles to make learning relevant and effective (Gay,

2000). It is comprehensive because it supports learning by "using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 382). It is empowering because it creates a better human race and more successful leaders who continually learn to do and be better through training, resources, assistance, positive role modeling, and praising accomplishments (Gay, 2000). It is transformative because it utilizes the collective student of color strengths to teach and learn in the classroom. It is liberating because students are free to learn their own truth without imposing mainstream ways of knowing into education.

Academic Preparedness.

In this section, the literature associated with academic preparedness overlapped the findings and will be delineated at the end of the section. One focus group participant and two one-on-one participants reported that their high schools did not prepare them for the academic rigor and experience of college. Three comments in particular address this point. Participant I-1 for instance, stated that he "was not challenged" in high school like he was challenged in college. Participant FG-3 added that his high school "had in no way prepared [him] for college." Participant I-3 also added "We just like went to class. We got A's and stuff [in high school] but in college you really have to study." Next academic readiness strategies employed to persist is discussed.

Two one-on-one participants reported taking advance placement courses and summer bridging programs as a strategy for supporting the transition from high school to college. Two comments in particular address this point. Participant I-1 for instance, stated that **"**taking a few college classes in high school really helped." While Participant FG-5 describes a college prep program that she attended for two summers prior to

attending college. This program "taught [her study skills that she did not receive] in high school [like] how to review your notes an hour after class and then later on that day and then tomorrow. But once you got it, don't go back and review those same notes. Start where you left off." Next, studies from Chapter Two relating to this section are discussed.

Four studies described in Chapter Two were related to identifying barriers and support for preparing American Indian students for college. In one study by Bosse, Duncan, Gapp, and Newland (2011) found that academic preparation and value as one of its six significant systems for supporting American Indian Students in the Transition to Postsecondary education. In a study by Guillory and Wolverton (2008) revealed that the lack of academic preparation is a barrier to persistence from the voices of American Indian students. A study conducted by Gilbert (2000) found cooperative learning, tutoring, and summer college programs as key factors for bridging the gap between high school and college. The fourth and final study conducted by Brown and Kurpius (1997) found that the perception of inadequate preparation for class work was significantly felt more by students' who did not persist in college. In addition, two models described in Chapter Two are related to the importance of academic preparation. McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model highlights academic preparation as one of its eight stepping stone influencing American Indian student's decisions to persist. Secatero (2009) Corn Model delineates graduates school preparation in the bottom portion of the corn model, which is part of the social well-being because a high level of academic preparation improves literacy and therefore supporting persistence. In one marginally relevant study not reviewed in Chapter Two, Ruey-Lin Lin (1985) found that American Indian students

struggle to make the connection from courses taught in school to their real world lives and future. This study was not reviewed in Chapter Two because this subject was uncovered as a result of the interviews. Next is themes and literature related to family influence.

Themes and literature related to family influence.

All five members of the focus group and three of the five one-on-one interviews for a total of 8 out of 10 participants reported family as a supporting factor influencing their persistence in college. Family influence is addressed among characteristic strengths, home, community, finance, nation support, and health as a result of one's experience with family structure, background, and environment within which they were raised building a strong and solid connection to their families serving as a positive, negative, and/or strategic experiences relating to college.

Five comments in particular address the positive experience. Participant FG-2 "family is just like the key in my life." Participant FG-3 "But I genuinely have fun when I am home [with family]. I love being at home [with family]." Participant FG-4 "to be honest like he [participant FG-3] said our families are very happy that we are in school and they have always been super supportive of anything I have ever done. Participant I-1 credits his "family support". Participant I-3 also agreed that her "family helped". Participant FG-5 "My kids are so proud they want me to walk the ceremonies next May and they want to bead my shawl, so that is how proud they are." Next the negative experience is discussed in terms of being a barrier to persistence.

Three comments in particular address the negative experience because it is perceived as a barrier for persistence. Participant FG-3 "So I think it is just missing your

family is a real big issue." Participant I-2 adds "It was hard at first freshman year like having to go out on my own and away from my family." Participant FG-1 She agrees with the other participants in that "a serious illness in my family" could also be a factor to impede her reaching her education goal. Next strategies employed to persist is discussed.

Two comments in particular address resource and motivation as strategic endeavors. Participant FG-2 Adding that when she has issues she finds solutions by "Just bouncing [things] off friends and family." Participant FG-4 adds that he "started going back to school because I wanted to be a role model for my cousins, my friends, my daughter, for my nieces and nephews. That is why I went back to school".

Three studies described in Chapter Two were related to family influence on a student's decisions to persist. In one study by Bosse, Duncan, Gapp, and Newland (2011) found that family support was vital to their participant's persistence in college. In the second study by Guillory and Wolverton (2008) found that family was the most mentioned factor affecting persistence. The third and final study conducted by Brown and Kurpius (1997) found the family encouragement measure showed no significant differences in the one-way ANOVA. In addition, three models described in Chapter Two were related to family influence on a student's decisions to persist. McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model highlights family support as one of its eight stepping stone influencing American Indian student's decisions to persist. Secatero (2009) Corn Model delineates family support as the root of the corn model, which is part of the physical well-being because all of the participants in his qualitative study for his dissertation reported family as being an important part of their success and persistence. While HeavyRunner & DeCelles (2002) Family Education Model direct focus connects family support as the

most important factor contributing to American Indian students persisting in college. A study not reviewed in Chapter Two conducted by Montgomery, Miville, Winterowd, Jeffries, and Baysden (2000) found that family support provided the necessary encouragement to positively address college life and academic experiences to persist in the unfamiliar academic system. Another study conducted by Jackson and Smith (2001) employed a qualitative design finding family support, family problems, and family financial concerns strongly influence American Indian students decisions to persist in college. This study was not reviewed in Chapter Two because the researcher did not come across this study until after the interviews for this study were complete. Next is themes and literature related to Wisconsin colleges.

Themes and literature related to Wisconsin colleges.

Eight themes from the study where functions relating to the atmosphere of universities that consisted of assistance beyond recruitment, academic resources on campus, campus climate, culture shock, racial discrimination, American Indian student organizations, college programs, and faculty and staff. Every participant responded with either a positive, negative, and/or strategic experience expanding over these eight themes.

Three comments in particular in particular address the positive experience. Participant I-1 shared a perceived positive experience that his college has many resource tools on campus for students to use such as tutors and a "writing lab and they will go over your papers. That helped a lot with my [his] English classes because I am not that good in [writing]." Participant FG-5 add that "because we had that strong Native American club and we had family" which assisted with things that they were going through. While participant I-3 reported that her dorm room hall director was helpful because he "was

really like involved and he would send me a lot of emails to make sure that I was getting along fine and [asking] are there any resources that he could link me up with which is really helpful."

Five comments in particular address the negative experience. Participant FG-4 reported that his college did well at recruiting him, but no one was there to answer questions after he started, he reports "So you kind of feel like they are all for the recruitment and getting you in." Participant FG-5 adds that she thinks this "is a problem for a lot of people is that they [universities] expect you to know all the rules when you go in and people just don't." Later she adds in regards to culture shock that "It [college] is just so different." Participant FG-3 shares what he "dislike is ignorant people [and] having to always explain my culture to somebody, always having to explain myself to somebody." Participant FG-1 adds that "teachers just don't expect you to succeed if you are a person of color." Participant I-2 adds, "It was hard at first freshman year like having to go out on my own and away from my family. [Also] trying to socialize makes everything hard**."**

Three comments in particular address continue guidance, self-reflection, and socialization as strategic endeavors. Participant FG-1 adds that "There is nothing wrong with holding hands when they [college students] are freshmen to get them started." Participant I-4 She believed that the change to an American Indian focus helped her to be less homesick because what she "learn[ed] at the tribal college is based around reservations and tribes and Native American studies [which connected to who she was and where she was from]. At [her state college], I didn't see too much of that." Participant I-4 adds "I would say making friends was a huge strategy that I had because

then it makes you want to go class and makes you feel more comfortable while you are in class."

Two studies described in Chapter Two were related to academic institutions supporting American Indian students and their persistence. In one study by Bosse, Duncan, Gapp, and Newland (2011) the researchers found that support from college advisors fostered success for persistence in college. A study conducted by Brown and Kurpius (1997) found that persistence was significantly affected by interactions with faculty and staff. In addition, three models described in Chapter Two were related to institutional support for improving persistence among American Indian students. McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model highlights institutional interference as one of its eight stepping stone influencing American Indian student's decisions to persist. Secatero (2009) Corn Model delineates supportive faculty and mentors in the upper portion of the corn model, which is part of the mental well-being because these allies can provide the necessary support to promote persistence. While HeavyRunner & DeCelles (2002) Family Education Model advocates that, the best way to improve persistence for American Indians students is for higher education institutions to interweave family into and throughout academia. Four studies not reviewed in Chapter Two were found to address strategies for institutions to employ to improve the persistence of American Indians students. One study conducted by Pewewardy and Frey (2004) found that is vital for colleges to gain a deeper understanding into cultural diversity because with lack of knowledge and contact with different cultures results in prejudice increasing on campus. Another study conducted by Jackson and Smith (2001) employed a qualitative design to find the importance of faculty relationships along with socialization among others from

the same culture who had positive experiences in college as factors for improving the persistence of American Indian students in college. Jackson, Smith, and Hill (2003) suggests that institutions start with dialogue before and continuing throughout college relating to loneliness, negative peer pressure, and the difficulty of finding and employing tribal identity to persist. In addition, this study also found American Indian support organizations along with structured mentoring programs the opportunity to connect first year students to advance American Indian students as a means of addressing the feeling of isolation that these students may feel on campus. Finally, Ruey-Lin Lin, LaCounte, and Eder (1988) found it important for the faculty in academia where American Indian students are attending to be aware of the unspoken hostility felt by these students. These studies were not reviewed in Chapter Two because the researcher came across this information after the study was complete. Next is themes and literature relating to Building Mohican Nation.

Themes and literature related to Building Mohican Nation.

The literature cited in the first three paragraphs of this section was not reviewed in Chapter Two. To understand building Mohican Nation (Stockbridge-Munsee Community) means to go deeper into the understanding of how an American Indian tribe is viewed which Garrett and Herring (2001) describe as "the tribe is viewed as an interdependent system of individuals who perceive themselves as parts of the greater whole rather than as a whole consisting of parts" (p. 9). With this understanding and narrowing the focus to building Mohican Nation starts with commitment of tribal leaders, which according to Akoto (1992) is to lead with "world order that complements their sense of cultural/historical awareness and their unique humanity [that] is predicated upon

historical awareness and cultural consciousness" (p. iv). Once the leaders commit to this

than the next step is to engage which Akoto (1992) describes as "the leadership of the

nation, cultural group or community, must work to counteract generations of

miseducation and the consequent psychic dependency, defeatism, self hatred, misguided

loyalties, and the inferiority complex" (p. iv) which is now coined "inter-generational

trauma" because this has been the case for many years. These studies were not reviewed

in Chapter Two because this subject was revealed as a result of the interviews.

> Two particular comments address this point. Participant FG-5 for instance stated,
>
> We [Stockbridge-Munsee members] don't know our history [and] we fight over
>
> the language of Munsee. That has kind of calmed down now, but is the name of
>
> our tribe folks, Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican. Because we [do not] know our
>
> own history, we fight ourselves over things like that. Not understanding our own.

Participant FG-1 adds:

> I think a lot of people feel like it is relates back to historical trauma I think
>
> because you always have white people telling us what is best for us and they were
>
> always educated so that when Native people come back they kind of get that
>
> thrown back at them.
>
> Disposing of all things Western is not Nation building. Alfred (1999) explains

this further as, "cultural revival is not a matter of rejecting all Western influences, but of

separating the good from the bad and of fashioning a coherent set of ideas out of the

traditional culture to guide whatever forms of political and social development—

including the good elements of Western forms—are appropriate to the contemporary

reality" (p. 28). Two particular comments address this point. For instance FG-3 shares

how other community members imply that he is "white because I was in college or that I was always acting like I was better than everybody else around here because I was in college." Participant FG-4 adds that he has "heard that before too." When he has to leave a social event and he says he has "to go because you have to go a do a paper. He hears, "you are acting like a white man and all this stuff because I did leave the reservation.**"**

Alfred (1999) offers guidance on how to heal from negative experiences when he writes, "we must be careful not to romanticize the past. Tradition is the spring from which we draw our healing water; but any decisions must take into account contemporary economic, social, and political concerns . . . peace is hopeful, visionary, and forward looking . . . peace is being [Indigenous], breaking with the disfiguring and meaningless norms of our present reality, and recreating ourselves in a holistic sense" (p. 28). Two comments in particular address this point for instance participant FG-5 reported that "It is about how we value ourselves and what we can do to forgive so we can move forward in our lives. So many of our Indian people are stuck with that blaming." While participant I-1 reports "We are a very fortunate tribe" which is evidence of a peaceful and holistic appreciation for his tribal community.

Literature reviewed in Chapter Two by Brayboy, Fann, Castagno, and Solyom (2012) express their belief in "that educational success within Indigenous communities is a necessary (though not sufficient) element of successful nation building" (p. 27). Two particular comments address this point. Participant FG-5 for instance stated that her tribal community "push[es] education in words and they provide some money but when you come back you kind of get it thrown at you because just because you have an

education, you know more than me. We are cruel to ourselves." Participant I-5 adds:
"They [tribal community] would rather see work experience verses say hiring someone
with a degree. They would rather hire somebody with actual experience. I think we have
to somehow change that view somehow." Secatero (2009) Corn Model delineates a
strong tribal identity in the tassel of the corn model, which is part of the spiritual well-
being because the participants in his qualitative dissertation study regularly mentioned
tribal cultural identity for why they were able to successfully persist in college to
completion.

Additionally, TribalCrit theory in education which was explored in Chapter Two
identifies nine significant areas addressing the complex and unique government to
government relationship that exists between American Indians and the United States
government which also constructs the foundation for Nation Building. In a study not
reviewed in Chapter Two conducted by Montgomery, Miville, Winterowd, Jeffries, and
Baysden (2000) found that even though most of the participants received a tribal grant, it
did not change their perception of the tribe as more a political system and less of a
cultural or educational system. As a result the participants viewed the tribe as non-
supportive and/or influential to their retention in higher education. This study was not
reviewed in Chapter Two because this subject was uncovered as a result of the focus
group interview.

Conclusions

Four general conclusions were taken from the major themes in this study. The
first conclusion for these students, it appears high schools that create and support
opportunities to build college skills, structured advance learning, and cultural

diversification into the curriculum with culturally responsive teaching positively bridge the transition to college. The second conclusion for these students, it appears that family influence and encouragement is at the center of their persistence and academic success in college. The third conclusion for these students, it appears the universities that work towards providing a sense of place for these student contributes to them feeling welcome and part of the campus community. The fourth conclusion for these students, it appears that the continual support and expansion of culture and language for Mohican Nation is needed to support a positive, healthy, and balance identity in their youth and to serve as a resource depository for all to learn and grow; contributing to the history of Mohican Nation being taught accurately in high schools and beyond.
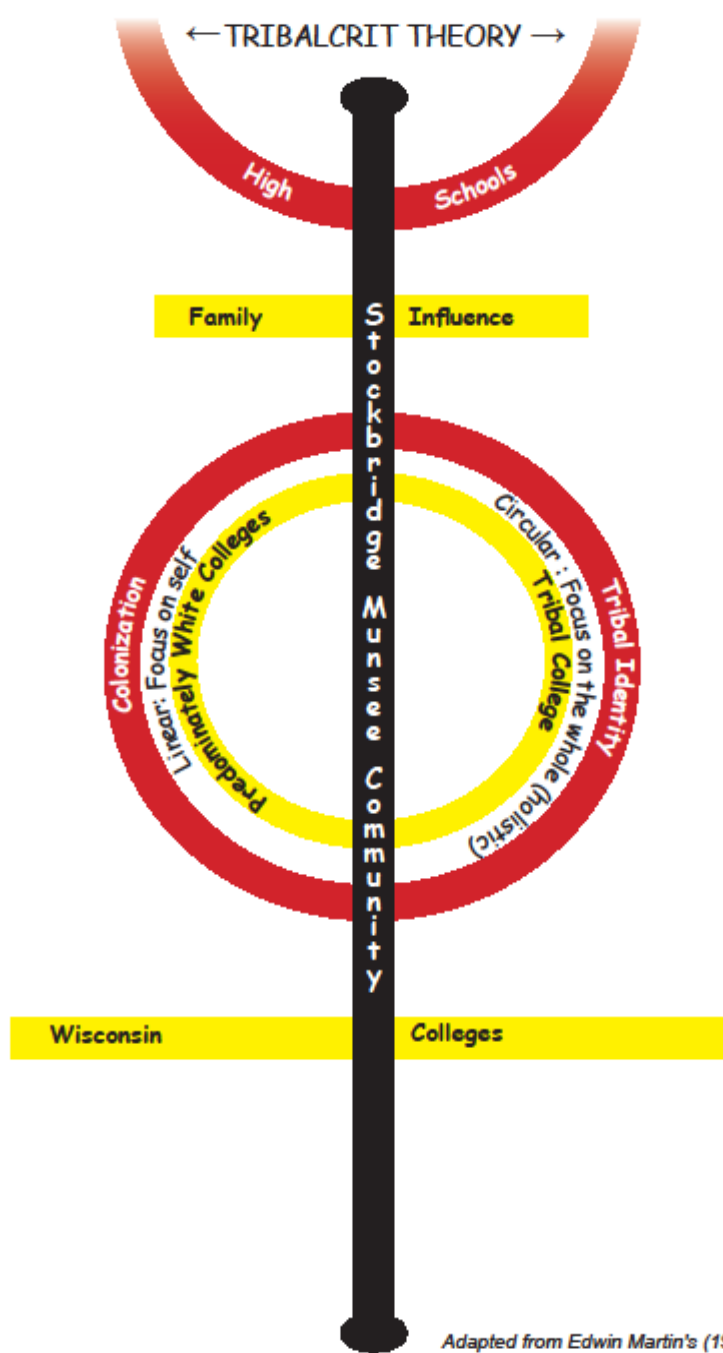
Relationship and Summary of Conclusions

Each of the four conclusions became more meaningful when viewed in relationship to one another as demonstrated in Figure 6. All four conclusions were generated by the data collected from student experiences. The support from high school, family influence, college, and tribal nation are essential factors for promoting persistence. These factors are strategies that Stockbridge-Munsee students credited for their persistence in Wisconsin colleges.

Figure 6

Concluding Themes that Highlight Supporting Factors for Stockbridge-Munsee Student Persistence in Higher Education

Concluding Themes That Highlight Supporting Factors For Stockbridge-Munsee Student Persistence in Higher Education

← TRIBALCRIT THEORY →

High Schools

Family Influence

Colonization · Linrear: Focus on self · Predominately White Colleges

Stockbridge Munsee Community

Circular: Focus on the whole (holistic) · Tribal College · Tribal Identity

Wisconsin Colleges

Adapted from Edwin Martin's (1965) "Many Trails" design.
Bowman, 2014

The final conclusions of this study were created from the findings and subsequent themes created from the stories that the participants shared. The themes were compared to the literature and four conclusions were formed. The first and the fourth conclusions were unique findings of this study while the second and the third conclusions were foundations at the center of Brayboy's (2005) "TribalCrit" theory along with essential components of American Indian based models from McAfee (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model, Secatero (2009) Corn Model, and HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) Family Education Model (FEM). Overall, the support from high school, family influences, college, and tribal nation positively influence the persistence of Stockbridge-Munsee students attending Wisconsin colleges.

Discussion of Implications

The findings of this study further inform fields of study and actions associated with the education of Stockbridge-Munsee students in Wisconsin colleges. These findings reveal implications for practice and research, as well as to the constructs of leadership, learning and service.

Implications for Practice

Implications for High Schools.

The findings from this study suggest that high school can impact a student's college persistence. High schools can do this by creating and building culturally responsive teaching in the classroom and school wide. According to Gay (2000) culturally responsive teaching for practice entails:

- Acknowledging the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of Stockbridge-Munsee students, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and

approaches to learning in the form of worthy content which is taught in the formal curriculum;

- Building bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities;

- Employing a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles;

- Teaching students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages; and

- Incorporating multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subject and skills routinely taught in schools (p. 29).

Hollins (1996) adds that culturally responsive education incorporates "culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content" (p. 13). In other words, culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the importance of academic achievement while also maintaining cultural identity and heritage. According to Shor (1992) culturally responsive teaching characterizes empowering education as:

> A critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change. It is a student-centered program for multicultural democracy in school and society. It approaches individual growth as an active, cooperative, and social process, because the self and society create each other. . . The goals of this pedagogy are to relate personal growth to public life, to develop strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change. . . The learning process is negotiated, requiring leadership by the teacher, and mutual

teacher-student authority. In addition, . . . the empowering class does not teach

students to seek self-centered gain while ignoring public welfare. (pp. 15-16)

Banks (1991) believes that if education is to empower through culturally responsive

teaching, it must be transformative. Transformative engages "students to develop the

knowledge, skills, and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective

decisions and implement their decisions in effective personal, social, political, and

economic action" (p. 131). Making authentic knowledge about Stockbridge-Munsee

accessible to all students is liberating. This freedom opens the doors for increased

concentration on academic learning as a result of clear and insightful thinking; improved

humanity interpersonal skills; deeper understanding of individual, local, national, ethnic,

and global interconnectedness of the human race; and acceptance that knowledge is

continuously revolving and should be regularly shared, critiqued, revised, and renewed

(Chapman, 1994; Foster, 1995; Hollins, 1996; Hollins, King, & Hayman, 1994; Ladson-

Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Lee, 1993; Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 1995). High

schools should seek assistance from tribal nations to create and/or ensure that the

curriculum they are using is accurate and relevant as they prepare to incorporate or build

culturally responsive teaching. This includes encouraging students to explore and

embrace their cultural backgrounds, beginning with creating relationships with tribal

governments, families, and communities.

Another implication for practice is academic preparedness which includes

preparing students for the academic rigor and expectations to persist in college. The

results suggested increasing skill building efforts, having a higher expectation for

assignments (grading and deadlines), and advance placement courses are all important for

high schools to take a closer look at so their Senior class graduates with a sense of what will be expected of them in college.

Implications for Wisconsin Colleges.

The results of this study highlighted family and student services (institutional support) as the top two factors impacting Stockbridge-Munsee student persistence at Wisconsin colleges. All the participants in this study credited family as their greatest support system and therefore family should be included throughout the educational experience from the recruitment. HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) champion the importance for institutions to create relationships between family, academic, and community to support persistence for American Indian students. Increasing family support is at the core of HeavyRunner and DeCelles (2002) Family Educational Model, which highlights the importance of family as an educational support system. Next institutional support in terms of a strong student services department is explored.

Engaging support systems and implementing policies and practices that acknowledge and address the unique challenges of Stockbridge-Munsee students in higher education is suggested. This can be done by continually to provide financial support along with institutional and community resources to create or maintain a strong student services department. A strong student services starts with a transformational change in the academic organization that is adaptive rather than technical. This requires bringing in American Indian staff and faculty along with creating a structure within the organization that has an equal voice and/or vote with decisions made on campus. It advocates for or provides a sense of place that is safe for students to socialize and make connections that builds a community, such as through American Indian organizations and

centers. It works collaboratively with the student's family and community to bring in guest speakers along with organizing cultural activities for all of academia to experience, learn, and grow from. It provides information and guidance for what services are provided by whom and where. It provides tutors, study sessions, and peer mentoring along with tracking and monitoring of student attendance and academics to get involved and provide support before it is too late to turn things around. When American Indians experience these types of support they feel welcome and an important community member on campus.

Implications for Mohican Nation.

The findings from this study point to the need for Mohican Nation to write their own story, so that others are not misguided from reading a fictional book written by James Fenimore Cooper "The Last of the Mohicans". Even though this book is fictional it influences perceptions that feed into stereotyping and racism. There are many books written about the Jew genocide over in Europe which is commonly referred to as "holocaust". However, very little is written about the American Indian genocide which is part of the United States history falling under the disguise of assimilation/colonization.

It is vital for Mohican Nation to continue increasing and expanding their culture resources and language revitalization efforts to inform others. This begins with reconnecting the elders with the young and passing on their cultural knowledge to the next generation for posterity. Documenting the knowledge and wisdom of the elders opens a window to the past to protect and preserve the lessons and wisdom of the past for the future. These efforts should be formalized into a fully operable tribal program that is accessible for everyone to learn and grow from, so they can teach others. This program

would also be a resource for Head Start and K-12 education systems to use as a resource and assistance for implementing culturally responsive curriculum which has already been identified as a need for high schools to provide. However, if they have limited or no resource to tap into than it makes it difficult for high schools to incorporate culturally responsive teaching pertaining to Mohican Nation. This is important because researchers have found that when tribal youth are consistently exposed to and learn their tribal heritage, cultural practices, and language they are instilled with pride which strengthens their identities with confidence and self esteem while simultaneously motivating them to attend college.

Another implication is outwardly supporting higher education beyond the tribal grant by increasing expectations and wage compensation for all tribal position descriptions. It is important for Mohican Nation to provide their citizens with jobs, but the positions should include flexibility and growth that coincides for every level of education that a citizen can attain. Otherwise the opportunity to motivate youth to attend college is missed. This missed opportunity grows into the youth perceiving that they do not need a college degree to gain or advance in employment for Mohican Nation.

The final implication is for tribal communities to continue building relationships with area high schools and college institutions to work collaboratively on bridging the gap between native cultures and mainstream education. Ortiz and HeavyRunner (2003) state, "It is through multiple and rich interpretation of their [American Indian] stories that we can better understand the relationship between the individual, the community, and the institutions of higher education" (p. 218). Next the implication for leadership, learning, and service is explored.

Implications for Leadership, Learning, and Service

The findings of this study provided further perspective of leadership, learning and service to student persistence.

Leadership is systems thinking.

Leadership is a process of influencing others towards the achievement of a goal (Dickmann & Stanford-Blair, 2009). This study suggests that persistence of Stockbridge-Munsee students is shaped based on experiences residing in college readiness, institutional support, community, financial aid, life imbalances, and family/social responsibility along with personal characteristic strengths.

Students who have access to needed support services are more likely to persist. It is essential for tribal communities, high schools, and institutions of higher education to implement a system of communication that connects students to services that can help them early on. This includes being open to new ways of operating in order to meet 21st century demands.

Senge (2006) stressed systems thinking as one of his five disciplines. He believes that patterns created from an accumulation of one's experiences help to make things clearer so they can see how to effectively change to make things better. Leaders must have foresight and not view the patterns of persistence as isolated branches, but remain aware and be involved in working collaboratively and broadly across tribal communities, high schools, and colleges to improve persistence for Stockbridge-Munsee students. This awareness allows the leader to gain an understanding of how systems are working together.

Learning incorporates multiple intelligences.

Learning occurs utilizing multiple dimensions of intelligence according to Dickmann and Stanford-Blair (2009) and Dickmann, Stanford-Blair, and Rosati-Bojar (2004). These authors describe six dimensions of intelligence that are interrelated as they shape and expand learning. These six dimensions include constructive, physiological, emotional, social, reflective, and dispositional. The combination of these dimensions nurture a relationship that influences student learning through each experience a student encounters while persisting in Wisconsin colleges. Next the constructive dimension of the brain is explored.

The center of learning occurs mostly in the constructive power of the brain, which is described as a "lean mean pattern-making machine" (Dickmann et al., 2004, p. 109). For the purpose of this study the brain constructs knowledge based on being in social situations within an indigenous framework. Brayboy and Maughan (2009) further describes this as Indigenous knowledge and states that "Indigenous peoples come to know things by living their lives and adding to a set of cumulative experiences that serve as guideposts for both individuals and communities over time" (p. 3). The purpose of Indigenous knowledge is not to say that it is the best, but rather to say it broadens other knowledge systems. For institutions to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the campus knowledge system is both being worthy and useful in transforming the campus climate from a place of destruction to a place of hope and possibility for American Indian students. Next the emotional and social dimension of the brain is explored.

The emotional and social dimension of intelligence is at the heart of the results of this study which employed the constructive powers of the brain to create new patterns of

meaning. The emotional function of intelligence is triggered in the brain when a student comes across something unfamiliar to them. In higher education, this unfamiliarity can be positive if the student feels accepted, safe, and secure which results in persistence or they can be threatening or distracting which results in the student stepping away from academics and more toward "stepping out." Both students and researchers explain how the campus climate is an important factor in decreasing emotional threats and distractions.

In the social nature of intelligence occurs when the brain learns from genetics and experience. The brain uses interactions with others to build ability. "It relies on quantity and quality of environmental experience to continually expand and refine neural capacity" (Dickmann et al., 2004, p. 50). This speaks to the influence that family and community have on a student persisting or not persisting. It further supports the importance of creating a sense of place (belonging), which described in HeavyRunner and Decelles (2005) FEM model can be created through offering positive social experiences that incorporate the student's American Indian culture on campus for them, their peers and their teachers to participate and appreciate. Finally the social nature of intelligence supports the use of guest speakers from the student's Indigenous community to provide new social experiences along with new information which expands worldview and creates positive emotional reactions. Next the physiological, reflective, and dispositional dimension of the brain is explored.

The physiological dimension is the biology of learning that is influenced by environmental experience (Dickmann et al., 2009). Maintaining a healthy balance is factor influencing ones educational path to persist in Wisconsin colleges. Participants in

this study were influenced to persist from the healthy experiences they received from their families and community. While others "stepped out" because of unhealthy environmental experiences, only to return (stepping back into college) after working through the unhealthiness in their lives.

The reflective dimension allows for patterns to be reorganized through thoughtful examination (Dickmann et al., 2004). This is important of family, community, and academia to provide opportunities to practice reflection and to have positive role models. Participants in this study were influenced by positive discussions about education, learning, and culture. Another finding of the study was the processing of cultural differences to balance two worlds within themselves so that the participants could navigate and persist within Wisconsin colleges. This reflection piece is important for administrators in academia to create universities where learning can take place.

The dispositional dimension is habits that grow from trying to survive while being shaped by genetics (Dickmann et al., 2004). Environmental surroundings in which one grows up in can change their genetic dispositions through culture, physical factors, and reflection to build intellectual development or it can expand or hinder one's capacity. Voices of participants connected positive educational experiences with family, community, academic instructors and staff who all influenced and supported their academic path to persist in Wisconsin colleges.

Each of these six dimensions influences the educational path of these students persisting in Wisconsin colleges. Findings from this study support the need for new contribution in order to expand constructive capacity toward cultural sensitivity in academia. New information or learning is gained through new experiences and new

social contacts, so providing these experiences become vital for academic leadership to not only educate, but also to expand cultural capacity among faculty, staff, and students "that maximizes a collective capacity for achievement" (Dickmann et al., 2004, p. 197). Next service is explored.

Service understands humanity.

Service is working collaboratively for the betterment of all. The survival of Wisconsin colleges relies on the students that they serve. Therefore it is vital to engage, listen, and change according to the needs of the students. Engaging discussion and listening to student voices opens the door for changing the shape of academic systems to build an institution that is functional for the students they serve. At the center of this transformational change is creating an environment where students feel connected through a shared vision with the understanding that it is about the collective, not a select few. Also, Brayboy and Maughan (2009) describe this process further in Indigenous knowledge which is not linear but cyclical and may continue as acts of service continue.

The purpose of the study itself was to listen to students who informed the study as they shared their experience relating to their persistence in Wisconsin colleges. Adding student voices to the discussion of academic persistence was called for by Cleary and Peacock (1997) to distribute American Indian educational research through stories which is an under explored area of persistence literature. While theorist and practitioners share and discuss numerous educational practices, few have listened to those most impacted by organizational practices. Giving students a sense of place at the discussion table to hear their needs and concerns is an important process for academia to show face that they are interested in reform.

The design of the study served as a means to understand the students' experiences while persisting in Wisconsin colleges. Students shared that service with academic preparedness in high school along with on campus resources were positive factors in their persistence while the lack of cultural representation and discontinuity were perceived as negative factors which required them to employ strategies to overcome.

Interaction of leadership, learning, and service.

Leadership, learning and service are interrelated equally. For a leader to not manage, but rather lead effectively they must create and nurture an environment conducive to learning in order to grow. This environment must be open and safe so that all learners are encouraged to participate in collaboration to accomplish a shared goal. In addition, learning should be viewed as lifelong and reciprocal. The nature and practice of leadership is what Gollanapalli's describes as "Servant first is a natural feeling then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" at a presentation to doctoral students during the Cardinal Stritch University Summer Institute in 2013. Mindful leadership encourages learning and through learning service is promoted.

Implications for Further Research

Limited research on American Indians in higher education along with the small sample size, unique site, cultural focus, and findings from this study requires further research to determine the validity of findings and to expand the scope of the study. The researcher proposes two investigations to explore the study's outcomes along with two expansions of the study that will either prove or disprove the present findings and offer Wisconsin colleges' additional information. Suggestions for additional research are as follows:

1. Further study of the lacking culturally responsive teaching and curriculum in K-12 and how that impacts one's mind set when they begin college.

2. Further study that investigates effective retention strategies currently employed with institutions that have a large American Indian student population.

3. Replicating this study with additional students not limiting it to just Wisconsin colleges.

4. Following participants from this study for the next five years monitoring persistence, strategies, and outcomes.

Concluding Remarks

This study is vital to research and literature because it is another scholarly resource for others to utilize to gain a better understanding of the unique needs and challenges of Stockbridge-Munsee students to persist in Wisconsin colleges. The most powerful findings from this study are centered on a support network that involves high schools, Wisconsin colleges, and Mohican Nation to improve the persistence decisions of Stockbridge-Munsee students attending Wisconsin colleges.

It is essential for high schools to incorporate culturally responsive teaching into their classrooms while also preparing students for the academic rigor of college by raising the bar of expectations and improving career readiness programming.

Family is the heartbeat to ones persistence and must beat within balance to meet the needs of self while persisting in college to earn a degree. Institutions must work towards being a less linear thinking, processing, and functioning place and more towards being culturally diverse and holistic in the way they manage and service students. This

includes supporting a strong student services and programming that meet the unique needs of students.

It is vital for Mohican Nation to continue building a language and cultural resources program that brings in the critical traditional and cultural elements into the community to strengthen the success of Mohican Nation citizens. It also includes bringing this knowledge into education and building relationships in academia. It is imperative for Mohican Nation to continue to tell their historical tragedies and triumphs stories. However, to meet the needs of the 21st century learner it is suggested that in additions to the oral stories and document depository for research that these stories expand to different modalities such as history books, videos, documentaries, and curriculum programming.

Table 7 identifies the research studies referenced throughout this study relating to the persistence of American Indian students in higher education. Articles, Indigenous models, TribalCrit Theory, dissertations, and books addressing American Indian persistence in higher education were not included in the table.

Table 7

Research Focused on American Indian Persistence in Higher Education

Author	Approach	Population Studied	Findings	Reviewed In
Benjamin, Chambers, & Reiterman, 1993	Mixed Method	A/I Students	Behaviors which enhance persistence and which are valid in minority cultures are recognized, supported, rewarded, and valued by the dominate culture. A move toward understanding and valuing cultural diversity.	Chapter One
Falk & Aitken, 1984	Qualitative	A/I Students	Support of family and Indian community, pre-college workshops, Indian student organizations, stronger support service programs, recruitment of Indian faculty and staff, financial aid, and personal motivation	Chapter One
Larimore & McClellan, 2005	Literature Review	A/I Students	Inadequate academic preparation, vague constructs of educational or vocational goals, financial aid, discrepancies between high school and college environments, prejudice, and social	Chapter One
Pavel & Padilla, 1993	Quantitative	A/I Students	Tinto's model is a weak fit for A/I students because it does not address the cultural needs of these students	Chapter One
Cleary & Peacock, 1997	Qualitative	A/I Students	Reporting research through stories is an honest way to report research.	Chapter One
Guillory, 2009	Qualitative	A/I Students	Family and giving back to the community, academic and campus social support programs, and lack of academic preparation	Chapter Two

Research Focused on American Indian Persistence in Higher Education (continued)

Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997	Quantitative	Bay Mills Ojibwa Community	The five cultural values of mothers found to contribute to their children's school success were sharing, other centeredness, and harmony with nature, noninterference, and focus on extended family.	Chapter Two
Demmert, 2001	Literature Review	A/I Students	Family support, cultural identity, personal determination and goal setting, financial support, academic skills, mentors and supportive faculty, and bicultural curriculum.	Chapter Two
Bass, 1971	Qualitative	Navajo	Academic preparation, performance, and atmosphere.	Chapter Two
Hoover & Jacobs, 1992	Quantitative	A/I Students	The students perceived adequate preparation in high school, but more need for guidance and counseling related to career selection. College bridging programs, specifically AISES represented a positive aspect. Importance of peer and faculty support in some organized way.	Chapter Two
Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008	Quantitative	A/I Students	American Indian mascots have harmful psychological consequences for the group that is caricaturized by the mascots.	Chapter Two
Brade, Duncan, & Sokal, 2003	Quantitative	A/I Students in Canada	No correlation between participation in cultural activities to education level.	Chapter Two
Waterman, 2007	Qualitative	Haudenosaunee	Centered to culture, community, and family. Mentors along with A/I faculty and staff.	Chapter Two
Besaw, Kalt, Lee, Sethi, Wilson, & Zemler, 2004	Qualitative	A/I Students	Political, economic, and socio-culture contours of A/I.	Chapter Two

Research Focused on American Indian Persistence in Higher Education (continued)

Okagaki, Helling & Bingham, 2009	Qualitative	A/I and European Students	Bicultural efficacy have positive education related beliefs and experiences.	Chapter Two
Huffman, 2001	Qualitative	A/I Students	Transculturation hypothesis - Security in one's own ethnic identity.	Chapter Two
Lin, LaCounte, & Eder, 1988	Quantitative	A/I and White Students	Social, cultural, and aspirational factors influence persistence. More specifically the perception of racial hostility to be significantly correlated with feelings of isolation and strongly (although not statistically significant) correlated to a negative attitude toward college and a pore grade point average.	Chapter Two
Boose, Duncan, Gapp, & Newland, 2011	Qualitative	A/I Students	Academic preparation and value, personal variables, family support, support from other adults, choice of major, and culture.	Chapter Two
Guillory & Wolverton, 2008	Qualitative	A/I Students	Differing perceptions of persistence and barrier factors from A/I students to that of institutions.	Chapter Two
Gilbert, 2000	Quantitative	A/I Students	Cooperative learning, tutoring, and summer college programs as key factors for bridging the gap between high school and college.	Chapter Two
Brown & Kurpius, 1997	Qualitative	A/I Students	Perceived discrimination, social integration, family encouragement, faculty or staff interactions, valuing of education, academic preparations and aspirations, and academic performance would influence the academic persistence of A/I undergraduates.	Chapter Two

Research Focused on American Indian Persistence in Higher Education (continued)

Brayboy, 2004	Qualitative	A/I Students	Visibility can lead to surveillance, marginalization, and ostracism, while simultaneously having positive consequences that are directly related to strategic forms of activism, advocacy, and the maintenance of cultural integrity. Invisibility serves to assist some students in "flying under the radar" in order to maintain their cultural integrity, but it can also have damaging influences on students regarding marginalization.	Chapter Four
Huffman, 1991	Mixed Method	A/I Students	Experience with campus racism. First, campus racism almost always takes the form of verbal derogatory racist comments. Second, these racial slurs are usually directed at Indians in general rather than an attack on the individual. And third, fellow students are typically the source of negative racial comments.	Chapter Four
Pewewardy & Frey, 2004	Quantitative	A/I Students	Differing perception between A/I students and White students regarding the need for more campus support services, the value of multicultural courses in promoting racial understanding, ethnic fraud, and stereotyping.	Chapter Five

Research Focused on American Indian Persistence in Higher Education (continued)

Jackson, Smith, & Hill, 2003	Qualitative	A/I Students	family support, faculty staff warmth, exposure to college experiences and possible vacations, developed independence and assertiveness, reliance on spiritual resources, dealing with racism, nonlinear path, and paradoxical cultural pressure.	Chapter Five
Lin, LaCounte, & Eder, 1988	Quantitative	A/I Students	A/I students feeling of isolation due to the campus hostility towards them.	Chapter Five

These prior studies were used together with Brayboy's (2005) TribalCrit Theory and McAfee's (1997, 2000) "Stepping Out" Model, Secatero's (2009) Corn Model, and HeavyRunner and DeCelles's (2002) Family Education Model (FEM) to advance the intent of this research giving Stockbridge-Munsee students a voice in the discussion of persistence by exploring their experiences and strategies. More specifically it took a deeper look into the challenges encountered and the strategies employed to overcome those challenges through story telling. Through sharing personal stories regarding the participant's educational experience and hearing their voices this study found that high schools, family, institutions, and Mohican Nation influence a student's persistence decisions.

Vignette Revisited

Below is a true story of what happens to the daughter.

The daughter did return to college, but this time it was much farther away from home, it was at Cardinal Stritch in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She lasted one year in their nursing program after transferring in through a LPN bridging program. Towards the end of the first year, she asked for help and started meeting with a school staff person that helped her to improve her study and test taking skills. This was extremely helpful, but unfortunately it was too far into the semester to bring her grades up to continue in the nursing program without having to retake classes.

Even though this was the daughters second "stepping out" from college, it was not the end of the daughter's college experience. After returning back home and working for her reservation, she returned to college using the study and test taking skills she gained along with life experiences to attain one associate, two bachelors, and one master degree from four different Wisconsin colleges.

In the summer of 2012 the daughter returned to Cardinal Strich to start a doctoral program. By this time in the daughter's life she had traveled many places, accomplished many things, and was comfortable with life. She diligently prepared to have everything just right as she started on her doctoral journey. She arrived at the University and planned on staying in the un-air-conditioned dormitory for the two week Summer Institute in June, so she checked in and unpacked. It was uncomfortable, but she was trying very hard to assimilate into this new small and hot environment that was to be her home for the next two weeks.

The next day she realized she could not physically survive living in this environment so she asked if there was another option. The only other option was to move into the air conditioned dormitory and accept rooming with someone she did not know. She accepted this option and moved her belongings to the air conditioned dorm to find the girls floor was on the second floor and the air conditioning was not being blown into the room as she unpacked. While waiting for maintenance to come and try to fix the problem a security guard was waiting with her. As they were exchanging some small talk he asked the girl where she was from. She responded "Gresham" he did not seem to know where this was so she said it is in Shawano County. He replied "Oh, I heard there is nothing up there but a bunch of Indians". The girl could say nothing as she was in shock and could not believe what she had just heard. In the end the air conditioning could not be fixed and there were no other options so the girl called her mother. As soon as she heard her mother's voice she began to cry and could hardly get out the words to explain what was going on. The girl explained she liked the program and felt supported by the instructors, but could not handle the living conditions (campus climate). Her mother talked through the situation providing options to solve her daughter's issues and to comfort her hurt feelings. The daughter reached out to her network of friends who lived in the Milwaukee area and was able to find a place that reminded her of home and that gave her a sense of place.

Having this experience in higher education motivated the girl as a researcher to study how other Stockbridge-Munsee students problem solve through barriers to persist in Wisconsin colleges. The hopes of this study are to assist those who work with Stockbridge-Munsee students to gain a deeper understanding of these students and to assist the rest of the Stockbridge-Munsee students with successful problem solving techniques to navigate through higher education to eventually earn a degree.

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Appendix A: Tables

Table A-1   Percentage of individuals living in poverty, by race/ethnicity: 2006

Race/ethnicity	Total	Total, 0–17 years	Under 5 years	5–11 years	12–17 years	18–64 years	65–74 years	75 years and older
		Under 18 years						
Total	**13.3**	**21.9**	**21.0**	**18.3**	**16.3**	**12.0**	**8.7**	**11.2**
White	10.5	12.5	15.8	13.3	11.7	9.9	7.0	9.8
Black	25.3	33.7	39.9	35.8	31.5	21.0	19.1	23.9
Hispanic	21.5	27.1	30.2	28.1	25.8	17.9	18.4	21.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	10.9	12.2	11.3	11.5	13.0	10.4	11.1	13.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	26.6	33.3	39.3	34.3	32.3	23.6	17.5	24.0

Copied from DeVoe, J.F., and Darling-Churchill, K.E. (2008). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES 2008-084). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

NOTE: Following the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If the total income for a family or unrelated individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family or unrelated individual is classified as being "below the poverty level." Race categories include persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *American Fact Finder,* American Community Survey, 2006.

Table A-2   Unemployment rates of persons 16 years old and over, by educational attainment and race/ethnicity: 2007

Race/ethnicity	All education levels	Less than high school	High school completion[1]	Some college, no Degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's degree or Higher
Total[2]	**4.7**	**11.3**	**5.4**	**4.5**	**3.2**	**1.9**
White	4.0	11.6	4.8	4.0	2.7	1.7
Black	8.2	19.5	9.4	6.5	5.3	2.7
Hispanic	5.6	8.7	4.1	5.4	3.5	2.3
Asian	3.2	4.5!	3.9	3.0!	3.6!	2.7
Pacific Islander	4.8!	12.8!	4.5!	4.1!	‡	#
American Indian/ Alaska Native	11.9	28.9	11.7	9.4!	5.0!	2.3!

Copied from DeVoe, J.F., and Darling-Churchill, K.E. (2008). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES 2008-084). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

! Interpret data with caution.

‡ Does not meet reporting standards.

Rounds to zero.

[1] High school completion includes equivalency (e.g., General Education Development certificate or GED).

[2] Total includes other race/ethnicity categories not separately shown.

NOTE: The unemployment rate is the percentage of the total labor force population that is jobless, looking for a job, and avail- able for work. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2007.

Table A-3 **Median annual earnings of full-time, full-year wage and salary workers ages 25-34, by highest level of educational attainment and race/ethnicity: 2006**

Race/ Ethnicity	Total	Less than high school com- pletion	High School com- pletion[1]	Some College	Assoc- iate's Degree	Bach- elor's degree	Graduate degree Total	Master's degree	Doctorate or first- profes- Sional Degree
Total[2]	**$34,800**	**$23,400**	**$28,300**	**$30,500**	**$33,500**	**$43,700**	**$52,800**	**$50,800**	**$60,900**
White	36,600	25,400	30,500	31,500	35,500	44,700	52,800	50,800	60,900
Black	30,500	21,300	25,400	29,500	30,500	38,600	48,800	45,700	60,900
Hispanic	27,400	21,100	25,400	30,500	31,500	40,600	48,800	48,800	48,800
Asian	45,700	25,400	26,400	30,500	35,500	50,800	62,000	64,000	60,900
Native Ha- waiian/ Pacific Islander	30,500	20,300	27,400	31,500	29,500	41,600	43,700!	32,500!	‡
American Indian/ Alaska Native	28,400	25,400	26,400	27,400	26,400	35,500	44,700	42,700	45,700

Copied from DeVoe, J.F., and Darling-Churchill, K.E. (2008). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES 2008-084). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

! Interpret data with caution.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

[1] High school completion includes equivalency (e.g., General Education Development certificate or GED).

[2] Total includes other race/ethnicity categories not separately shown.

NOTE. *Full-year worker* refers to those who were employed 50 or more weeks the previous year; *full-time worker* refers to those who were usually employed 35 or more hours per week. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Files, 2006.

Table A-4 **Percentage of academic year 2004 high school graduates, by the timing of first postsecondary enrollment by race/ethnicity: 2006**

Race/ethnicity	Ever attended a postsecondary institutions	Immediate Enrollment in Postsecondary Education	Delayed Enrollment in Postsecondary Education	Non-enrollee, or still Enrolled in high school
White	81.9	74.4	7.5	18.1
Black	76.3	62.5	13.8	23.7
Hispanic	72.6	58.4	14.1	27.4
Asian	90.0	85.2	4.8	10
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	74.4	66.5	6.8	25.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	69.6	52.1	17.5	30.4
Two or more races	74.0	67.2	6.8	26.0

Adapted from: National Center for Education Statistics, "Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study" (Washington, D.C.: April 2012), retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012046.pdf.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal study of 2002 (ELS; 2002). "Second Follow-up 2006."

Table A-5   Graduation rates at all Title IV institutions, by race/ethnicity and degree sought where the students started as full-time, first-time students: United States, cohort year 2005

Degree sought and completed	Overall (%)	American Indian or Alaska Native (%)	Asian (%)	Black or African American (%)	Hispanic or Latino (%)	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (%)	White (%)	Two or More Races (%)	Race/ethnicity Unknown (%)	Nonresident alien (%)
Bachelor's or equivalent degree-seekers attending 4-year institutions and completing bachelor's or equivalent degree (cohort year 2005)	58.8	39.8	69.6	39.9	51.2	48.5	62.1	64.3	55.8	62.6

Excerpted from: Knapp, L. G., Kelly-Reid, J. E., and Ginder, S. A. (2012). *Enrollment in postsecondary institutions, fall 2011; financial statistics, fiscal year 2011; and graduation rates, selected cohorts, 2003-2008 *NCES 2012-174)*.   Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, Spring 2012, Graduation Rates component (preliminary data).

Table A-6   Percentage distribution of adults ages 25 and over, by highest level of educational attainment and race/ethnicity: 2007

	Less Than High School completion	High School completion or higher						Graduate degree	
Race/ethnicity		Total	High School completion[1]	Some college	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Total	Master's degree	Doctorate or first-professional Degree
Total	**14.3**	**85.7**	**31.6**	**16.7**	**8.6**	**18.9**	**9.9**	**7.0**	**2.9**
White	9.4	90.6	32.2	17.4	9.1	20.7	11.1	7.9	3.2
Black	17.2	82.8	36.3	18.9	8.8	13.0	5.7	4.4	1.3
Hispanic	39.7	60.3	28.4	13.0	6.2	9.4	3.3	2.4	0.9
Asian	12.1	87.9	19.9	9.3	6.3	31.7	20.7	13.6	7.1
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	11.4	88.6	34.4	21.2	9.2	17.7	6.1	3.7	2.5!
American Indian/Alaska Native	19.7	80.3	35.8	21.8	9.5	8.6	4.5	3.1	1.4

Copied from DeVoe, J.F., and Darling-Churchill, K.E. (2008). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES 2008-084). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
! Interpret data with caution.
[1] High school completion includes equivalency (e.g., General Education Development certificate or GED).
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and EconomicSupplement, 2007.

Table A-7   **Enrollment at all Title IV institutions, by control of student level, level of institution, and race/ethnicity: United States, fall 2011**

Student level, level of institution by race/ethnicity	Total	
	Number	Percent
Total students	**21,554,004**	**100.0**
4-year	13,493,033	62.6
2-year	7,662,010	35.5
Less-than-2-year	398,961	1.9
American Indian or Alaska Native	180,835	0.8
Asian	1,153,218	5.4
Black or African American	2,966,463	13.8
Hispanic or Latino	2,825,433	13.1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	64,017	0.3
White	11,770,782	54.6
Two or more races	414,406	1.9
Race/ethnicity unknown	1,436,838	6.7
Nonresident alien	742,012	3.4
Undergraduate 4-year		
American Indian or Alaska Native	83,139	0.4
Asian	570,063	3.1
Black or African American	1,379,521	7.4
Hispanic or Latino	1,158,073	6.2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	29,345	.02
White	6,089,133	32.7
Two or more races	218,615	1.2
Race/ethnicity unknown	708,302	3.8
Nonresident alien	325,326	1.7
Undergraduate 2-year		
American Indian or Alaska Native	79,104	0.4
Asian	397,743	2.1
Black or African American	1,162,756	6.2
Hispanic or Latino	1,385,046	7.4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	26,607	0.1
White	3,923,203	21.1
Two or more races	151,894	0.8
Race/ethnicity unknown	439,771	2.4
Nonresident alien	96,186	0.5

Table A-8   Percentage of full-time, full-year undergraduates receiving financial aid from any source, by race/ethnicity: 2003-04
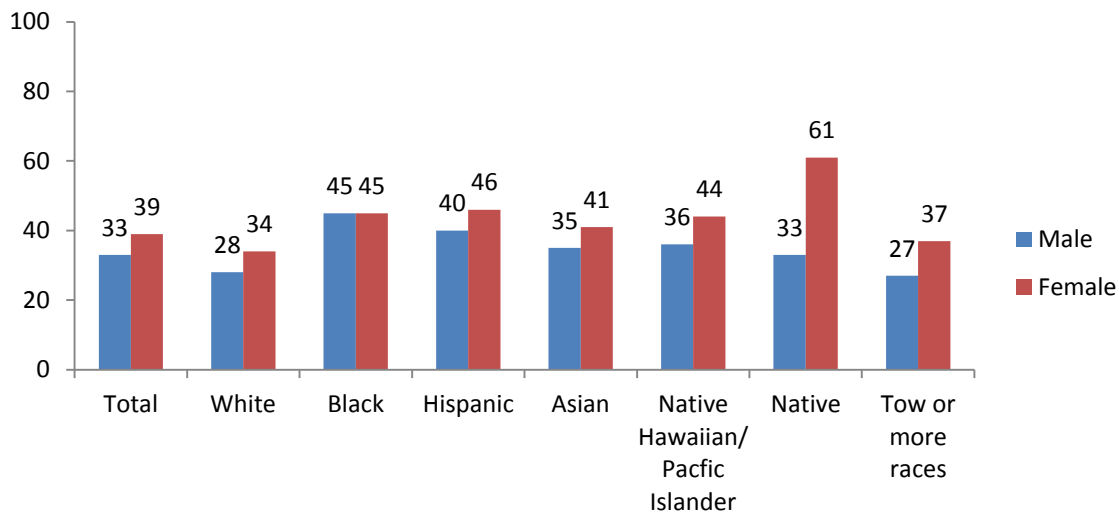
Race/ethnicity	Percent
Total[1]	**76.1**
White	74.0
Black	89.2
Hispanic	80.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	66.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	81.9

NOTE: Adapted from DeVoe, J.F., and Darling-Churchill, K.E. (2008). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES 2008-084). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC. [1] Total includes other race/ethnicity categories not separately shown. Students may receive aid from multiple sources. Financial aid includes assistance in the form of grants, loans, work study, or any other type of aid, including PLUS loans (loans to parents). Data include undergraduates in degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003–04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04).

Appendix B: Figures

Figure B-1   Percentage of first-year undergraduates who reported ever taking a remedial course, by race/ethnicity and sex: Academic year 2007-08


Total includes other race/ethnicity groups not shown separately in the figure.
NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Data weighted by WTA000.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08).

Figure B-2   American Indian/Alaska Native enrollment in public and private degree-granting institutions by sex in 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2006
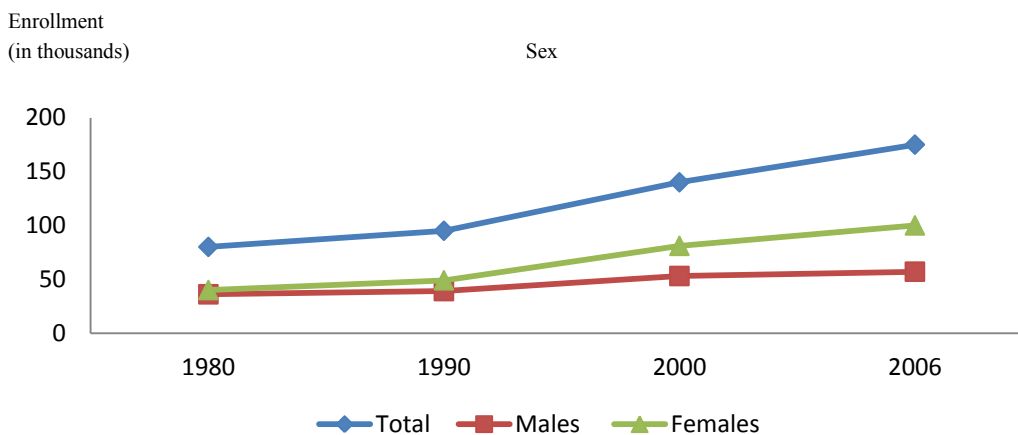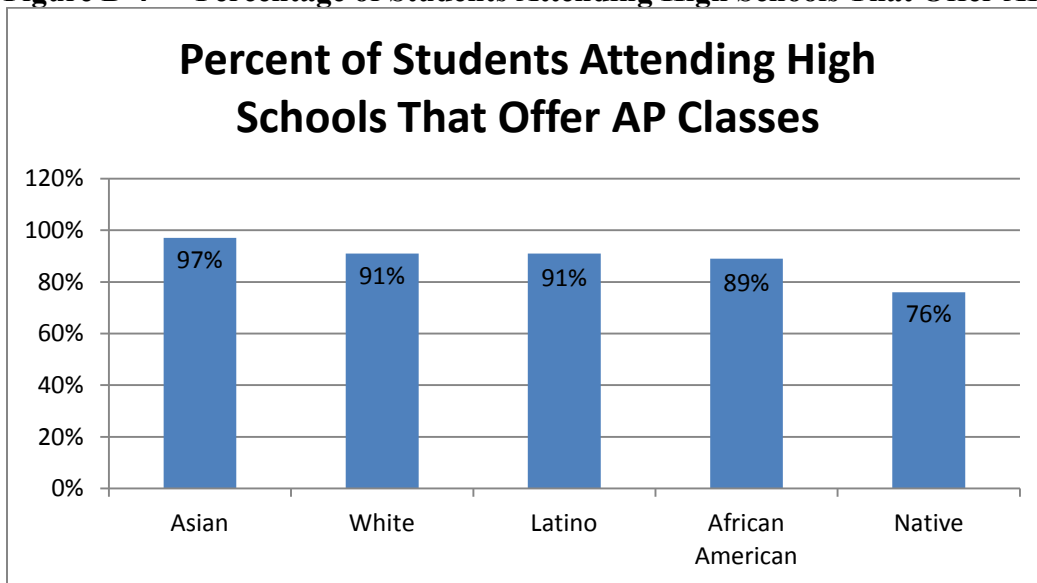

NOTE: Adapted from DeVoe, J.F., and Darling-Churchill, K.E. (2008). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES 2008-084). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC. Race cate gories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Data from 1980 to 1996 are for institutions of higher education that were accredited by an agency or association that was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or recognized directly by the Secretary of Education. Data from 1996 and later years are for degree-granting institutions. The new degree- granting classification is very similar to the earlier higher education classification, except that it includes some additional institutions, primarily 2-year colleges, and excludes a few higher education institutions that did not award associate's or higher degrees. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2007,* based on Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities," 1976 through 1986; and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment Survey," 1987 through 1999, and Spring 2001 through Spring 2007.

Figure B-3   Percentage of HS Graduates Meeting ACT College-Readiness Benchmarks
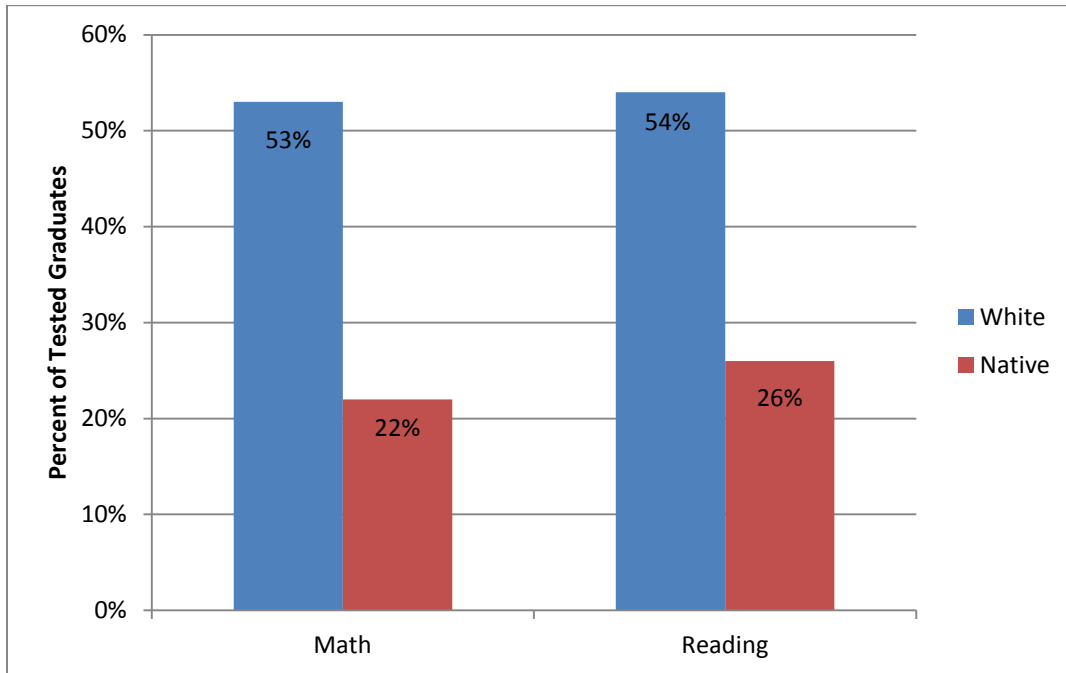

Source: ACT, "The Condition of College and Career Readiness: National" (Iowa City, Iowa: ACT, 2013), http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2013/states/pdf/AmericanIndian.pdf?utm_source=NIEA+Native+Ed+Review+-+3-20-14&utm_campaign=NIEA+Native+Ed+Review+Vol.+1+%238&utm_medium=email

Figure B-4   Percentage of Students Attending High Schools That Offer AP Classes

Copied from http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/NativeStudentBrief_0.pdf. Source: Christina Theokas and Reid Saaris, *Finding America's Missing AP and IB students* (Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust and Equal Opportunity Schools, June 2013), http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/Missing_Students/pdf.

Figure B-5   Enrollment in tribally controlled colleges: Fall 2000 through fall 2006
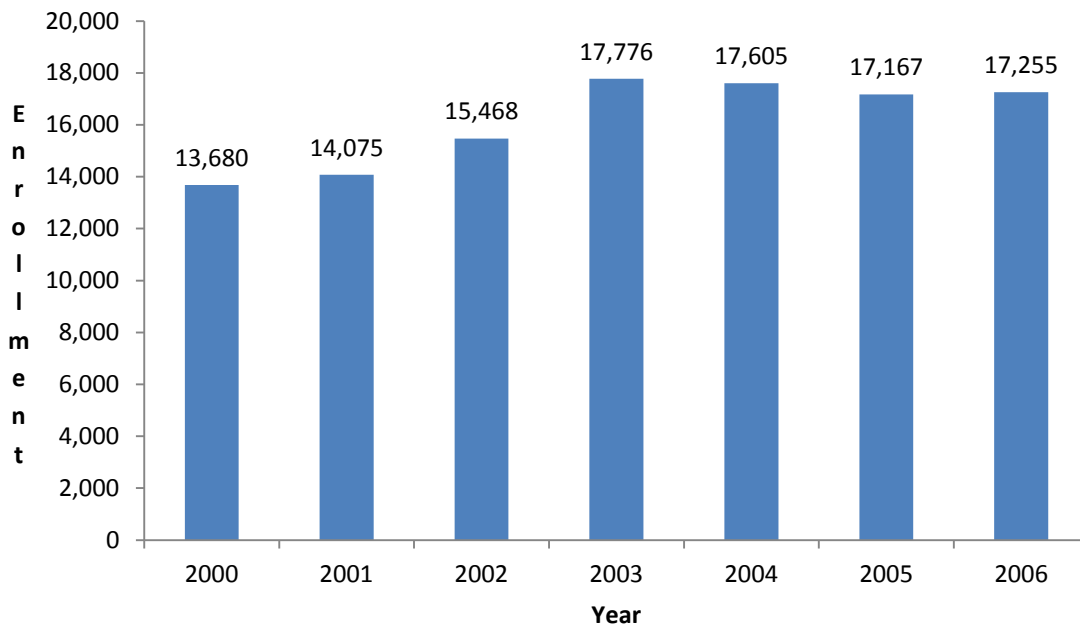
Adapted from DeVoe, J.F., and Darling-Churchill, K.E. (2008). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES 2008-084). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2007,* based on Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment Survey," 1997 through 1999, and Spring 2001 through Spring 2007.

Appendix C: Dissertation Instruments

Appendix C-1

Sample Recruitment Letter

September 20, 2013

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Jolene Bowman and I am a doctoral candidate in the Leadership for the Advancement of Learning and Service in Higher Education program. I am conducting a study to explore the experiences of Stockbridge-Munsee students in higher education. I am particularly interested in how Stockbridge-Munsee students overcome obstacles or barriers while in college in order to persist and graduate.

To learn more about these topics, I am conducting a focus group interview and a one-to-one interview with Stockbridge-Munsee students who have a minimum of 24 credits earned and who are attending a Wisconsin college. I will be conducting one focus group interview that will last no more than two hours with all of the eligible students present. Then I will select up to five participants from the focus group to participate in a semi-structured one-to-one interview. Interviews will last between 60 to 90 minutes. You may decide to stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information and identity confidential. You will not be identifiable by name or description in any reports or publications about this study. Because of the group nature of the study, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. It is possible that other participants in the group may disclose information obtained while participating in the focus groups. Participants will be instructed that participation is to be kept confidential, and that thoughts or opinions expressed by other individuals in the groups are not to be shared with persons outside of the group.

This study will help us to gain better insight into the experiences and perspectives of Stockbridge-Munsee students in higher education. The stories and experiences gained from this study will identify successful strategies Stockbridge-Munsee students use in order to persist in college. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at 715-853-4631 or by email at jebowman@stritch.edu. Please respond by **October 4th, 2013**. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jolene Bowman
Doctoral Candidate
Cardinal Stritch College
Leadership for the Advancement of Learning and Service in Higher Education

Appendix C-2

Informed Consent Form

Date _____

I agree to participate in a research study that focuses on how Stockbridge-Munsee students persist while attending a Wisconsin college. My participation will include a two-hour recorded focus group interview or a one hour one-on-one interview.

Basically, I understand that no hardship or discomfort should occur since my identification will be kept private and confidential at all times. For confidentiality purposes, all interviews will be given a different secret code before the interview transcription process is started, in a form of pseudonyms. In addition, all information will be kept in a locked drawer. At the successful completion of this particular study the transcripts and all audiotapes will be destroyed immediately.

The information gained from this research study may help to enhance the understanding of strategies used by Stockbridge-Munsee students to persist in a Wisconsin college. As a research participant, I understand that the reflection of my professional leadership experiences may inspire future leaders. I also understand that the data collected may be used for presentations and publications. However, individual participants' names will remain anonymous.

If you have questions about this research study, please contact Jolene Bowman, via email at: jebowman@stritch.edu, or her dissertation chair, Dr. Janice Jones via email at: je2jones@stritch.edu. The protocol of this research study was reviewed and approved by the Cardinal Stritch University Human Subjects Review Committee. Questions about the approval process can be answered by contacting Dr. Janice Jones via email at: je2jones@stritch.edu

Participation is voluntary. As a participant, I confirm that I understand the purpose and parameters of the research study outlined above. I am aware that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research study at any time with no complications. I hereby provide consent for the use of my information/signature and wish to participate in this particular research study.

_____
Name (Print or Type)   Telephone Number

_____
Signature   Date

Appendix C-3

Demographic Questionnaire

Gender: ☐ Male or ☐ Female

Age: _____

Major: _____

Minor: _____

Classification: _____ #of Credits completed: _____

Did you transfer here from another college to your current college? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please indicate what college(s)?_____

Enrolled Member of: _____ Enrollment #: _____

in High School Graduating Class: _____

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married or ☐ Divorced

Children: ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how many? ☐

Mother's Education:

PhD/MD/JD   Masters   Bachelors   HS Diploma   No HS Diploma

Father's Education:

PhD/MD/JD   Masters   Bachelors   HS Diploma   No HS Diploma

Parents Status:

Married   Divorced   Separated   Never Married   Other: _____

Appendix C-4

Focus Group Interview Protocol and Interview Questions

Project: Identifying Stockbridge-Munsee Strategies to Persist in Wisconsin Colleges
Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Participants:

Script:

Hello, my name is Jolene Bowman. I am here to explore the strategies that Stockbridge-Munsee students use in order to succeed in college. I want you to be very specific and in-depth about your experiences while in college, obstacles you may have faced, and how you overcame them. I encourage you to provide stories and to feel free to say whatever you think, even if you think it is not important. Participating in this interview will be confidential. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, or do not wish to participate, you may leave the room at anytime. I will be taping this session and sending the recording out to be transcribed by a transcriptionist. I will remove any identifiers. No one reading this transcript will be able to identify those participating. Do you have any questions?

The questions will be grouped into four categories: opening, introductory, transition, and key/ending. The questions are designed to gain an understanding about how the participants feel regarding their persistence while attending a Wisconsin college. The questions will follow a semi-structured questioning route format with the aim of fostering consistency in questioning as well as questioning across the different groups. The following general questions will be asked with additional probes as needed to facilitate discussion.

Opening Questions

The use of opening questions is to open up the storytelling while helping participants feel welcomed and relaxed (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

1. Do you live on campus, with parents, or have your own place?

2. Are you in your Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior year?

3. What is your personal definition of "academic success"?

Introductory Questions

Introductory questions are normally open-ended questions that build the topic of discussion and support participant in sharing their experiences by socializing with them through storytelling to see further into their thoughts and views (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

1. What do you like and dislike about your college experience thus far?

2. When you had questions and/or needed assistance where did you go on campus and/or off campus? Was it helpful or not helpful and why?

3. What did you find most frustrating on campus and/or off campus? What parts made it difficult and trying?

Transition Questions

Transition questions explore deeper into the participants' perspectives and shift the storytelling to the type of questions that are the center of the study (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

1. What is the reason for attending your Wisconsin college?

2. What does your family think about you attending college? How does this make you think, feel, or respond to what they think?

Key/Ending Questions

Key questions encourage personal sharing and influences response and comments between participants stories (Krueger & Casey, 2000). These inquiring questions will require complete stories and a watchful review.

1. What steps did your college take to enhance your college experience? What else can they do?

2. Did you experience racial discrimination and if you did how did it make you feel and how did you respond?

3. What kind of things could interfere or stop you from earning the degree you are seeking?

4. What cultural knowledge or traditions assisted you to persist in college?

5. Describe what you believe causes other Stockbridge-Munsee students to not finish college.

6. Where do you see yourself personally and professionally after attaining a college degree?

7. How can you develop and enhance a relationship with your college professors?

8. Would you recommend your college to other Stockbridge-Munsee students?

9. Do you have anything additional to share about American Indian student's problem solving to continue in college?

Appendix C-5

One-on-One Interview Protocol and Questions

Project: Identifying Stockbridge-Munsee Strategies to Persist in Wisconsin Colleges
Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Participant:

Script:

      Hello, my name is Jolene Bowman. I am here to explore the strategies that Stockbridge-Munsee students use in order to succeed in college. I want you to be very specific and in-depth about your experiences while in college, obstacles you may have faced, and how you overcame them. I encourage you to provide stories and to feel free to say whatever you think, even if you think it is not important. Participating in this interview will be confidential. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, or do not wish to participate, you may leave the room at anytime. I will be taping this session and sending the recording out to be transcribed by a transcriptionist. I will remove any identifiers. No one reading this transcript will be able to identify those participating. Do you have any questions?

The following general questions will be asked with additional probes as needed to facilitate discussion.

1. Describe your experience at college thus far?

2. Describe a time when you have done well in school.

    a. What did you do that helped you to succeed?

3. Describe a difficult situation you dealt with while in school?

    a. How did you cope with that issue during that time?

4. What are the barriers you had to overcome in trying to complete your education?

    a. How did you overcome those barriers?

5. What factors have led you to persist through your university so far?

6. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about Stockbridge-Munsee or other American Indian students in higher education regarding barriers and strategies used to persist in college?