“I’M GONNA TELL YOU THAT WE’RE NOT A MYTH”: NATIVE STUDENTS’ AND NON-NATIVE TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON ANTI-INDIGENOUS CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOMS

by

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ABSTRACT

BRITTANY DANIELLE HUNT. "I'm gonna tell you that we're not a myth": Native students' and non-Native teachers' perspectives on anti-Indigenous curriculum and classrooms. (Under the direction of DR. CHANCE LEWIS)

Though North Carolina is home to the 9th largest Indigenous population in America, as well as to the largest Tribe East of the Mississippi, North Carolina curriculum and schools often erode Indigenous histories from the classroom. Indigenous people are presented as forever constrained within antiquity, as savage, as docile, as stoic, and at worst – as nonexistent. This study centers Native students who traverse through these systems that perpetuate stereotypes of Indigenous barbarism, passivity, and erasure, with a focus on Native students living in urban areas of North Carolina. Similarly, non-Native teachers were interviewed for this study to discuss their role in this system as well as what they are doing to challenge it. Themes include problematic curriculum, anti-Indigeneity, erasure, White supremacy, and resistance and resilience.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my momma and daddy, Cordelia Johnson Chavis and Ron Hunt, and to my grandparents, Hazel and Haywood Johnson and Sonja and Jerry Hunt. Also, to my niece and nephew, Peyton and Paxton, this is for you, too. Without my family, these stories and this work would be impossible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A most special thank you to the Indigenous scholars who contributed to this work, those whose literature I looked to to root and ground my work, those whose words have provided an impetus for this research, and especially to those K-12 grade students I spoke with who articulated so clearly and plainly about both their plight and their triumphs in the school system today. You all are why I do this work, and I thank you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Though there are 5.2 million Native American people in the United States from more than 600 tribes who live in every state in the nation (Faircloth, 2018), American Indian people face an obscurity in public discourse that pushes them to the margins. However, 93% of Native children attend public K-12 schools and more than 70% live in urban areas across America and not on reservations (Faircloth, 2018, Whittle, 2017). Unlike in their tribal territories, they do not occupy large populations in these cities, and tend to be forgotten, invisibilized or further marginalized in urban areas. Therefore, the distance from their tribal communities is not only geographic, but curricular, as well. This erasure also happens in teacher representation; for example, though American Indian people comprise more than 1% of the U.S. population, they comprise 0.4% of teachers in the nation (NCES, 2016). With a scarcity of these teachers and a problematized curriculum, American Indian students are left viscerally lacking in representation.

Additionally, North Carolina is home to the largest tribe east of the Mississippi, the Lumbee Tribe, and has the ninth largest American Indian population in the U.S. at more than 130,000 (Lumbee Tribe, 2019; NCPedia, 2005). There are seven other state-recognized tribes in North Carolina: the Haliwa-Saponi, Coharie, Waccamaw Siouan, Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation, Sappony, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, with the latter being North Carolina's only federally recognized tribe (NCPedia, 2005). There are also four urban Indian associations and organizations in the state including: the Metrolina Native American Association, Guilford Native American Association, Triangle Native American Society, and the Cumberland County Association for Indian People.

This study focuses specifically on North Carolina's urban counties, including Mecklenburg, Wake and Guilford counties. In Mecklenburg County, approximately 0.8% of the

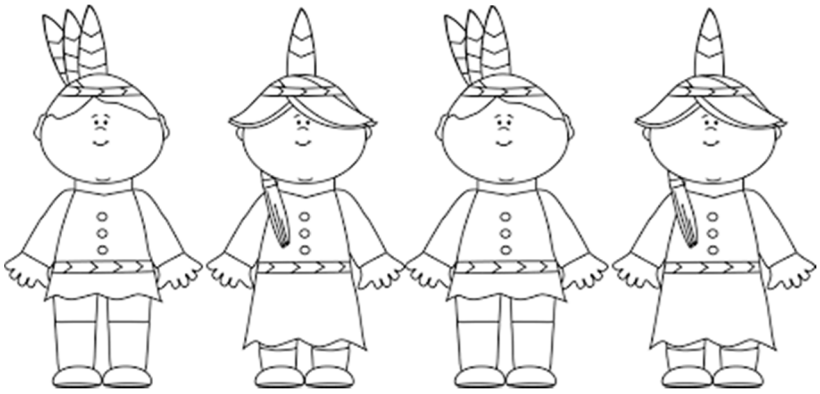
population is American Indian, while 57.8% is white, 32.8% is Black, 13.3% is Hispanic/Latino, and 6.1% is Asian (U.S. Census Mecklenburg, 2018). There are 549 (.4%) American Indian students enrolled in Mecklenburg County schools of a total student population of 136,031 (SACIE, 2019). Guilford County's population is approximately 0.7% American Indian, while 59.6% are white, 34.8% are Black, 8.1% are Hispanic/Latino and 5.2% are Asian. There are 269 (.4%) American Indian students enrolled in Guilford County schools of a total student population of 66,613 (SACIE, 2019). In Wake County, approximately 0.8% of the population is American Indian, while 68.1% is white, 21.1% is Black, 10.3% is Hispanic/Latino, and 7.5% is Asian. There are 393 (.26%) American Indian students enrolled in Wake county schools of a total student population of 148,147 (SACIE, 2019).

Despite the state's rich tribal history, the state of North Carolina has only one K-6 American Indian related history standard and a single Native American history course that is taught in a handful of schools (Shear et al., 2015). When students do learn about Native history, both in North Carolina and nationally, it is often taught from a strictly pre-1900s context and is overly focused on tribes out West who are far removed from North Carolinian students' southern contexts (Shear et al., 2015; Whisnant, 2019). Lumbee historian Malinda Maynor Lowery notes "my ancestors were the original southerners, here before something called the South ever existed. Yet other Americans, especially southerners, freely mourn and memorialize their histories being lost or erased, all the while challenging our right as Lumbees to do the same" (p. xiv). Southern American Indian history takes a visceral hit as America's preconceived notions of American Indian people are increasingly solidified as something mystical or other, something leathered and feathered, something rooted in settler imagination rather than Indigenous reality.

I spoke with many educators in preparation for this research. I asked them about the Indigenous content they teach in their classrooms. Their answers were varied but were almost always disturbing. One teacher told me that for his singular lesson on Native Americans, he had students carve soap. When I asked why, he said "because they don't have any wood to carve." Another had students draw a teepee and write 'Indian words' beside it. I was unprepared for all of these responses, but there was one that took me particularly by surprise. During the month of November and right before Thanksgiving, an educator had students bring in photos of themselves and their family members. She supplied photos of a cartoon Native family. Students were then asked to cut out the faces of their own family photos and paste them on top of the faces of the Native family, thereby making themselves into Indians. While I do not have an actual copy of the cartoon family used, I imagine it might look something like the photo below.

Figure 1

Native Cartoon/Coloring Sheet



These stories are not anomalies, they are not exceptions, they are not outliers; they are, rather, a glimpse into K-12 schools' treatment of Indigenous children and content. What do these sorts of activities do to the psyche of Native children present? What do they do to non-Native children? Native students endure constant and cumulative degradations of their cultures and lived realities, like the aforementioned activities, but also in other unnamed and innumerable

ways. They enter into classrooms designed to either erase them completely or deeply problematize their histories (Loewen, 1995; Pewewardy, 1998; Shear et al., 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Teachers project these fictitious narratives onto their students, teaching non-Native students stereotyped and simplified versions of incredibly complex and dynamic Indigenous histories; additionally, when confronted with the presence of a Native student, non-Natives often bemoan that they are "not the Indians they had in mind" (King, 2003, p.1). King's (2003) spoken word further notes:

> I'm not the Indian you had in mind
>
> I've heard him
>
> Oh, I've heard him roar,
>
> the warrior wild, the video store
>
> the movies that we all adore
>
> the clichés that we can't rewind,
>
> But I'm not the Indian you had in mind (p.1).

When I was an undergraduate student, I remember meeting someone and telling her that I was Native; she then told me that she expected me to 'sound more mystical' and admitted that my southern vernacular was perplexing. Other classmates and professors were bewildered when I told them that I did not in fact live in a teepee or have an 'Indian name.' Others asked me if I was 'sure' that I was Native or asked if I had a special connection with nature. I was not the Indian they had in mind. Their projections onto me were rooted in the rigidity that underscores American Indian content in modern media and classrooms that do not allow for the fluidity and authenticity of actual Indian identity.

Chimamanda Adichie notes the risks of stereotyping and oversimplifying people and nations, referring to this as the "danger of a single story" (Adichie, 2009). She notes "power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person" (Adichie, 2009). The definitive story of American Indian people in the US is not self-defined; it is rather co-constructed via an array of non-Native medias bent on portraying the Indian as vanishing, as savage, and as the stuff of myths.

In keeping with this rigidity, in 2019 a charter school for Indigenous youth called "Old Main STREAM Academy" was proposed to the North Carolina State Board of Education but was denied due to its "portrayal of American history" (Keung Hui, 2019). Many members of the board took particular issue with the principle of "Red Pedagogy" which was a foundational principle to the school's curriculum; board members argued that this concept, crafted by Quechua scholar Sandy Grande, is too divisive, "didn't talk about the greatness of America," and centered knowledge of the genocide of American Indian people (Keung Hui, 2019). For the board members who voted against the school, these truths were too controversial to be taught in state-sanctioned schools.

But what of current American curriculum? What does it teach? What does it exclude? Research shows that the history of American Indian people in this country is taught as footnotes, if at all, and largely positions settlers as the heroes of the American story (Moore & Clark, 2004; Shear et al., 2015; Stanton, 2014). Settlers then seek ways to erase Natives further by becoming them, by 'playing Indian' in school in a number of ways, including wearing paper headdresses during Thanksgiving lessons (Amerman, 2007), carving soap in the absence of wood, and pasting photos of themselves onto cartoon Indians. And despite the imposed mysticism that

enshrouds Indigenous people in this country, such activities empower non-Native students to 'play Indian' while disempowering Indigenous students actual Indianness.

Teachers are agents in this process, and in turn, create agents out of their students who internalize harmful and inaccurate messages about Indigenous people and history. Therefore, I contend that American Indian children internalize harmful imagery about their identities given the current curriculum. Additionally, though teachers receive marginal training on cultural competence, this training often excludes American Indian people, leaving teachers unprepared to be culturally responsive to their American Indian students. Compounded by the media's either lack of Native representation or stereotypical imagery therein, both teachers and Native students often enter classrooms lacking the knowledge that they both need to be holistically and reciprocally successful. This research provides visibility to the Native students obscured by small numbers in big cities as we conduct research with Native youth in urban settings as well as with their teachers. The primary research questions are:

1. What have Native students and non-Native teachers learned and internalized about American Indian history, culture, and life via present/past curriculum?
2. How are students' and teachers' conceptions of American Indian people stereotyped? How does the invisibility of Native narratives in the classroom impact students and teachers?
3. In what ways do students resist these stereotyped narratives? In what ways do teachers resist?

Study Design

Data was compiled in urban areas across North Carolina, including Charlotte and Raleigh. This work centers American Indian students in grades 6-12 living in these areas and

gather oral stories regarding their experiences in the school system. This work relies on Indigenous research methodology, which has been practiced for millennia, as Indigenous people have always been investigators and theorists, though in a more relational and communal way than Western-based researchers (Lambert, 2014). This research is in keeping with these ancestral scholarly practices and prioritizes the stories and knowledge of Indigenous people (Lambert, 2014). This research exists as a counternarrative to typical research that excludes American Indian data on the premise that it is too small, too biased, or too other. It challenges traditional renditions of research as inherently 'non-biased,' removing the researcher from the research process, as this follows a Western-based approach; we seek to decolonize this process and to Indigenize it. Therefore, all participants are considered co-researchers in the process and knowledge was collaboratively derived and constructed. Teachers are also an integral part of this research, and stories were collected from them regarding their perceptions of American Indian people and history. Like the discussions with students, teachers also participated in discussions and were asked questions relating to their knowledge and perceptions of American Indian people and issues.

This research also prioritizes Indigenous students and operates from an understanding of their isolated and marginalized positions in urban spaces, and in their schools, specifically. Moorhouse (2016) in her experiences with academic, home-based research, challenges herself by asking "can I do this and still come home?" (p.15); I ask, 'can these students do this and still go to class?' Conversations in these discussions could potentially reveal information about teachers that is less than ideal; therefore, it is critical that the content preserve participants anonymity and confidentiality.

Additionally, Indigenous research methodologies reject research for the sake of research. Mihesuah (2000) contends that in traditional, Western research with Indigenous communities, scholars "usually just want information that they use to build their academic careers, while the knowledgeable "objects of study" receive nothing in return" (p.1250). Therefore, rather than place complete trust in abstract findings or predatory researchers, we trust what we can see, we trust each other, and we trust what we have experienced. Being a member of the Indigenous community does not grant a researcher free range to research Indigenous people and related issues. Indigenous researchers are tasked instead with maintaining their relation to home by moving beyond the typical research model of 'do no harm.' From my own perspective, it is not enough to simply not harm the community; if I am asking something of my participants - their time, their stories, their opinions - I must give reciprocally of myself and of the resources available to me, as well. Therefore, students were provided with both a gift card and resources on surviving as Indigenous scholars in non-Native contexts. These exist as a part of a much larger gift of reciprocity that I developed alongside my participants. Additionally, teachers were provided with a gift card, a professional development course on how to incorporate more Indigenous content into their classrooms, with a focus on tribes local to the area, as well as other online resources and training modules.

Significance of Study

This work is significant because Indigenous students are significant. This work is not only the responsibility of teachers or of Native people, but of all Americans; Faircloth (2018) notes that we have a "moral and ethical obligation" to eradicate those policies and practices that harm Indigenous students and erase their respective cultures and histories (p.19). Schools can be sites of transformation and restoration if we make them so, but this is impossible so long as

whitewashed curriculum exists. The continued perpetuation of narratives depicting Native people as eternal savages forever fixed in times long ago cannot stand. We must move as a country away from the palatable vignettes of forgetfulness or misrepresentation and into the ugliness of American history as it relates to Indigenous people. Indigenous people are entitled to this dignity. This work is important, not only for its work in restoring dignity and justice to Native people, but for the very survival of Indigenous people (Whyte, 2018). Without providing Indigenous students exposure to Indigenous content, particularly those in urban settings, we strip them of their ability to fully imagine their Indigenous identities; these students often lack the resources necessary to carry their Indigenous identities into the future or pass them onto the generations who come after them.

Additionally, it is not enough to just represent the trauma that defines most settler-Indigenous relations of America's past and present. It is necessary as well to celebrate, honor, and comprehensively represent the undeniable, unending, and innumerable historical and contemporary contributions of Native people to America. Our story is not one of only pain, but of power, too. These stories must find their way into American classrooms. Indigenous and non-indigenous students are entitled to them.

Positionality Statement

I am a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. I grew up in Robeson County, NC, which is the heart of Lumbee territory. I was raised primarily by my mother and grandmother, though my father and paternal grandparents were integral to my life, as well. When I went to college at Duke University, I felt that I was transplanted into an alternate reality. Though only a two-hour drive away, I was the only Lumbee person on the entire campus and the cultural insulation that home provided me was now foregone. I was totally unprepared for the

realities of life outside of my Indigenous context. I soon realized that though non-Native people in my county had some familiarity with Native history or with how to interact with a Native person in general, that my peers at Duke did not possess this knowledge. The regularity of which I was asked questions like *Do you live in a teepee? A*r*e you sure you're Native American*? *Do you feel more connected to nature? Can you do a rain dance for us?* cannot be overstated.

My peers oscillated between disbelieving my Native identity entirely or discounting it in a variety of ways. They would ask me "what part Indian" I am even if I told them that both my parents were Lumbee. I was put into a state of constantly having to prove my Indigeneity to non-Indigenous people, and specifically to people who had had no known previous encounters with a Native person. I was up against an image of Indianness that they have seen on TV, in movies, or at football games that positions Indian people as a people of the past, as 'noble savages,' mascots, cartoons, or relics. This imagery renders it impossible for non-Natives to conceive of the realities of Indigenous life, and as previously stated, make us "not the Indians they had in mind" (King, 2003). To add to this misrepresentation, in my college classes I found that Native people were rarely, if ever, represented in the content. When my professors did speak about Native people, it was always in the past-tense. However, Native people live in all tenses; we were here before, we are here now, and will be here in futurity. This knowledge, though rooted for me, was not planted in my curriculum.

Another common occurrence was a counterintuitive one; while discounting my Indian identity, some would also name themselves as Indigenous by way of a distant relative, or often, a 'Cherokee great grandmother.' It seemed that my own Indigenous identity was deviant to them in some way, but that theirs was normal because it conformed to their belief that Native people are a vanishing race, cannot be whole, or exists only by way of an ancestor. Tuck and Yang

(2012) note that society has "multiple simultaneous and conflicting messages about Indigenous peoples, such as all Indians are dead, located in faraway reservations, that contemporary Indigenous people are less Indigenous than prior generations, and that all Americans are a "little bit Indian" (p.9) My peers then were perfectly willing to accept that I was a "little bit Indian" like the myths they grew up hearing from their families about themselves, but not that I was an Indigenous person, a member of a tribal nation, or Lumbee, specifically. I found myself trying to make a space apart from their restrictive notions of Indigeneity that expected me to look and perform a certain way (or to not exist at all) and from their abstractions of Indianness that did not allow for the complexities and actualities of my own Lumbee identity.

The anti-Indigenous commentary enshrouded my time at Duke; it did not wane, lessen, or become easier. Now that I am in a doctoral program, they have increased; though I am more adept at handling them, they are no less exhausting. I thought that if this is what my experience is like in college amongst well-educated people, what must the experiences of children in K-12 settings be like? I was unprepared at 18 for the microaggressions I faced in college, so what must those younger than me feel? What messages are their peers communicating to them about their Indigenousness? What messages are their teachers communicating, and also, what was communicated to their teachers?

Part of me feels sympathy for those who make stereotypical remarks about Indigenous people; I know that they do not know any better because they were not taught better. Even in my own schools growing up, we sat 'Indian-style' on the floor as our teacher taught us that Columbus discovered America. I dressed as an 'Indian' in a paper headdress during Thanksgiving Day lessons. However, growing up in a county that was 40% Native tempered and mitigated my school experience. Though not learning about Natives in the classroom in a very

meaningful or consistent way, I went home daily to my very Indian mother and grandmother. I went to an Indian church. I had Indian teachers and classmates and doctors. Indian people permeated every aspect of my childhood growing up. Native children living in cities do not have this luxury, these layers of protection and representation. Therefore, to this research, I bring my own experiences and a Lumbee person growing up in Lumbee territory to contexts with students who do not live this reality. This work focuses on students who are Native attending schools with small (<1%) Native populations.

Definition of Terms

1. *Indigenous, Native, Native American, American Indian, Indian***:** Throughout this work, these terms will be used interchangeably. Though possessing different sociopolitical and cultural implications, they are used to collectively and cohesively refer to the people indigenous to the land that is now called America. When possible, tribally specific names will be used.
2. *Settler/settler colonialism:* Settler colonialism differs from colonialism in fundamental ways. The goal of colonialism is to conquer a nation for various reasons, which often involves controlling the population or taking their resources; the goal of settler colonialism is to replace a nation's Indigenous population with a settler population, who will then become the new 'natives' of the land. Settlers come with the intention of staying; their occupation is not short-term, but the goal is to create a 'new' nation. Indigenous people problematize this goal due to their preexisting nations that maintain sovereignty on settler-desired land. This desire lays the framework for genocide, forced removal, and settler violence against Indigenous people. Patrick Wolfe (1999) defines settler colonialism as a structure, not an event. Settler colonialism did not occur in the

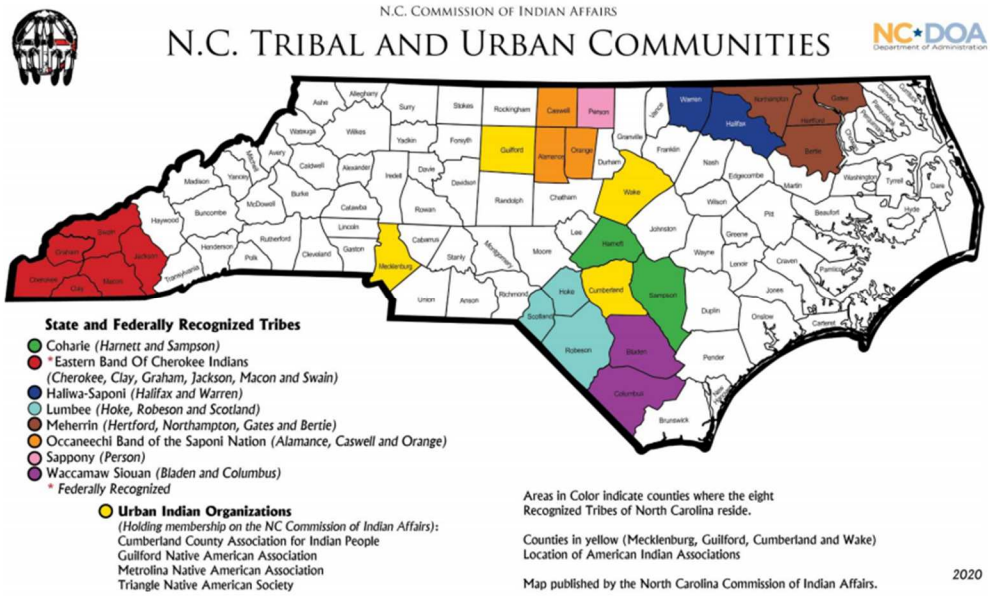
past for a set time but is occurring today as Indigenous people continue to be murdered and imprisoned at higher rates than any other population which then makes possible further seizure of Indigenous land. Settlers, then, are those who benefit from this seizure.

3. *Tribes & Native Nations of North Carolina:* As mentioned earlier, there are eight state-recognized tribes in NC: the Lumbee, Haliwa-Saponi, Waccamaw-Siouan, Meherrin, Sappony, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Indians, Coharie, and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Of these, only the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians are federally recognized. However, the Lumbee do possess partial federal recognition via the Lumbee Act of 1956, which stipulates that while the federal government acknowledges us as Indian, we are denied the government-government relationship, and the benefits therein, afforded to other federally recognized tribes (Lowery, 2018).
4. *North Carolina's Urban Indian Organizations:* During the 1950s and 60s, many American Indian families moved away from their tribal communities and into cities. This was a part of a governmental relocation project aimed at breaking up Indigenous communities, dissolving them into cities where they would not possess large numbers, and then taking control of more Indian land (Laukaitis, 2005; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012); though these efforts were primarily focused on Native people living in the Midwest and West, similar trends existed with tribes in the East. Native in the cities found unique ways to connect with one another through the formation of urban Indian organizations. North Carolina's urban Indian organizations are: the Metrolina Native American Association (serving the Charlotte-area), Guilford Native American Association (serving the Greensboro-area), Triangle Native American Society (serving the Raleigh-Durham area), and the Cumberland County Association for Indian People (serving the Fayetteville

area). The map below (N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs, 2020) shows the service areas of these organizations, as well as the primary counties that members of the eight tribes reside and maintain governance in.

Figure 2

Map of North Carolina Tribal and Urban Communities



(N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs, 2020)

Organization of the Study

This work consists of five chapters: an introduction (Chapter 1), a literature review (Chapter 2), methodology (Chapter 3), findings (Chapter 4), and a discussion (Chapter 5). This chapter provided a general introduction to and context of the problem, as well as defining key terms, and relaying the positionality of the researcher to the work. Chapter 2 provides greater background into the history and current reality of Native education today, as well as of teacher preparation programs as they relate to Indigenous content, and introduces Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribCrit), which is the theoretical framework guiding this study. Chapter 3 further

delves into the rationale behind and knowledge centering Indigenous research methodologies and provides participant information and the general data collection processes. Chapter 4 relays the findings from this process, including particularly poignant quotes from participants. Chapter 5 synthesizes these findings, ties them back to the theoretical framework, and provides recommendations for the future.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Though education can be a powerful tool of liberation and progress, it has also been wielded as a mechanism of controlling entire populations and maintaining white supremacy (Bear Nicholas, 2001; Brayboy, 2005). Its double-edged nature both beckons and violates. Brayboy et. al (2015) notes:

> Education was and in many ways continues to be (1) a battle for the hearts and minds of Indigenous nations; (2) a colonial call for assimilation; and (3) a responsibility of the federal government arising from a series of agreements between Indian nations and the United States meant to open up land bases to a burgeoning immigrant population (p.1).

Because of the assimilatory history of the education of Indigenous people in America and its enduring legacy of harm, many Native people today approach education with reticence and mistrust (Goodkind et. al, 2001). This literature review details and explores the history of Indigneous education, both precolonial and colonial, and will explore the modern-day effects of these contexts, including anti-Indigenous curriculum and teacher preparation programs today. This review, and this work in its entirety, is guided by Lumbee scholar Bryan Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribCrit), with emphasis on its tenets of American education as inherently assimilationist as well as of Indigenous stories being critical to research.

Precolonial Indigenous Education

Before America became America, the Indigenous people of the land had sophisticated governments, agricultural practices, economies and educational systems (Jaimes, 1992; Lowery, 2018; Yeboah, 2005). These systems emphasized the individual's role within the community, respect for elders and other authority figures, agriculture, political participation, and matrilineality (Medicine, 1981; Yeboah, 2005). Schools were also sources of survivance and

Native youth were taught various skills including hunting, fishing, child rearing and home management; religion and ceremony were intrinsic parts of schooling, as well (Reyhner, 2006). Students learned their role within their families, clans, and tribal nations (Reyhner, 2006). Dr. Henrietta Mann (Cheyenne), at the 1972 National Indian Education Association (NIEA) conference, stated:

> contrary to popular belief, the transmission and acquisition of knowledge and skills did not come to the North American continent on the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria. We Native Americans have educated our youth through a rich and oral tradition, which was and is today transmitted by the elders of the tribe (Juneau, 2001).

Additionally, unlike European education, Native education was predicated upon application and collaboration, not memorization or competitiveness (Cross, 1999; Yeboah, 2005). These systems were usurped by the arrival of European colonizers to the continent, forever changing its geographic, social, and educational landscape (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Goodkind, 2011; Lowery, 2018).

The Boarding School Era

When European settlers came to the land now known as America, they were faced with what would later be coined as the "Indian problem," and developed solutions aimed at eradicating the population to both promote their land-snatching agenda and bolster white supremacy (Garland, 1902; Zalcman, 2016). It is estimated that pre-Columbus, the continents were populated by upwards of 10 to 15 million Native people (Schaefer, 2004). By the 1850s, their numbers had been decimated to 250,000 due to forced removals, germ warfare, war, and murder, and the destruction of sustenance (Schaefer, 2004; Yeboah, 2005). After many American Indian tribes were pushed westward, America switched its practice from physical extermination

and forced removal to assimilation into white society (Gram, 2016; Yeboah, 2005). This assimilation was achieved through various means, including the 1887 Dawes Act's Indian land allotments, which forced tribal members onto individual land tracts rather than communal plots and reduced their lands drastically (Prucha, 1986; Yeboah, 2005). However, this assimilation was primarily achieved through boarding schools for American Indian youth.

European settlers developed Indian boarding schools throughout the 19th and 20th century designed to reify white supremacy, enforce Indigenous subordination, and make further claims to Indigenous land (Bear Nicholas, 2001). These schools existed in contradistinction to precolonial Indigenous education which was predicated on communal knowledge and elder wisdom (Reyhner, 2018). The boarding schools instead sought to sever these ties, destruct ancestral knowledge, and dismantle Indian societies (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Reyhner, 2018; Tatonetti, 2011; Yeboah, 2005; Zalcman, 2016).

Richard Henry Pratt founded the boarding school movement after conducting an experiment on 72 Plains Indian prisoners in his jurisdiction (Tatonetti, 2011). Pratt indoctrinated these prisoners with military education and transformed their physical appearance to align with white standards (Tatonetti, 2011). Though some of these prisoners committed suicide during the process, Pratt showed before-and-after photos of the prisoners to officials within the Department of the Interior and the War Department, both of which primarily dealt with Indian affairs, and military style schools for Native children began popping up across the country (Jones, Bosworth & Lonetree, 2011; Tatonetti, 2011). Indian pupils were forced to adopt Euro-Christian names and styles of dress, and forbidden from speaking their native languages; they were transported to schools hundreds or even thousands of miles from their homes to prevent "the degrading influence of tribal life" (Adams, 1995, p.30; Reyhner, 2018). Complementary to this removal,

Christian zealotry punctuated and defined the boarding school experience (Child, 2018; Reyhner 2018). Many tribes' cultural and religious practices subsequently became obsolete, leaving Christianity as the sole spiritualizing and moralizing agent for many tribes (Child, 2018). Poor nutrition, overcrowding, corporal punishment, and sexual abuse were also characteristics of the schools (American Indian Boarding Schools, 2008; Gregg, 2018; Reyhner, 2018).

White supremacy was a defining feature of these institutions. One superintendent at the schools remarked: "the Indian child is of lower physical organization than the white child of corresponding age...and his offspring cannot be taught like the children of the white man until they are taught to do like them" (Lomawaima, 1993, p.230). Children's hair was cut against their will to force them into white standards of grooming and appearance, despite the cultural importance of having long hair in many tribes (Jones et al., 2011). These boarding schools operated under the guise of "kill the Indian, save the man," as it was believed that the only way to save the soul of the Indian was sever all that was Indian within and around him and assimilate him into white standards of being (Tatonetti, 2011, p.270; Zalcman, 2016). The ultimate goal was to totally supplant Indianness with white identity.

Teachers at the schools learned little of Native culture or language, and often punished students for any expressions of either in these institutions (Reyhner, 2018). When pupils at these schools later became parents, rather than passing down their cultural traditions, they acted out of the fear that had underscored their boarding school experiences. Dr. Lori Arviso Alford (Navajo) wrote of her father and grandfather's experiences in boarding schools, noting:

> "Navajo children were told that their culture and lifeways were inferior, and they could never be as good as white people. . . .two or three generations of our tribe had been taught to feel shame about our culture, and parents had often not taught their children traditional

> Navajo beliefs– the very thing that would have shown them how to live, the very thing that could keep them strong" (Alvord & Van Pelt, 1999, p. 86 & 88).

Indigenous youth are critical to Indigenous futurity (Vallgarda, Alexander, & Olsen, 2015). By instilling a fear of cultural transmission in its pupils, the boarding schools' assimilationist legacy found ways to exist intergenerationally.

Life after the boarding schools was similarly bleak for most of the pupils. Though many returned home, they often arrived feeling out of place (Jones et al, 2011; Reyhner, 2018). Many had forgotten how to speak their tribal languages due to the punitive practices of the boarding schools (Jones et al., 2011). They were left with a loss of Indian identity, and a new whitewashed identity in its place, but soon found that white society did not accept them, either (Jones et al. 2011). This cycle would continue for decades, with many of the schools remaining open until the 1980s, leaving us less than 40 years removed from these traumatic, culturally exterminatory institutions (Churchill, 2004).

The harm boarding schools has done to Indian country is undeniable. Native students are often conditioned to believe that to perform better academically, they would need to become "less Indian" (Wright, 1991, p. 447). Many Natives view public education with reticence, for these institutions were formed to drain them of their cultural identities whilst forcing whiteness onto them (Wright, 1991). The current status of Native education cannot be divorced from American Indian history in our country nor the fact that education has been used as a homogenizing and civilizing agent (Brayboy, et al., 2015). Faircloth (2018) warns that a failure to correct these modern-day iterations of historically traumatic schooling practices makes us complicit in the mass reproduction of ignorance and that we must "dismantle educational

practices that sustain the forced erasure of American Indian peoples, their histories, cultures, traditions, and languages" (p.19-20).

Modern Day Schooling

Today, Native youth live in all 50 states, and reside in rural, urban, and suburban areas (Seelau, 2012). Less than one-third of these youth live on reservations and there are more Native youth per capita under the age of twenty than any other racial demographic in the United States (Seelau, 2012). These youth are from more than 560 federally recognized tribes and countless other state recognized tribes (Faircloth, 2018). More than 600,000 American Indian youth are currently enrolled in K-12 schools, with 93% of these youth attending public schools and 7% attending tribal or Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded schools (Faircloth, 2018). However, many of these youth will not graduate high school, with the American Indian graduation rate of 67% falling drastically behind the national average of 81% (Faircloth, 2018). Low graduation rates and educational attainment metrics are likely influenced by high poverty levels, schools who serve youth who experience high poverty, and a lack of internet access, among other factors (Faircloth, 2018). Additionally, urban Natives receive less funding for education, health and employment than their counterparts on reservations, leaving them simultaneously separated from their tribal communities and from resources critical for success (Berry, 2002).

North Carolina's public schools enroll 18,650 American Indian youth, comprising 1% of the school population (SACIE, 2019). Though no tribally specific demographics are available, the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina has a population of approximately 70,000, and since North Carolina's Native population is approximately 100,000, it is safe to assume that the bulk of the Native youth enrolled in these schools are Lumbee, as well. Of the 18,650 American Indian students, 15,199 (81.5%) attend schools in counties that receive funding through the Title VI

Indian Education Act (IEA) of 1972 (SACIE, 2019). The 18 school districts receiving this funding include the counties focused on in this study: Mecklenburg, Guilford, and Wake. Within the state, American Indian youth have a lower graduation rate (84.3%) and higher dropout rate (2.83%) than their white counterparts (89.5% & 1.73%, respectively) (SACIE, 2019).

Curriculum

These issues are compounded, created and intensified by American public-school standards that are non-inclusive of Indigenous history and culture, or that allow such knowledges to be corrupted (Shear et al., 2015; Stanton, 2014). In a study of five popular history books, the sections on American Indians nearly always ignored their pre-colonial experiences; instead, their stories were told from the perspective of colonizers, leaving students with whitewashed versions of Native narratives (Stanton, 2014). Other textbooks display similar tropes, with American Indians categorized as lazy, drunken thieves (Moore & Clark, 2004). Indigenous agency is similarly excluded from the texts as Indigenous people are consistently constructed as being acted upon rather than as leaders, initiators, or even narrators of their own stories (Stanton, 2014). Native histories and peoples are subsequently reduced to small paragraphs, misrepresentations, and oversimplifications.

Particularly evident in American textbooks is the concept of 'Manifest Destiny' which purports that American expansionism, and therefore tribal land reduction, was/is inevitable (Moore & Clark, 2004; Shear et al., 2015). Other texts romanticize colonization and westward expansion, while excluding the persistent stories of trauma, murder, enslavement, and rape that American Indian people endured at the hands of white settlers (Trafzer & Lorimer, 2014). The genocide of American Indians is also noticeably mum in these works (Trafzer & Lorimer, 2014).

In an analysis of Scholastic Book Club offerings for grades K-6, Natives are often depicted as violent, wild and barbaric (Chaudhri & Schau, 2016). The characters wear clothing that conform to stereotypes rather than depicting authentic American Indian clothing, and wore feathers, braids and fringe; in addition, throughout many of the texts, American Indian people are often compared to or placed in juxtaposition to animals, further bolstering the idea of the Native as savage or primitive (Chaudhri & Schau, 2016). Other elementary school texts present rudimentary and simplistic depictions of American Indian people (Sanchez, 2001) which can bar students from viewing tribes and tribal members with any level of complexity; Native people subsequently become static in the minds of American students. Pewewardy (2004) notes, "these make-believe Indians are prohibited from changing over time to be like real people" (p.182).

A common theme of the books, both textbooks and children's books, is the erasure of American Indians from modern contexts (Chandler, 2010; Rains, 2006; Shear et al., 2015). Native people are presented as people of the past, rooted in our Nation's distant history, but irrevocably and inalterably severed from our present (Chandler, 2010). Shear et al. (2015) found that of the Indigenous content taught in U.S schools, on average only 13% relates to history, culture or issues post-1900s; 87% of standards taught focus on American Indians in a pre-1900s context. North Carolina differs from other states in that it offers an Indigenous history course as an elective in high schools; all high schools do not provide this course (Shear et al., 2015). Additionally, North Carolina only provides one K-6 American Indian related history standard. Much of the content of these standards frames American Indians within an "insider–outsider dichotomy... rather than an Indigenous-centered context and timeline, further calling into question whether Indigenous peoples are insiders or outsiders to the American experience" (p.84).

Within North Carolina specifically, the curriculum is particularly problematized; in a review of the experiences of North Carolina American Indian urban public school students, both current and former, students cited experiencing erasure, racism, lack of representation and tokenism (Hunt et al., 2020). One former student noted:

> in our history books, they leave us in the 1800's and they don't talk about us today…I often wondered, living where I lived, being Lumbee, and if I didn't know the history of my people and if I just went by what my schools taught me, I wonder where my level of education would it be when it comes to my own people (Hunt et al., 2020, p.14).

Though the North Carolina Board of Education has mandated that North Carolina teachers teach content on American Indian life before and after European invasion, teachers typically conform with the latter standard by teaching about the Trail of Tears, which occurred in 1831 (Whisnant, 2019). As a result, this is often the most modern content related to American Indian life provided in North Carolina's classrooms, and students are left with a picture of the American Indian as removed, distant, or nonexistent.

Such exclusions and framings of Indigenous people align with what Tuck and Yang (2012) refer to as 'settler moves to innocence.' These moves are predicated upon reconciling settlers' history of violence against Indigenous peoples, and the benefits therein, with their present realities. Absolution is achieved through various measures that maintain settler dominance while ignoring how violently that dominance was secured (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Settler moves to innocence absolve guilt without requiring recompense, or relinquishing any land, power or privilege (Tuck & Yang, 2012). One particular modus operandi of settler moves to innocence is the asterisking of Native people; Tuck and Yang (2012) note:

> Indigenous peoples are rendered visible in mainstream educational research in two main ways: as "at risk" peoples and as asterisk peoples. This...erases and then conceals the erasure of Indigenous peoples within the settler colonial nation-state and moves Indigenous nations as "populations" to the margins of public discourse (p.22).

Therefore, Indigenous people become footnotes, rather than co-creators, of the American narrative. These moves to innocence are also evidenced in the ways that textbooks utilize passive voice when describing massacres or removals of of Native people, using language like "were beaten" or "were forced", and purposely ignoring who was doing the beating or the forcing (Stanton, 2014). Similarly, these textbooks also characterize these acts of brutality not only as justified, but as rare, though actual acts of settler violence against Indians were and are persistent and frequent (Spring, 2016; Stanton, 2014).

Teachings of the genocide of Indigenous people are similarly omitted from textbooks (Trafzer & Lorimer, 2014). Many texts instead deny this genocide outright or ignore its occurrence completely, and prohibit authors from addressing it (Trafzer & Lorimer, 2014). Teachers and students alike remain unaware of the history of their own nation's founding, though being extensively educated on genocide committed by other countries (ie. Germany) of other groups (Trafzer & Lorimer).

An additional key to move to innocence made possible by the erasure of the genocide of American Indians is the concept of 'settler nativism.' In addition to the absolution of guilt, settlers are equally bent on 'playing Indian' or actually becoming Indian (Walters et al., 2019). Many settlers identify having 'Indian blood' through some distant relative, either real or imagined (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Vine Deloria Jr. (1969) refers to the claims of distant Native ancestry, typically of an Indian grandmother, as the Indian-grandmother complex, stating "do

[settlers] need some blood tie with the frontier and its dangers in order to experience what it means to be an American? Or is it an attempt to avoid facing the guilt they bear for the treatment of the Indians?" (p.4). Settler nativism, then, is an attempt to reject a settler identity by adopting a circumstantial Indigenous identity when it is of benefit, and still maintaining all of the privileges of their settler heritage and legacy (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

These moves to innocence by way of settler nativism pave the way for playing Indian in the classroom; if settlers largely believe that they are all a little bit Indian, then incorporating problematic content that encourages students to perform Indianness is rendered appropriate. Thanksgiving lessons that involve dressing as Indians remain popular in schools (Amerman, 2007; Blossom, 2018; Pewewardy, 2004). American Indian mascots remain present in schools, as well. Over 2,000 schools in the country have American Indian mascots, mascots which typically depict Natives as violent, garish, or antiquated (King, 2008; Munguia, 2014). North Carolina, 22 school districts and a total of 36 schools have American Indian mascots, including 10 elementary schools, 1 K-8 school, 1 intermediate school, 10 middle schools, and 14 high schools (SACIE, 2019). These mascot names include: The Tribe, Warriors, Lady Warriors, Braves, Indians, Redskin(s), Raiders, Red Raiders, and the Sauras (Faircloth, 2017).

Pewewardy (2004) also notes that historically, American Indian people have often existed in academic contexts that have stripped them of their culture, language, land, family and Indian identity in general (i.e. boarding schools). American Indian mascots are an extension of this lack of cultural autonomy as this imagery is the product of the white imagination, not of Natives themselves. This imagery compounds to forge an imaginary Indian who is invisible yet ever-present, noble but savage, and everyone but no one at the same time (Pewewardy, 2004).

North Carolina American Indian students are particularly ensnared in this conundrum; several students report being disbelieved when disclosing their American Indian identity to their peers or teachers, but also asked to teach their classes about American Indians and have a comprehensive knowledge of all American Indian content. One student recalled statements and questions like "well you don't look Indian or you look like a white girl, do you speak Indian? Do you live in a teepee? Do you have running water? How do you have the clothes that you have?" (Hunt et al., 2020, p.12). Others felt tokenized, with one student stating "I was most of the time the only Native, so it was a lot of ignorant questions I was supposed to know all the answers to, or it was being the token poster child;" another said "I'll never forget when I was in the fourth grade and it was Thanksgiving time lo and behold my teacher looks at me and says, 'You're Indian, get up and tell us about being Indian and Thanksgiving.' All I knew was that I was Lumbee" (p.13). Therefore, within North Carolina specifically, American Indian students are subjected to curriculum and social interactions that are inherently counterintuitive; they are simultaneously subjected to contexts that belie their Indigeneity while also expected to be experts at very young ages on said Indigeneity.

This harm done by schools and curricula to Native students is not ahistorical. Indigenous boarding schools and current public-school systems do not only overlap chronologically, but in fundamentals and principles. Modern day schooling of Native students, and schooling in general, is rooted in Whiteness and Christianity, and is culturally relevant only for those dually identified (Grande, 2004; Stanton & Morrison, 2018). Research shows that US curriculum often supports and standardizes settler–colonial narratives over curriculum that advances multiculturalism and social justice (Stanton & Morrison, 2018). In his song "BRACKETS," rapper J.Cole (2018) notes this phenomena in the lyrics:

And the curriculum be tricking them, them dollars I spend

Got us learning about the heroes with the whitest of skin

One thing about the men that's controlling the pen

That write history, they always seem to white-out they sins

Grande (2004) explores similar concepts and discusses the education system's commitment to what is both mainstream and White, or "Whitestream." Indigenous knowledge is constructed as deviant, illegitimate and primeval and whiteness as eternally victorious, good and right (Cole, 2018; Grande, 2003). Without a teacher equipped to critically and responsibly teach the truth, many students, Native and non-Native, will be subjected to content that is inherently anti-Indigenous and unequivocally white.

Whiteness in all arenas, but particularly within schools is "a set of normative cultural practices...visible most clearly to those it definitely excludes and to those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it" (Frankenberg, 1994, p.228-229). Though elusive to white teachers and students, whiteness is not abstract to students of color, particularly as they find themselves negotiating their own identities, actions, and feelings in relation to it (Nayak, 1997). Students of color are left feeling otherized, fetishized or demonized, and though not experiencing regular moments of extreme racism, are left encumbered instead by daily, persistent and more subtle forms of racism (Nayak, 1997).

Since Whiteness is often unacknowledged or undefined by white teachers, race and racism are similarly shunned topics in class discussion (Castagno, 2008). Colormuteness is instead the unnamed doctrine, which involves the silencing of race-related words in public discourse (Pollock, 2001). Occasionally, teachers also ignore or sanction misusing or stereotyping groups based on race or nationality; Castagno (2008) observed teachers' laughing or

remaining silent when students engaged in racist discussions of Indigenous people. In this instance, silence is action that serves to maintain white supremacy and dominance in the classroom, while perpetuating the stereotypes of Indigenous people that are necessary for the former to exist (Castagno, 2008).

Teachers, Teacher Preparation Programs and Internal Bias

Teacher complicity in Whitestream curricula involves the adoption of a 'we vs. they' stance in teaching Indigenous students (Pewewardy, 1998). This results in teaching that is contradistinct to traditional Indigenous schooling's emphasis on community and relationality, opting instead for an arms-length approach (Juneau, 2001; Reyhner, 2006; Yeboah, 2005). Monocultural worldviews, rather than multicultural ones, are the primary drivers of teaching and subsequent interactions with Native students (Pewewardy, 1998). Teachers often express that teaching practices rooted in Whiteness and Eurocentricity are "all they know, want to know, or feel comfortable knowing," regardless of the discomfort this causes their non-white students (Higgins et al., 2013, p.251). Teachers shield themselves in 'colonial cloaks' that allow them to ignore uncomfortable truths that might inflame white guilt or reveal them as settlers on stolen land (Higgins et al., 2003; Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2005).

Additionally, most teachers are educated in schools that perpetuate the myth of the American Indian as savage or extinct, and subsequently pass this miseducation onto their students (Pewewardy, 1998). They are often influenced by the media's stereotypical representations of Indigenous people and by their own "personal biographies" of Indigeneity and also incorporate these tropes into their classrooms (Grant, 2003; Pewewardy, 1998; Shear et al., 2015). This is seen when teachers ask Native students for their blood quantum, refer to Native people only in the past tense, and adopt a pan-Indian view of Native people rather than

acknowledging the cultural, social and political distinctiveness of different tribes (Pewewardy, 1998). Other errors include teaching the false Columbus-discovered-America narrative and mistelling the story of Thanksgiving in favor of more palatable, yet irrevocably false, versions (Pewewardy, 1998). Many teachers have committed these offenses and Native students are forced to separate fact from fiction on their own. One Native North Carolinian student recalls dressing up as an Indian during Thanksgiving and "learning that the Indians and Pilgrims were allies who shared knowledge and thrived together" (Whisnant, 2019). Therefore, many teachers in North Carolina not only continue the practice of performing Indigeneity in the classroom, but provide falsified narratives of Indigenous-settler relations that glorify an otherwise predatory and genocidal relationship.

Teacher education programs often do little to disrupt teachers' preconceived notions about Indigenous people, as these programs are often created by and for white teachers (Sleeter & Milner, 2011). Subsequently, teacher experiences within the program are defined by Whiteness, and though white preservice teachers are often unaware of this, non-white teachers exist in a constant state of conforming to these unspoken norms (Brown, 2014; Marom, 2019). Whiteness in teacher prep programs also functions to deincentivize and outright punish deviants within their systems, making it impossible to either prevent or remedy the racism that is so pervasive throughout (Henry et al., 2017).

Similarly, when professors in these programs did provide Indigenous texts or content for their students to digest, professors often proved unable to critically and thoroughly engage with the texts (Stanton & Morrison, 2018). Indigenous content was constructed as 'additional' or 'supplemental' but rarely as integral and foundational to teacher education (Stanton & Morrison,

2018). Convertino (2016) refers to such marginalizations as "ethnic tidbits" introduced as footnotes within the programs, rather than as complex content requiring scaffolding.

Even teacher programs marketed as prioritizing Indigenous ways of knowing and being are also often rooted in colonial forces (Castagno, 2012; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). Since these programs often avoid disrupting anti-Indian sentiment, subsequent teachers' expectations of Indigenous students are often shaped around preconceived, unchecked stereotypes (Higgins et al., 2015). Gebhard (2015) states that in her work with non-Native teachers there is often a greater desire "to make dream catchers and tuna can drums, while refusing to recognize how Indigenous people are positioned as the racial other" (p.768). When teachers do teach Indigenous culture, it is often surface-level or performative, like the aforementioned activities, rather than impactful (Schick, 2014). Alternatively, when teachers, particularly Indigenous teachers, teach true Indigenous history, they are often punished for it; Marom (2019) notes that one such teacher taught about the history of Indigenous boarding schools and was chastised by her superior who stated "You think you can just come in here and teach Native things?...Why are you teaching this?" Indigenous history is subsequently made taboo in favor of narratives that are more pleasing to white audiences. Other teachers cite the necessity of going beyond the text, which is often problematic, and seeking out Indigenous people, tribes, and organizations to partner with that challenges the stereotypical narratives in text (Stanton & Morrison, 2018).

Australia and Canada have made systematic efforts toward cultural responsiveness for their Indigenous populations. Canada allocates additional funding to First Nations students, recognizing its historical role in their marginalization, and being purposeful in bridging the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Additionally, teachers who are knowledgeable about First Nations people and issues are given priority in hiring and First Nations teachers are

recruited via the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) (Darling-Hammond, 2017). ATEP also functions to increase the academic potential of its students and to increase parental involvement. Australia has similar methods; scholarships are provided specifically for Indigenous students to recruit them to teacher prep programs (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

America, however, does not have such uniform policies in supporting Native students or teachers since education is primarily orchestrated and designed at the state level (Stanton & Morrison, 2018). Some states have taken a vested interest in its Native population, including Montana in the creation of its Indian Education for All (IEFA) legislation (Carjuzaa et al, 2010). The program emphasizes aligning state standards with Indigenous knowledge and history; lesson plans are collaboratively constructed by both the State Office of Public Instruction and tribal members and instructors (Carjuzaa et al, 2010). As a result, curriculum is culturally responsive to the state's Native students and the histories of all tribes in the state is reflected in course content (Carjuzaa et al., 2010). Though the introduction of more Indigenous content in the classroom does provide greater opportunities for anti-Indigenous sentiment, when teachers are properly trained to engage with and disseminate this content, there is greater room for education than there is for ignorance (Stanton & Morrision, 2018). Indigenous content is not siloed, static or programmatic, but rather, comprehensively and thoroughly integrated into courses by capable teachers.

In North Carolina specifically, in interviews by Raleigh, NC newspaper *The News & Record*, one teacher expressed shock that her students did not know that Native American people still existed, but counterintuitively indicated that her lessons on Native people focus solely on artifacts from civilizations of the 'past' (Whisnant, 2019). Therefore, even the teachers who are the most well-meaning can often be the primary source by which stereotypes about American

Indian people are derived. Additionally, though Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is home to the state's largest urban American Indian population and receives Title VI funds via the Indian Education Act (IEA), the school system's annual Equity Report references American Indian children only four times in the 56-page report, while mentioning white students 78 times, Black students 77 times, and Hispanic students 62 times. The equity report details the socioeconomic, academic, and racial barriers to success for Black and Hispanic students, erasing Indigenous students completely, and noting, "in acknowledgement that the majority of CMS students are black, white, or Hispanic, only these three largest racial subgroups (by proportion of total students district-wide) are included in subsequent figures" (CMS, 2019, p.16). Therefore, though Indigenous students maintain a larger presence in this school system than in any other urban NC system, their data is completely erased. This sends a message to teachers, particularly those who are interested in culturally responsive teaching and understanding the barriers their marginalized students face, that not only do Indigenous students not exist, but they do not matter. Therefore, educators and policy makers must unite in recognizing Indigenous students' precarious educational contexts; not only is the content problematized, but their own data is asterisked away and footnoted to death. Both realities must be addressed in solving the systemic problems American Indian students face.

In evaluating classroom content, Pewewardy (1998) asks the following questions:

1. Is the American Indian culture evaluated from the perspective of Indian values and attitudes rather than those of another culture?
2. Does the literature discuss the contributions of American Indians to Western civilization?
3. Does the author recognize the diversity among tribes, cultures, and lifestyles?
4. Are Indians portrayed accurately as individuals and not groups?

5. Does the literature recognize the American Indian as an enduring race, not a vanishing or assimilated people?
6. Are tribal languages and dialects respectfully portrayed?
7. Does the literature give a realistic description of Indian life?
8. Does the literature portray realistic roles for American Indian women? (Pewewardy, 1998, p.73)

With these questions, Pewewardy (1998) provides a framework for educators desiring to create culturally responsive content. These questions help educators move beyond what Pewewardy (1998) refers to as 'fluff,' which is this constant enumeration of the problems plaguing Native education and into 'feathers,' which are the tangible, culturally relevant solutions to these problems.

Research shows that teachers who know Indigenous youth, care for them, know about their culture, speak like them, and are engaged in tribal communities provide an education that is restorative (Castagno, 2012; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty et al., 1997; Reyhner, 1992; Yazzie, 1999). Teachers' exposure to these negative images and stereotypes play a major role in the cultural sensitivity of their work. Since history books and mascots add fuel, the fire continues. American Indian people are not the only ones impacted by this system, but a disservice is done to U.S. society as a collective (Carjuzaa et al., 2010). The misrepresentation and erasure of American Indian people from history hurts us all and discredits the quality of our education (Carjuzaa et al., 2010). All students need and deserve positive lessons focused on modern-day American Indian people, else they are prone to developing racist, anti-Indian stereotypes (Haukoos and Beauvais, 1996).

Theoretical Framework

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribCrit) was developed by Lumbee scholar Bryan Brayboy as an extension of Critical Race Theory for Indigenous peoples. This formative theory advocates for educational revisions and merges critical race theory with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Though Critical Race Theory was monumental in outlining the ways race and power shapes society, TribCrit adds components of sovereignty and self-determination critical for Indigenous peoples' futurity. Though Indigenous students and their histories and lived realities are deprioritized, erased, and stereotyped in schools, TribCrit calls for a centering of these stories by way of storytelling. Tenets of the theory include the following:

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

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 (Brayboy, 2005; p. 429-430).

Tribal Critical Race Theory informs this research by underscoring the critical role colonization continues to play in shaping American schools. Teachers and students are not immune to this but are directly impacted. Rather than understanding colonization as an event, it must instead be understood as a structure, as something intrinsically tethered to the underpinnings of the country, and thus, our education system (Wolfe, 1999; Brayboy, 2005).

TribCrit contends that our educational system is designed to assimilate Indigenous children; this is not an ahistorical conjecture, but is rooted in the knowledge of centuries-long attempts at subjugating Indigenous students via Indian boarding schools and other assimilationist measures (Brayboy, 2004; Caruthers, 2007; Gram, 2016; Lomawaima, 1993; Zalcman, 2016). Both this work and TribCrit exist as a countermeasure to these practices and seeks a restorative approach to education that centers Indigenous students and their lived realities.

TribCrit's emphasis on stories as legitimate sources of theory and data is also critical. In her work on Indigenous women, Sarah Deer (2015) remarks "there is a kind of knowledge we gain from years of careful study" and "a kind of knowledge we gain from experiencing something, a visceral knowledge that can invoke the physical senses and the genius of memory," (p.14) stating that an understanding of the local realities of Indigenous people are particularly critical. These realities are too often overlooked, but in this work, are centric.

Brayboy's (2005) emphasis on knowledge, power and culture via Indigenous lenses is also prioritized in my work; though Native people have been largely constructed in textbooks in

ways that mirror white understandings of Indigenous identity (Higgins et al., 2013), this work provides a space for Indigenous students to name and claim themselves separately from the white gaze. TribCrit's also allows for difference amongst Native tribes and nations, disallowing pan-Indianism while also recognizing the similar ties that bind us together.

Summary

All students are affected when the curriculum is unrepresentative and exclusionary (Carjuzaa et al., 2010). This research aims at providing a more culturally responsive and culturally restorative model of understanding Indigenous students and those who teach them. Though the boarding schools are no more, the spirit of them is alive and well in our schools. American Indian students still face a curriculum that prioritizes Whiteness while delegitimizing Indianness. American Indian youth continue to endure an education that seeks to Anglicize them through whitewashed curricula that either ignores or erases Native experiences, histories and cultures (Grande, 2004). However, the rate of American Indian college graduates continues to rise as they traverse the unforgiving terrains that academia continues to construct for them (Faircloth, 2018). This work, therefore, is to make smooth these paths that have long led Native youth down roads oppositional to their cultural identity; we can begin this process first by simply telling true histories in the classroom, as this is the first step towards healing. Battiste (2004) states that decolonization is both "deconstruction and reconstruction" (p.10); in order to construct a better educational system, it must first be deconstructed. Though education has been a historically assimilatory process, the harm must end so that Indigenous children might not be forced to continue to suffer in learning.

In conjunction with decolonizing content and engaging in truth-telling, educators must also work to decolonize pedagogy and their own relation to the land. Educators must learn about

the history and issues of Native people in their own school district, town and state. They must also understand their own relation to the soil they occupy and ask themselves difficult questions like "when did my ancestors come here?", "whose land did they occupy when they came?", and "whose land do I occupy now?" When teachers readily engage with these difficult questions and histories, then perhaps a more just educational system will emerge.

Additionally, though this review summarizes literature related to teachers and Indigenous content in the classroom, or the lack thereof, there is little to no research on the experiences of Indigenous students in the classrooms, particularly in the South and specifically in North Carolina. We know that the texts are problematic, that they stereotype and erase Indigenous people, but we do not know how current students internalize these messages nor what they mean to them. We do not know the ramifications of these anti-Indigenous curriculas on their very Indigenous lives. We also know that teachers teach what they know and what they were taught, which is often heavily stereotypical, but we do not know the impacts of this, nor the dissonance it might create in teachers who are also exposed to the truth of American history and Indigenous realities. This work seeks to understand the impacts and ramifications of such 'learning' and teaching on both groups.

North Carolina has a rich Indigenous history and living Indigenous presence that are not currently being narrated in the classroom. Thus, I have chosen the state as my research site. North Carolina is home to eight tribal communities and four urban Indian organizations, and urban Indigenous populations continue to grow. With these rich histories and realities, and these burgeoning urban Indian populations, North Carolina remains forever indebted to its original inhabitants, particularly as they maintain residence on their ancestral homelands despite the state's many attempts at removal. Their stories deserve thorough telling.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Problem Statement

Though Indigenous students occupy precarious spaces within K-12 schools, and though their identities are often unsupported and invisibilized in curricula, they have powerful stories to tell. Their stories are not ones of only pain but of power, as well. The multitude of assaults on Indigenous history, identity and culture that students often stomach during their school years and beyond create powerful narratives of resilience and resistance that demand telling. This chapter outlines the methodology used to tell the duality of these stories, and the ways that students are repeatedly and continuously subjected to anti-Indigenous content in the classroom while managing to survive through these contexts. This chapter contains the following information: research questions, research design, data collection, data analysis, population description, positionality, and limitations and delimitations.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this work are:

1. What have Native students and non-Native teachers learned and internalized about American Indian history, culture, and life via present/past curriculum?
2. How are students' and teachers' conceptions of American Indian people stereotyped? How does the invisibility of Native narratives in the classroom impact students and teachers?
3. In what ways do students resist these stereotyped narratives? In what ways do teachers resist?

Research Design - Indigenous Research Methodology

Vine Deloria, a Lakota scholar, notes that "academia, and its by-products continue to be more irrelevant to the needs of people" (Deloria, 1969, p.93). Indigenous people in particular have often been victims of research that is at best asinine and at worst predatory. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* discusses this predation at length; she notes that the word 'research' is a dirty word for indigenous people across the world and that "it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful" (p.1).

Amongst Lumbee people specifically, research has been catastrophic. In the early 1900s, Harvard anthropologist Carl Seltzer began a series of 'tests' to determine the degree of Indian blood possessed by the Lumbee people. These tests included: phrenology, a pencil test in which a pencil would be placed in the hair of a Lumbee person, and if it stayed in the hair after mild to vigorous shaking of the head, then that person was declared non-Indian, and a scratch test where Lumbee people were asked to remove their shirt, upon which their chests would be scratched, and if the mark was red, they were non-Indian (Lowery, 2018). Of the hundreds tested, only 22 were determined to possess "half or more Indian blood" though some of the 22 were full siblings of those determined non-Indian. Though these tests have since been denounced as pseudoscientific, their results still loom as the Lumbee were thereafter declared ineligible to receive full federal recognition by the federal government, though the 22 were allowed to pursue individual recognition (Lowery, 2018). Therefore, Indigenous people have been scorned by researchers in ways that make tenuous their sovereignty. They have been used as rungs in the ladder towards tenure by many academics, having gifted themselves, their stories, and their bodies only to receive trauma in return (Mihesuah, 2000).

This work is informed by Indigenous research methodology, which exists outside the parameters of these Eurocentric research methods that extract life and strength from Native people. Indigenous research methodologies center Native people and their unique ways of knowing and being (Lambert, 2014). TribCrit as well as Critical Race Theory similarly are similarly compelled by the strength of storytelling and counterstorytelling (Brayboy, 2004; Iverson, 2007; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This work centers the stories of students who live in contradistinction to much of the content delivered in their classroom, content which "conveys a whitewashed version that appears to be the only truth" (Iverson, 2007, 604).

Lumbee scholar Bryan Brayboy, in addition to crafting TribCrit, has also developed the four P's of Indigenous research methodology, which include *personal, presence, place* and *positionality* (Brayboy, 2018). These methodologies are *personal* to Indigenous scholars and reject the contention that this closeness is "bias, and thus outside methodology" (Kovach, 2010). Similarly, though Western methodologies often advocate for a separation of the researcher from the researched, Indigenous *presence* is necessary in this work. This operates out of the idea that the researcher should bring their full selves to their work and avoid the distancing we have been falsely conditioned to believe is necessary. Additionally, Indigenous *presence* directly rejects the narratives of invisibility and erasure forced onto Indigenous people in American society. *Place* is also critical to this work as Indigenous people hold special ties to land and community that inform our research, whether our work is in or outside our tribal communities. *Positionality* indicates our own unique position to the research, including what we do and how, why and for whom.

Indigenous research methodologies also focus on shifting the perception within Indigenous communities of research being "something done only by white researchers to

indigenous peoples" (Smith, 1999, p.122). For elders, seeing Indigenous researchers engage in restorative research practices can offer healing; for youth, it can empower them to interrogate the spaces they inhabit in similar ways and inspire them to conduct their own research, as well. Additionally, within this framework, consent is preeminent. It is a "dynamic relationship rather than a static decision" and it is a process that is in constant flux, negotiation, and reaffirmation (Smith, 1999, p.137). Since this project focuses heavily on the stories and experiences of minors, consent is particularly critical.

This work also centers the stories of non-Native social studies/history teachers in urban areas and the content that they learned when they were students, as well as what they teach currently related to American Indian history and culture. These teachers have the power to create classrooms that are culturally attuned to their Indigenous students or to ignore or problematize these students' cultures completely. To improve Indigenous students' school climates, work with teachers is critical.

Finally, as noted by Vine Delora, research has become increasingly disjointed and immaterial to the communities it purports to serve. Indigenous research methodology, however, is in part predicated on reciprocity; we give to our participants and co-researchers just as they give of themselves. Therefore, both Indigenous students and teachers were given $50 gift cards. Indigenous students were also armed with tools to combat the Indigenous erasure and microaggressions they experience in their schools; these skills will become ever more necessary to them as they enter adulthood. Teachers will be provided a free training to help them unlearn the stereotypes about Indigenous people that have been forced upon us all, as well as how to comprehensively incorporate Indigenous history, culture, and modernity into their classrooms in meaningful ways.

Reciprocity is critical to Indigenous research methodology because it honors Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Western research is predicated on taking, but Indigenous people acknowledge the cyclical ways of life, connection, and research; there can be no take without a give. Therefore, it is critical for researchers practicing Indigenous research methodology to give to their participants/co-collaborators just as they expect to be given to; this work is founded upon this principle.

Data Collection

Data was be collected via two methods: conversations and collection of Indigenous-related schoolwork. These methods combined provide a more holistic view of the classroom experience. Students or teachers may, for example, report believing that the content in their classroom related to American Indian history is appropriate; however, they may be unaware of the subliminal messages the content delivers. Therefore, review of classroom content provides for a more objective review of the classroom experience, while the conversations provide the subjectivity that is also necessary for this work. Data was collected throughout the Fall of 2020, particularly in September and October. Indigenous-related schoolwork/lesson plans were collected from most teachers before their conversations/interviews were held, as well as during and after the conversations. Content from students was collected during the semester, both before and after conversations took place.

Conversations/Visiting

In many Indigenous communities in the Southeast, including my own, ‘visiting’ is a critical element to maintaining communal ties (Hunt et al., 2020). Indigenous elders often use this term to refer to time spent spending time with others; this can include friends or family, but it typically pertains to those outside of your immediate family. In my own community, ‘visiting’

was something I did with my grandmother; on Saturday mornings, or sometimes after church on Sunday, we would travel to 'visit' with one of her friends or sisters. Oftentimes, my grandmother might bring some gift, maybe a cake or some other trinket she picked up from town; she often left with something in return, as well. Once we arrived, they would talk about everything - church, politics, hair, fashion, family, and more. I was lucky enough to be privy to these special conversations. Indigenous research methodology fits well with 'visiting' as it prioritizes rapport and communality, both of which are critical to have the sensitive conversations necessary to this research. Therefore, this work does not employ 'interviews,' but instead centers around 'conversations' occurring while visiting. Before diving into the intensity of these conversations, it is necessary to spend some time getting to know the student or teacher.

The researcher and co-collaborators worked to co-construct questions during the conversation process; therefore, each interview consist of similar questions, with a few added in based on the trajectory of the conversation. The questions below were used as a general guide for students and teachers, but both were encouraged to also ask any questions they had.

Table 1

Questions for Participants

Questions for AI Students	**Questions for Teachers**
What tribe are you from?	How long have you been teaching? What subject(s) do you teach?
How long have you lived in Charlotte/Raleigh/Greensboro?	How long have you lived in Charlotte/Raleigh/Greensboro?
Have you ever had an American Indian teacher?	Have you ever had an American Indian teacher?

Have you ever had another American Indian student in any of your classes?	Have you ever taught an American Indian student?
What do you know about American Indians? Who taught you this?	What did you learn about American Indians growing up? Or in college? Who taught you this?
What do you know about American Indians in North Carolina?	What do you know about American Indians in North Carolina?
Have you learned about American Indians this year in school? If so, what?	What have you taught regarding American Indian people and history this year?
What have you learned about American Indians in past school years?	What have you taught in the past?
What have you learned specifically about your tribe in school?	What have you taught about tribes local to your school?
Do you believe American Indian people or history is stereotyped in the classroom?	Do you believe American Indian people or history is stereotyped in the classroom?
Have you ever spoken out in class or at school about something you thought was wrong or inaccurate?	Have you ever challenged the curriculum in anyway? Have you challenge American Indian content in any way?
What have you learned about Native people living today?	What have you taught about Native people living today?
Would you like to learn more about American Indian people in school? What would you like to learn?	Would you like to incorporate more American Indian content in your courses? What would you like to incorporate?
Are you the only Native person in your school? Neighborhood? What is that like?	What is it like to teach Native history? Does it feel uncomfortable?

These conversations lasted approximately one hour. Conversations were recorded in entirety using a voice recorder and then transcribed and coded for themes. Parental consent was obtained verbally as well as verbal consent from the minor to participate in the conversations; teachers also provided verbal consent. Participants could leave the study at any time or decline to answer

any questions asked during the conversations. Students and teachers were compensated with a gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation. At a later date, teachers will also be provided with a free training on how to better incorporate Indigenous knowledge in the classroom. Students were provided with tips on how to combat microaggressions at school, resources for connecting with other American Indian students or programs, as well as free review of college application essays for the upperclassmen.

Demographic information including gender, tribal affiliation, race, age, and grade level was collected, but name, email or any other personal identifiers were not; in order to preserve students' anonymity, pseudonyms were used. No names of schools/institutions were listed in any transcripts or writeups. Any names of people or places were redacted during the transcription process. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and then the recordings were deleted. Research data is stored in a password-protected Google Drive folder that only I have access to.

Indigenous-Related Schoolwork

In addition to conversations, students and teachers were asked to provide any Indigenous-related schoolwork that they received/provided during the study process or have received/provided in past school years. Two students (28.6%) provided coursework related to Indigenous peoples, and six teachers (85.7%). Since this study took place in the Fall, and since Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day, Native American Heritage Month, and Thanksgiving occur during this time, American Indian content is often more prevalent. Schools often use these times to deliver lessons on American Indians which can be extremely problematic. Students and teachers were asked to provide any worksheets, lesson plans, PowerPoints, readings, or assignments related to American Indians during this time. Any school names, teacher names, or other identifiers were redacted in this work as to not compromise anonymity. The addition of

this data collection component ensures that engagement with participants is not reduced to a one-time conversation, but is more dynamic, complex, and continuous process throughout the course of the semester.

Data Analysis

After the conversations with students and teachers were complete, audio recordings were transcribed in entirety. Transcripts were then coded for themes which were used to construct overall meaning. Teacher data and student data were analyzed separately and have separate sets of themes. The themes from the student data are 1) problematic curriculum and classroom experiences, 2) interpersonal anti-Indigenousness and isolation, 3) resistance, responsibility, and relationality, and 4) imagining a pro-Indigenous classroom. The themes from the teacher data are 1) learning and unlearning problematic Indigenous content, 2) teaching and uncovering problematic Indigenous content, 3) Whiteness in teaching, and 4) resisting and deconstructing problematic curriculum.

The Indigenous-related coursework was also be examined in the context of these themes. I assessed the content based on the following questions: *Does this content portray Native people as a people of the past? Does it convey stereotypes? Does it showcase Indigenous people in modern contexts? Is the information accurate? Does the content require students to perform Indigeneity in some way (i.e. dressing up as Indians, making paper headdresses, etc.)*? This content was assessed in the context of the teacher or student who provided the information and then compared with other student/teacher submissions. This content was also compared with content from similar grade levels, with middle school (6-8) and high school (9-12) content being separate categorizations. This analysis also relied on Pewewardy's (1998) critical questions in examining Indigenous-related classroom content, including:

- Is the American Indian culture evaluated from the perspective of Indian values and attitudes rather than those of another culture?
- Are Indians portrayed accurately as individuals and not groups?
- Does the literature recognize the American Indian as an enduring race, not a vanishing or assimilated people? (Pewewardy, 1998, p.73).

Additionally, all data was analyzed from the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribCrit) (Brayboy, 2005). TribCrit examines the ways in which colonization is entrenched in society and is activated in ways that usurp Indigenous sovereignty and visibility (Brayboy, 2005). Schools are sites of colonial power at work and were created with colonial interests in mind; therefore, Indigenous peoples and histories are erased or bastardized in American classrooms. Data from this study was analyzed via this lens.

Sites of Research

Participants were recruited from urban areas due to the social, curricular, and geographical distance American Indian youth often experience in urban schools; this distance is different from Native students who live in their tribal communities. Though these students are, too, exposed to problematic content, they also have the insulation of their communities to combat the stereotypes presented in the classroom. Even if they are not shown depictions of Native people living in modernity, they see it in their schools, homes, neighborhoods, and churches; urban American Indian students often have no such buffer.

These conversations were held online; students were from various urban counties across the state of North Carolina, including but not limited to Mecklenburg, Guilford, and Wake counties; the researcher and co-researchers live in these counties. Mecklenburg County has the highest population of all counties in North Carolina, with 1,093,901 residents (U.S. Census

Mecklenburg, 2018). Approximately 0.8% of the population is American Indian, while 57.8% is white, 32.8% is Black, 13.3% is Hispanic/Latino, and 6.1% is Asian. There are 549 (.4%) American Indian students enrolled in Mecklenburg County schools of a total student population of 136,031 (SACIE, 2019). Major industries in the area are banks, colleges, and healthcare systems. Mecklenburg County is the ancestral homeland of the Catawba and Sugaree people (Native Land, n.d.).

Guilford County is home to 533,670 people (U.S. Census Guilford, 2018). Approximately 0.7% of the population is American Indian, while 59.6% is white, 34.8% is Black, 8.1% is Hispanic/Latino and 5.2% is Asian. There are 269 (.4%) American Indian students enrolled in Guilford County schools of a total student population of 66,613 (SACIE, 2019). Major employers include colleges, healthcare systems, and textile and furniture industries. Guilford County is the ancestral homeland of the Eno, Sappony, Catawba, and Shakori people (Native Land, n.d.).

Wake County is home to 1,092,305 people (U.S. Census Wake, 2018). Approximately 0.8% of the population is American Indian, while 68.1% is white, 21.1% is Black, 10.3% is Hispanic/Latino, and 7.5% is Asian. There are 393 (.26%) American Indian students enrolled in Wake County schools of a total student population of 148,147 (SACIE, 2019). Major employers include colleges, science and technology firms, and healthcare. Wake County is the ancestral homeland of the Tuscarora people (Native Land, n.d.).

Population/Sample Description

American Indian Students

American Indians are a relatively young population with 32% of all Native people in the U.S. being under the age of 18, compared to 24% of the general U.S population (NCAI, n.d.).

There are 18,650 American Indian youth enrolled in North Carolina's public schools, comprising 1% of the school population (SACIE, 2019). Though no tribally specific demographics are available, since the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina is the largest tribe east of the Mississippi River and has a population of approximately 70,000, and since North Carolina's Native population is approximately 100,000, it is safe to assume that many Native youth enrolled in these schools are Lumbee.

American Indian students were primarily recruited via outreach to parents through word of mouth, social media, and the urban Indian organizations; I currently serve on the board of the Metrolina Native American Association and used my connections there as well as throughout other areas of the state to recruit student participants. Therefore, this sample was obtained through convenience sampling. I recruited seven American Indian students enrolled in following the tribes: Lumbee, Waccamaw Siouan, and Chickahominy. Five of the students were Lumbee, one was Lumbee and Chickahominy, and one was Lumbee and Waccamaw Siouan. Students ranged in age from 12-16, with the average age being 14.1. Student grade levels ranged from 6th – 11th, with one student in 6th, one in 7th, two in 9th, one in 10th, and two in the 11th. There were four female students and three male students. Students were from Raleigh (n=4), Burlington (n=1), Hillsborough, (n=1), and Louisburg (n=1), all cities in or around urban centers in North Carolina.

Table 2

Native Student Participants

Pseudonym	**Grade**	**Age**	**Gender**	**Tribe**	**City**
Beth	11th	16	Female	Lumbee & Waccamaw Siouan	Raleigh
Brandon	9th	14	Male	Lumbee & Chickahominy	Burlington

Courtney	6th	12	Female	Lumbee	Hillsborough
Jeremy	7th	12	Male	Lumbee	Raleigh
Jordan	10th	15	Female	Lumbee	Louisburg
Lena	11th	16	Female	Lumbee	Raleigh
Nick	9th	14	Male	Lumbee	Raleigh

Non-Native Social Studies Teachers

There are approximately 100,000 teachers in North Carolina, 80% of whom are white, though the student population is less than 50% white (Hinchcliffe, 2019). Additionally, teachers in urban schools often face additional pressures and challenges including crowded classrooms and high teacher attrition rates (Day & Hong, 2016). This population was also recruited using intentional sampling; I used a convenience sample to recruit seven social studies and history teachers teaching grades 7, 8 or 10, as these courses included standards related to US History. Non-native teachers were also recruited via word of mouth and convenience sampling. All teachers were social studies or history teachers of varying grade levels; one taught 7th, one taught 7th and 8th, three taught 8th, one taught 8th and 10th, and one taught 10th. Six teachers were female, and one was male. Two teachers were Black and five were white. They range of number of years teaching was wide, from 2-24 years, with the average number being 10.57 years. Teachers were in Durham (n=3), Charlotte (n=2), Raleigh (n=1), and Apex (n=1).

Additionally, non-Native teachers in the study operated under a different level of tension than their Native student counterparts. While Native students were not likely driven by a desire to self-preserve or sanitize their experiences, non-Native teachers were undoubtedly influenced by these desires. Native students tended to speak more freely about their experiences in the classroom, while teachers likely felt a certain pressure to market themselves as competent,

knowledgeable, good, and well-meaning. Therefore, the submission of Native-related course content by teachers was critical to address this issue.

Table 3

Non-Native Teacher Participants

Pseudonym	**Grade Level**	**Gender**	**Race**	**Location**
Angie	8th and 10th	Female	White	Raleigh
Anna	8th	Female	Black	Charlotte
Corey	8th	Male	White	Charlotte
Iva	7th	Female	White	Apex
Karen	7th and 8th	Female	White	Durham
Michelle	10th	Female	White	Durham
Tammy	8th	Female	Black	Durham

Positionality Statement

During my years in college, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral, I have unfortunately faced multiple examples of anti-Indigenous content and commentary in the classroom. I once I enrolled in a class that focused on race. I began this class with excitement because the content was aligned with my interests. This excitement was short-lived. Soon after beginning class, our professor spoke about the genocide of American Indian people, saying "there are cars named after extinct people, like the Jeep Cherokee." Shocked, I raised my hand and said that the Cherokee are not extinct and that there are hundreds of thousands alive today. I thought that perhaps someone in the class would support my statement, but instead a classmate said "barely" in response to me. How does hundreds of thousands of Cherokee people equate to "barely"?

Unfortunately, things got worse. Later in that class, the professor again spoke about Native genocide, and said "now, there are only a couple of Natives left." Instinctively, my hand shot into the air and I spoke before being called on, stating that there are many more than a couple. My professor responded with, "well, only on reservations." Rather than giving in, I told him that "eighty percent of American Indians live in urban areas, not on reservations." Instead of backing down, apologizing, or making a correction, the professor instead said "Indians? Native Americans are not from India." In that moment, my professor attempted to usurp my right to self-classify my own racial, cultural, and political identity. Adolph Dial, a Lumbee historian wrote, "My momma was Indian, my Daddy was Indian, what else would I be?"

Therefore, this research is deeply personal to me. I am not separated from it, I live it. I am unable to be unbiased, because my bias informs, strengthens, and personalizes this work. I am not in the business of doing research for research's sake, or publishing for publication's sake; instead, it is critical to me that this work is cathartic and transformative for those who elect to participate in it. Native students need an outlet to discuss the harmful classroom content they have been subjected to and non-Native teachers need the reflective time necessary to improve their Indigenous-related content. Both perspectives are vital to sparking change, the resistance and resilience of students and the reform and reflection of teachers.

Limitations

Though this work will add to the critical research needed on this topic, there are several limitations to the study, as well. The age of the student participants could be a challenge. Since they range in age from 12-18, they may not have had the time and space to critically reflect on their educational experience. They may not be at the stage in personal development where they are questioning their everyday realities. Additionally, they may not have had exposure to

American Indian history lessons from their parents, elders or Native community members; therefore, they may not know how to spot out content that is problematic or inaccurate. The sample size (n=7) might also be a challenge, as well.

Additionally, teachers may not have been completely forthright in discussing the material they teach in their classes related to American Indian people and history. They might teach very little of this content and have felt reticent to share this truthfully. Since they were in this study, they also might have been more likely to create more American Indian content than they normally would, so they have more documentation to produce. While this could impact the integrity of the study, it would theoretically benefit the students in that course as they would receive more exposure to this content.

Conclusion

Indigenous research methodology combined with tribally-specific concepts of 'visiting' were used to guide this data collection and analysis process. It is critical that methodologies that emphasize reciprocity and communality are used when working with Indigenous people since Western researchers have been historically unkind to and exploitative of them. This work goes beyond research and into practice, helping Indigenous students better navigate their way through non-Indigenous spaces and helping teachers better support these students and engage in content that is meaningful to them and necessary for all Americans to know.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Native Students

Native students documented their experiences of racism, erasure, Eurocentrism, and tokenism in the classroom, while also detailing their resilience and perseverance despite and because of these negative school experiences. From 'visiting' with these Indigenous students, four major themes arose, with several subthemes within each theme. The themes were: 1) problematic curriculum and classroom experiences, 2) interpersonal anti-Indigenousness and isolation, 3) resistance, responsibility, and relationality, and 4) imagining a pro-Indigenous classroom.

Problematic Curriculum and Classroom Experiences

Classroom Promotion of Stereotypes

Native students reported commonly experiencing promotion of stereotypes of Native people in their schools, either by their peers, their teachers, or by the curriculum. Many students indicated frustration with Native identity being boiled down to a single story or characteristic rather than acknowledging the complexity, longevity and nuance of actual Indigeneity and history. Beth stated that the overarching theme of Native identity in the classroom was of a "brainless kind of just people that were just surviving. They didn't have their own cultures or anything. They were just kinda living here." In this classroom portrayal, Native people are passive and inactive, and waiting on colonial forces to provide them with some sort of pathway towards a meaningful existence.

Similarly, Jeremy struggled with the stereotypical representations of Native people that constructed impossible standards of a singular Native phenotype. When discussing a cartoon his teacher showed in the classroom that depicted Indigenous characters, he stated:

> the animation, they show two Native Americans popping up, feathers out their head, crazy-looking, not trying to say that we're crazy,but [it was] just weird. They didn't animate it right, I guess…So whenever somebody else looks at it, they're like, 'Oh, that's what a Native American is meant to look like.' And that's another stereotype which I get incredibly annoyed at because you could look at somebody and be like, 'that's how you're supposed to look' versus this how we actually look.

Non-Native students, when only presented with this type of imagery of Native people in the classroom, find themselves ascribing to these rigid expectations and stereotypes of Native people. This imagery makes it more difficult for non-Native students to parse through fact from fiction, particularly when they meet an Indigenous person who does not mesh with what they learned in the classroom.

Similarly, another student talked about the mythological overtones of her classroom instruction on Native people, and how her teacher depicted Indigenous people from a fantastical lens. Lena stated, "…she was really talking about creation stories. And the way that they depicted it, and then the whole like smoke signals and yada yada yada. And I was like, well, we're still here. So, yeah. I'm gonna tell you that we're not a myth." Lena also states that within the classroom, beyond being mythologized, that the curriculum presents a picture of Indigenous people as deviant, stating that she was taught that "when settlers got here, we were a little bit more hostile towards them and that we essentially, in the classroom so far this year, [were] depicted as savages." Therefore, Native students are submerged in a conundrum between the reality of their lives as Indigenous people and the mythology of Indigeneity presented in the classroom, which can be both a source of cognitive dissonance and frustration.

Native Erasure

Beyond being problematized in the curriculum, other students experienced a total erasure of Native content that further alienated them from content. When asked about what he learned about Indigenous people in school, Jeremy noted "At school? No. Never. Like maybe I have, again, maybe I was too young to understand, but again, we're completely ignored. It just comes back to that. We're completely ignored." Other students discussed the brevity with which Native content was presented. Courtney stated, "I don't learn about them a lot. Like there's one unit, not even a full unit, like, Oh, we do this for a week, and next week is something else." Therefore, Indigenous content is not something taught comprehensively or thoroughly, but haphazardly, marginally, and perfunctorily. Lena again notes the mythology enshrouding Native teaching, and when asked if she ever learned about her tribe, the Lumbee Tribe, she stated, "Well, ok. The Lost Colony of Roanoke. Yeah. Usually when a teacher starts talking about the Lost Colony of Roanoke, they mentioned something about the Lumbee Tribe. That's about the bare minimum that I've ever heard of it." Therefore, when information about her tribe is presented in the classroom, it is presented from a theoretical and mythological standpoint, rather than presenting actual information about North Carolina's original inhabitants. Additionally, her tribe is only taught from the context of learning about a group of lost European settlers – therefore, her tribe only becomes relevant in proximity to whiteness.

Eurocentrism and Inaccurate Depictions of History

Like the Lena's disgruntlement with the Lost Colony story, several students felt maligned by the curriculum's presentation of Native existence only when encountering European invaders. Jordan noted, "We're only mentioned when it's time to talk about the new world. Yeah. I really don't hear about us." Other students discussed how considering history from a solely Eurocentric perspective was harmful and misleading. Beth states:

> We had a discussion in class about how everything is written and compared on the European standards. So, what they were writing, it was comparing a completely different culture to their own and was making it seem like European was superior versus the other one, when they were just different.

Students, however, are often not provided complementary Indigenous historical accounts and are left solely with white standards to parse through and internalize. Beth also notes that history is mostly "from the Europeans and the colonizers...So it has their bias in it. So, you have to be really careful of how you take what they say."

In addition to these Eurocentric narratives, Native students also find themselves being subjected to false teachings, including the Columbus-discovered-America narrative or the Thanksgiving story. The most memorable moment of all the conversations I had with students occurred with one student, Jordan, who began to cry when discussing the Thanksgiving story. She began to tell me what she learned in school, and then asked, "but that's not true, is it?" When I told her it was not, she began crying, and said "I just feel like they've been feeding me the wrong information and I don't really know about my own people because I always trust my teachers because it's a teacher, they're supposed to teach me." This student felt disenchanted by the education process, that proclaims objectivity and truth, but counterintuitively serves to spoon-fed false stories to unsuspecting students. Other students like Jeremy had similar realizations of these false teachings. He stated "whenever we go into Thanksgiving, everybody talks about Native Americans having a feast with the Pilgrims. Now I still think about that to myself. I'm like, that's not what happened. That's not how it happened." Though many Native students know that these teachings are at least partially untrue, other students are none the wiser about these histories, and will go forth both believing and unchallenging this ideation. Nick

stated that teachers and curriculum developers should not "tell people lies or they're going to remember it in their head. They're going to spread it and think it's factual."

Natives Situated in Antiquity

Another mistruth perpetuated in schools is the myth of Indigenous extinction, which is particularly evident in the ways that Native people are perpetually situated in antiquity, in a distant past intangible to and untethered from the present. Brandon notes, "It ends at reservations. And that's why I feel like kids nowadays, if they don't learn about it, can still think that all Native Americans live on reservations or something like that." With classroom teachings of Native people often ending with the Trail of Tears or similar stories of removal to reservations, many students - Native and non-Native alike - are left with a belief that all Native peoples are relegated to reservation life, despite the inaccuracy of this assumption. Nick notes similar feelings, stating:

> I think it's the way that we're taught and if we know any Native Americans, like for example, our history teacher just teaches us about Native Americans and don't really say what we do nowadays, they'll just think that they'll never see one of us, so they won't know what to do. So, just like assume that we just we're all gone and we're all extinct.

Nick recognizes that the curriculum does not showcase Native people living today and acknowledges the stereotypes of extinction this must create within his classmates. Though the curriculum presents Indigenous people as a people of the past, he experiences dissonance with these teachings and with his knowledge and experience of Native life today. However, non-Native students are not provided with complementary stories of resistance, survival, and modernity post-Trail of Tears, and subsequently leave the classroom further entrenched into the mythology of non-existence.

Lena notes similar mischaracterizations, and states that Indigenous people are not discussed in modern contexts in her classrooms "unless I'm talking to the class about it because I'm like we need to learn about this." Additionally, Lena states that she does not "believe [Native people are] represented in a way that would bring us any justice." Therefore, Lena does not seek an education on Indigenous people that is conciliatory, but rather one that presents Indigenous history truthfully and presently.

Playing Indian

Another injustice that repeatedly plays out in the classroom involves teachers having students 'play Indian.' Several students indicated experiencing classroom activities that encouraged them or others to dress like 'Indians' or to perform Indianness in some way. Courtney noted making dreamcatchers in her class and stated "we made dreamcatchers last year, but it's a thing, we're done with it….It was fun, but it was like a ring, a string, and a few feathers." Courtney also stated that there was no complementary lesson on dreamcatchers, the tribe who invented them, nor any other form of substantive history on their creation. This activity further contributes to the mythology of Indigeneity by constructing it as something you do or make rather than something that is and was and will be.

Other students indicated similar performativity but expressed mixed emotions. Brandon stated:

> In first grade we kind of put on a little skit…And my teacher asked me to be the Native American in the situation. Cause she knew I would have the stuff. And she knew I was actually a Native American, which would be better than just asking some random student in the class. But that was the only time. And I was the only one that 'dressed up like a Native American'….During Native American history month and heritage month, there

> was one of my friends who would dress up in a Native American costume for like one day. And it wasn't, it was stereotypical, but I wouldn't say it was offensive, really. Cause he wasn't going around doing the 'war cry' or anything. He wasn't going around chopping people's head off with axes or anything like that. He just wore it because he thought it was fun and that he was being a part of it.

This student did not take offense to being asked to play an Indian in a skit, nor to his peer dressing as an Indian during Native American Heritage Month. However, other non-Native students may see this as license to perform Indigeneity in other more explicitly derogatory ways that might deepen their stereotypical thinking of Indigenous people.

Lena noted the traditional Pilgrims and Indians skits performed during Thanksgiving season in schools. She stated

> In kindergarten I remember doing it, too. And that's when my mom really broke the ice on that…when I got home and I was like, 'look, mommy'…and she was like, hold on….So in kindergarten, she talked to me about that…And then third grade…I was like, this isn't cool."

Lena, therefore, had a mother who explained the implications of cultural appropriation as well as of mistelling the Thanksgiving story. After this talk, Lena was subsequently less forgiving of her teachers for subjecting her to this content.

Interpersonal Anti-Indigenousness and Isolation

Anti-Indigenousness from Peers

The problematic curriculum Indigenous students are exposed to is further complicated and compounded by anti-Native comments made by their peers. Though some students indicated having positive relationships with peers and feeling supported in their American Indian identity,

most others told stories of peers who touted stereotypes or expressed apathy or disbelief when disclosing or discussing their Indianness. Brandon discussed one classroom experience when a teacher was showing a movie clip that depicted Native American people in battle. He notes that one of his peers "did the Native American quote unquote war cry, and then everybody in my class started doing it. And I was just really kind of frustrated by that one…I just kind of sunk down, just kind of thinking about that, that's wrong." This student witnessed his peers and friends mock Native American people with no interruption from his teacher and felt no path towards recourse.

Another student noted similar stereotypes applied to Indigenous people by her peers. Lena stated that her peers asked her:

> 'What kind of gods do you worship? Do y'all dance around a fire doing smoke signals and stuff?'…one kid in sixth grade, he knew that it just annoyed me and he would call me Pocahontas in the hallway and then he'd do like the call thing [stereotypical Native American war cry]. So, they're very stereotypical and I was always just fed up with it…and then in the past year or so, like I've had people in my grade call me a culture shock and everything…And there's these girls, it was Halloween spirit night at a football game. And they thought it'd be fun to do the head dress and war paint and stuff. And they're like, 'oh my gosh, Lena, look!' And I was like, that's not cool.

Therefore, not only was Lena subjected to her peers making derogatory and stereotypical comments to her about Native people, she also witnessed her peers dress in stereotypical Native costumes, and expecting her to be happy about it.

Other students noted the overwhelming disbelief they experienced when sharing their Native identity with their peers, or people who purposely misclassified them to bother or hurt them. Beth stated:

> one guy, he knew that I didn't really like being called Indian. I was like 'I'm Native American.' So, he would call me Indian on purpose just to mess with me. One of my other friends, he just calls me Black all the time… and I'm like, 'no, I'm Native American, like, he'll just be like, no, you're Black. And I'm like, 'I'm Native American, that's my identity. That's what I am.'

Many Native students exist in the Black/white binary that plagues the South, and many Southern Indigenous people, both past and present, have fought against or succumbed to its pressures. Nick noted that when telling his friends that he is Native, many would say "are you actually Native American?" Many Native students find it difficult or perplexing when met with this disbelief or resistance.

Native students also find themselves battling the mythological narratives enshrouding Native people and found themselves feeling almost enigmatic when discussing their Indigenous identity with their peers. Jeremy noted:

> It's kind of fear, not fear, but like not understanding enough. For example, if you went into the third grade and didn't know anything from high school and somebody walked in and decided to tell you about the quadratic formula and said, 'we're going to have a test on this next week,' you'd be kind of scared because you didn't even know what it was until that day. I kind of think that's what it is.

Jeremy, and many other Indigenous students, expressed a feeling that their peers did not have the interest nor the range to engage with them genuinely about their Indigeneity, which led to feelings of isolation and frustration.

Anti-Indigenousness from Teachers

Native students, though experiencing many challenges with their peers, also faced substantial pushback and racism from teachers. Students noted teachers making anti-Native comments in class or disbelieving their Indigenous identity. Courtney noted that a teacher rolled her eyes at her when she told her that she was Lumbee. She said, "I feel like she didn't think Lumbee was a real tribe." Other students had similar experiences. Lena noted this experience with a teacher:

> All my friends took AP human geography last year and I would go eat lunch with them in his room. And then my friends explained to him that I was Native. So, he came up and he tried to have a conversation with me about it. And he asked me what tribe I was from. And I said 'the Lumbee Tribe.' And he said, 'Oh, the tribe that doesn't exist'…So those are the kinds of teachers that I have.

Native students, particularly Lumbee students, find it difficult to contend with teachers who ascribe to anti-Lumbee belief systems that purport that Lumbees are a fake tribe. These students also find it difficult to continue in classrooms with teachers who believe their identities to be made-up or contrived and find it all the more hypocritical when this ideology is purported by teachers who are severely lacking in knowledge on Indigenous peoples' more generally.

Other students noted instances of anti-Native racism presented in classrooms to students by teachers. Brandon notes that his class was

> talking about Columbus Day when it was in the media and how it was changing to Indigenous Peoples Day, with my English teacher who was talking about how she more supported Columbus Day and liked it, then had a situation kind of saying, 'what did Indigenous peoples do? Or what did Native Americans do to get a day?'"

Brandon felt hurt and distressed by his teachers' comment and was unsure of how to act in the moment, though he later chose to confront her. His conundrum is like many Indigenous' students as they continue to battle anti-Native comments in the classroom from authority figures.

Native Isolation

Negative experiences with both peers and teachers who Native students look to for community and guidance serve to further complicate and create feelings of isolation in these students. Beth stated, "I think it was harder for me in middle school. Cause everybody, it kind of seemed like everybody had their default group…everybody was friends with people of their own race, mainly. So, I was just like, where do I go?" Indigenous students in urban areas find themselves in this conundrum regularly as they navigate through schools demarcated by the Black/white binary. Other students noted the isolation and the anomaly of their existence in their schools. Jeremy noted, "I've never seen a Native American teacher, student, principal, nobody. I'm the only Native American that I really know." Out of the seven students interviewed, only two had ever had a Native American teacher, and that was when they lived in their tribal communities before moving to cities. No Native students reported ever having another Native student in any of their classes, though some knew of 1-2 other Native students in their schools. Therefore, Native students report feeling an isolation that is both curricular and relational, as they attempt the difficult journey of existing in schools with both anti-Indigenous curriculum and

no other Indigenous people with whom to create community, stand in solidarity, or provide respite.

Resistance, Responsibility, and Relationality

Student Resistance

Though students feel unduly burdened by the curriculum and by anti-Indigeneity from teachers and peers, many found unique ways to resist and persist. Though some students reported not speaking out, others noted the clever and quick-witted methods they utilized to combat racism in their schools. Lena notes a particular experience when she was a small child:

> They had us make, for Thanksgiving, headdresses, and they had Indians versus pilgrims and all this stuff. And I just, my mom says I refused to make one. Cause I was like, this, this is not right. I didn't like the feathers. And I was like, my mom has taught me you do not glue feathers on a piece of cardboard and put it on your head and walk in a circle to try to act. So, I remember getting very upset at that…and then moving on to middle school…we were in a history unit and I got upset at the way the Natives were being depicted once again. And I talked to my teacher and was like, 'can I bring in my regalia tomorrow and show you what it actually looks like to be Native?' So, I brought in my regalia and I did a fancy dance class and everything. So, every single situation that I've had, that I've gotten upset, I always said my peace in it.

Though this student has experienced several instances of racism in the classroom, she found ways to harness her anger in later years towards creating change in her classroom. Therefore, rather than allowing her classmates in middle school to ascribe to stereotypes about Indigenous people taught in the classroom, she showed them a part of her Native American culture – regalia

and fancy dancing. She also reversed roles – from student to teacher – which is a shift many Native students take in similar settings.

Other students like Brandon used moments of teacher anti-Indianness to confront racist tropes. Brandon notes that after his teacher indicated support of Columbus Day and anger over Indigenous Peoples' Day, he confronted her after school. He said that though she indicated remorse, he felt frustration with her initial comment, stating:

> My other thing with that teacher is, even how Columbus Day becoming Indigenous Peoples' Day, because some people might be mad at that cause like, 'why is the victim getting a day?' It's like, well, that's just more we've done. We were able to endure through this cause, if we hadn't, I wouldn't be Native American today….We did so much, what we went through and still made it, even though we lost great numbers, we still made it as people.

Brandon both boldly confronted his teacher for her statement and came to other, more personal realizations about the strength of Indigenous people on his own, which further reified his argument and his own internal resolve.

Self-teaching and Unlearning

Several Native students indicated frustration and disenchantment with the portrayal of Native history in the classroom and took it upon themselves to self-teach. Jeremy noted:

> everybody thinks that Native American lives in teepees…You ask somebody randomly, 'where did Native Americans live?' They're probably going to be like 'teepees.' And then I go back, and I look on Wikipedia…And then I learned about longhouses, farmhouses, fishing houses, things like that. And I'm like, well, why didn't I learn that?

Jeremy notes the stereotype of Indigenous people living in teepees and experiences frustration when fact-checking this assumption and finding that historically, most Native people, and especially those in the South, did not live in teepees. He comes to a central question that most Native students eventually come to: why didn't I learn that?

Other students noted having contradictory knowledge about a subject they are taught in class. On Christopher Columbus' enduring classroom legacy as a discoverer and savior, Jordan notes, "oh, they didn't necessarily call it mass murdering. They call it him finding new land, but we know he was a mass murderer and he took the land." Therefore, Jordan's self-teaching is at odds with what she learns in the classroom. Brandon notes experiencing similar historically inaccurate teachings about Columbus, and states,

> I never knew about what Christopher Columbus actually did until I researched it myself. So, after I did that, that changed my complete view on him. So, I learned about the '1492 Columbus sailed ocean blue' but I never learned about what he actually did. My viewpoint on him was always, oh, I know he didn't actually find America, but he came over here. But when I actually learned about him and I really thought about it more and started thinking 'that's really messed up.'

He also notes that he's "lucky enough to be in a generation where you can learn almost anything on YouTube." Brandon raises a critical point – that this is the generation of the Internet, of YouTube, of Wikipedia, of accessible information at their fingertips. Generations before Brandon did not have this access, and therefore may have found it more difficult to challenge curriculum or stereotypes. However, this generation is becoming increasingly emboldened by accessible knowledge, as well as disillusioned by contrasting classroom content.

Familial Influence

Though students play a critical role in their own conception of Native identity and history, their families are also heavily involved in their education and in their schools in ways that other racial groups are not or do not have to be. Nearly every student I spoke with discussed how their family members, typically their mother, came to their school and did a presentation for their class about Indigenous people. When asked if she had ever learned about Lumbee people in class, Beth stated, "when I was in elementary school, my mom was the counselor and she always did a little presentation for the fourth graders, just teaching about Lumbee culture. So that was like the only time. And that was from my mom." Therefore, Beth's mother stepped outside of her role as counselor and into that of teacher, as she taught about Indigenous people to her daughters' classroom. Beth stated that this is the only moment she can recall learning about her tribe at school.

Another student notes the clash between what her mother has taught her about Indigeneity and what she has learned in the classroom. Lena states, "my mom has taught me what we believed in and then there's the teacher telling me what we believed in. So that's a huge clash for me, personally." Therefore, students' conceptions of what they know about their identity and what they are taught about their history by their mothers are often at odds with the curriculum's presentation of Indianness. Other students felt similar dissonance; Courtney notes that her "Mama said it's not right for other people to dress up as Natives when they aren't" when discussing students who dress as Indians in the classroom during Thanksgiving Day events. Students are thus confronted by two major authoritative forces in their lives, their mothers and their teachers, and though undoubtedly aligning with the former, still finding it necessary to be at peace with the latter, which can become a near impossible alliance.

Responsibility and Burden of Native Students and Families

Further complicating this impossibility are Native students' feelings of responsibility for teaching others about Indigenous people given the reality that their teachers and textbooks will not. Brandon notes "That's definitely something we do need to do, because…the books don't talk about us as much as other cultures. Right? So, it puts a responsibility upon that culture, in this case, Native Americans, to talk about what their culture is." This responsibility is not placed upon seasoned scholars in the field, nor upon professors or teachers or historians, but upon Native children who are seeking safe spaces in their own schools. Native students thus feel pressured to step outside of their role as student and into a role of teacher. Beth notes her parents feeling similar pressure, stating, "I think parents are willing to go and the schools are willing to let us speak. So, it's like a firsthand source but I also think we shouldn't have to get our parents and families to teach us…Other people learn about their history in school." Beth is indicating the frustration that many Native students and parents feel, as well as the weight of having to teach to others what has not even been taught to her.

Other students feel other, more personal pressures to succeed in environments created against them, as evidenced in this exchange:

> Courtney: Mama pushes me to try to be the smartest in the class
>
> Interviewer: Because you have to be since you're Native?
>
> Courtney: To try to prove myself.
>
> Interviewer: Yeah. Do you think that, do you think that white kids have to think about stuff like that?
>
> Courtney: No. I want to prove myself because I'm Native, Black, Japanese, a girl. Most people aren't as lucky as me.

Therefore, Courtney feels encouraged by her mother to do more than just survive as a Native and multiracial student in the classroom, but to thrive, to be the best, to showcase the 'luck' that she feels from having multiple diverse layers of identity.

Imagining a Pro-Indigenous Classroom

However, Native students, though exhibiting a unique and persistent form of resilience, fundamentally believe that the school system does not serve them. Though they resist, teach, learn, read, and fight against Native stereotypes, they remain expectant of a change. Many are hopeful that both the curriculum and the teachers who deliver it will change. Brandon notes:

> I would definitely like for teachers to do more research themselves than just looking at the book…because most tribes' websites have stories on them and have stuff like that. And I would like teachers to look at those and even look at what their traditions are and just kind of do more of that. Then, just teaching more about Native Americans [outside] of the book.

Brandon is imagining a teacher that would go beyond the textbook, beyond the curriculum, and would do research on tribes from that tribes' perspective. He also states:

> And even Native Americans weren't perfect. So, I would like them to even focus more on, 'Hey, even though they were peoples who had lots of wrong done to them, they still did wrong'…I still think you need to keep that in there, too…I also would like to see more of what happened to them. And because I feel like most of your books just say the smallpox got to them and killed them all. I think it should be more how did the smallpox get there? How did all that happen? What actually happened? Was it just smallpox got to them or was it that colonists brought over diseases that their immune system had never been introduced to?

Brandon, therefore, does not envision a curriculum nor a teacher who creates a narrative of a pacifist Native people, nor of one that negates or ignores the realities of Indigenous wars and resistance. Rather, he is interested and wholly committed to a classroom environment that promotes facts, that disavows mythological depictions of Native people, that engages with the nitty gritty realities of history. Additionally, just as he does not see Native people as passive nor perfect, he wants the realities of colonial brutality to be made plain and clear.

Other students exhibited similar desires and hoped for a classroom that centered Indigenous peoples local to them, as well as ceasing the depiction of Native people only when encountering colonizers. Nick stated that he wanted to learn "More cultures, more information about other tribes and more about the Lumbee Tribe since it's in North Carolina. In my opinion, I think that every state should always talk about the tribes in their states." Though most Native students in the South are learning about Indigenous people out West, Nick believes that home-grown histories are more critical and relevant. Beth states:

> I think it would be cool to learn about how people were living before colonizers and before America. I know we don't have a lot of information on that, but we talked about it for like a day this year and then we went straight into Europeans coming over here. So, I think it would be cool to focus on how they were living before.

Beth is frustrated with the narratives of Indigenous people that only begin at colonization, and with the brevity or nonexistence of teachings of periods beforehand. Students in general are tired of whitewashed narratives, of the teachers who peddle them, of the textbooks that perpetuate them. Native students deserve something much better than what they have been given. They deserve textbooks that are true, comprehensive, and unbiased. They deserve teachers who care,

who research, who go beyond the book. The classrooms they have imagined are not difficult to create, and it should not be their responsibility to create them.

Indigenous-related schoolwork

To supplement the information provided by students in our conversations, two students – Beth and Lena – submitted Indigenous-related coursework that they were provided this year by teachers. Beth was provided with two essays and one assignment related to Indigenous people. The two essays are "Indian Slavery in the Americas" and "Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress." Each essay discusses the impacts of colonization on Indigenous people, including slavery and genocide. Beth was also assigned the following project:

Figure 3

Student Assignment on Pre-colonial Native Societies

(1.2) Native American Societies Before European Contact

Thematic Focus: Geography and the Environment (This focus includes understanding the competition and debates over natural resources and the ways in which the development of America impacted the environment and leads to debates about the environment and other geographic issues.)

Learning Objective: Explain how and why various native populations in the period before European contact interacted with the natural environment in North America.

The reasoning process often used to assess your knowledge of this topic is comparison. One of the easiest ways to compare Pre-Columbian Native Cultures is to use the thematic approach of geography. This geographic approach includes understanding the competition and debates over natural resources and the ways in which the development of America impacted the environment and leads to debates about the environment and other geographic issues.

Examples of questions include the following:

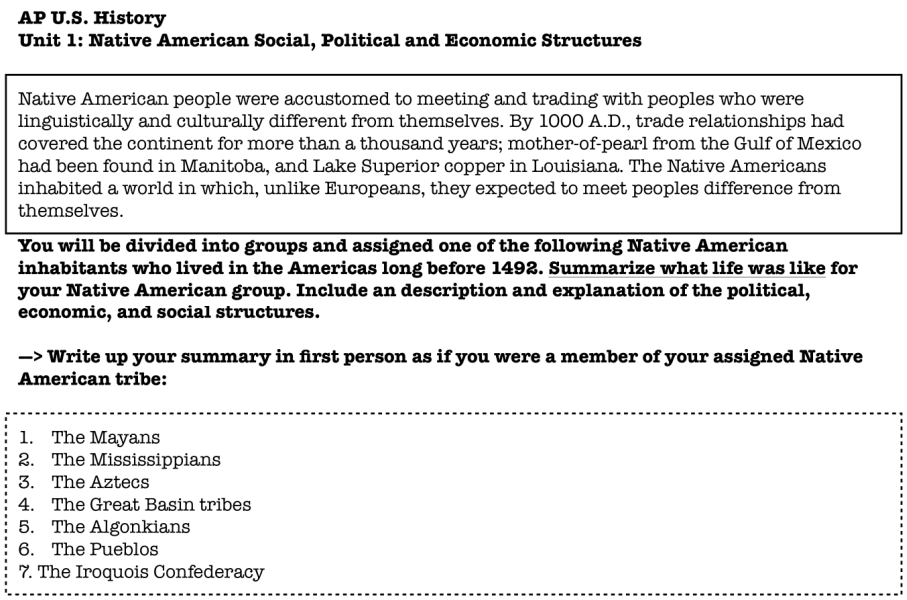
1. Explain how and why various native populations in the period before European contact interacted with the natural environment in North America.
2. How did the Mississippian Culture differ from native cultures that lived in the present-day American Southwest?
3. How and why did native groups of the Great Basin and Great Plains develop mobile lifestyles?

This project focuses on Indigenous people and their interactions with nature pre-colonization. Throughout this text, the teacher consistently capitalizes European, but not Native. Additionally, in question #2 at the bottom, the teacher refers to the "native cultures that *lived* in the present-day American Southwest," implying that Natives no longer live in that region. Therefore, considering the two essays as well as this assignment, Beth's education on Indigenous people seems to be disjointed in that her teacher provides accurate content related to the brutalities of colonization and the true story of Columbus, but still seemingly ascribes to the belief that Indigenous people have vanished from America. This is also the only assignment Beth was provided relating to Indigenous people.

Similarly, Lena's teacher also provided four articles about Indigenous people and Columbus, including one entitled "The White Man's Indian" as well as several others about the truth of Columbus and the Iroquois Confederacy. She was provided two assignments related to these topics, one of which is featured below:

Figure 4

Student Assignment on Pre-colonial Native Sociopolitical Life



AP U.S. History
Unit 1: Native American Social, Political and Economic Structures

Native American people were accustomed to meeting and trading with peoples who were linguistically and culturally different from themselves. By 1000 A.D., trade relationships had covered the continent for more than a thousand years; mother-of-pearl from the Gulf of Mexico had been found in Manitoba, and Lake Superior copper in Louisiana. The Native Americans inhabited a world in which, unlike Europeans, they expected to meet peoples difference from themselves.

You will be divided into groups and assigned one of the following Native American inhabitants who lived in the Americas long before 1492. Summarize what life was like for your Native American group. Include an description and explanation of the political, economic, and social structures.

—> Write up your summary in first person as if you were a member of your assigned Native American tribe:

1. The Mayans
2. The Mississippians
3. The Aztecs
4. The Great Basin tribes
5. The Algonkians
6. The Pueblos
7. The Iroquois Confederacy

Therefore, like Beth, Lena's teacher provided articles necessary for students to deconstruct their knowledge about Columbus as well as discuss the reality of colonization's impact on Indigenous people. However, the assignment provided in this instance is vague and is similarly rooted in solely focusing on Indigenous people in antiquated contexts. Therefore, both Beth and Lena's teachers provided them with readings that provided historically accurate accounts of colonial brutality but did not provide complementary assignments to reify this reality. Instead, the assignments are brief, summative, and surface-level, and over-rely on developing an awareness of Indigenous people in antiquity, whilst ignoring Indigenous people in modern contexts.

Non-Native Teachers' Findings

Like Native students, non-Native teachers similarly grappled with the erasure and anti-Indigeneity presented in the curriculum, both when they were students and now that they are teachers. However, unlike Native students, non-Native teachers find themselves as agents in the problematization of Indigenous people in the classroom, and experience varying levels of guilt for this complicity, as some work to truly decolonize their curriculum. From my 'visits' with teachers, four major themes arose within the teacher data, which include 1) learning and unlearning problematic Indigenous content, 2) teaching and uncovering problematic Indigenous content, 3) Whiteness in teaching, and 4) resisting and deconstructing problematic curriculum.

Learning and Unlearning Problematic Indigenous Content

Problematic Content Taught in K-12

Many teachers noted experiencing either a lacking American Indian curriculum or a stereotypical one during their time as students in K-12 schools. Iva noted that in her schools, the overarching theme or stereotype of American Indians in curriculum was of "these like warlike people [who] were fighting civilized American colonists who just wanted to find land." Other

teachers had contrasting, yet similarly demoralizing lessons of the passivity of Indigenous people; Michelle notes:

> I also realized now, the kind of overarching trend…it was always like Indigenous people helping settlers colonize. And that was definitely the overarching theme…Indigenous people were always happy, and they were always helping, and they were always giving people food and giving people trails and doing things like that.

Therefore, though the lessons about Indigenous people from her teacher did not classify them as savage, they were classified instead as being ready and willing to not only help settlers, but to freely give away their lands to them. Both messages are erroneous, both are gross oversimplifications of a much more complex, nuanced history of resistance and relationality.

Other teachers noted being inundated with specific imagery considered stereotypical; Angie stated "just those typical images, I think that you see, you know, of what Native Americans look like with the headdress and things like that. And you know, like teepees on the plains and things like that." Corey notes similar tropes used in his school, stating, "I don't think we focused on them at all. I don't think we learned any Native studies or anything like that. The only thing I can really remember is back in kindergarten around Thanksgiving, learning about Native Americans. And that was, I distinctly remember getting paper bags and, you know, painting symbols on it." His knowledge of American Indians from his K-12 experiences are therefore both primitive and performative, similar to Native students who discussed 'playing Indian' in the classroom.

Other teachers also remember 'playing Indian' during their childhood years, though outside of the classroom. Karen states that she was a member of the YMCA Indian Guides program, which is still in operation, and is a summer program for children that heavily relies on

the cultural appropriation of Indigenous tribes. Karen stated "I still remember making dream catchers and having an Indian name. And now I'm just so appalled by it." She later discusses being placed into a tribe within the program and states "you know these names, Cherokee and stuff, but they don't mean anything to you." Therefore, like many K-12 experiences, these teachers are learning about Indigenous peoples in problematic ways both inside and outside the classroom that delegitimize actual Native tribes and Native identity. Such programs and performances also desensitize non-Native people to Indigeneity – naming things that are not Cherokee as Cherokee, or things that are not Lumbee as Lumbee, takes away the meaning of the terms, makes them overly accessible, with further perpetuates their mythology.

Many also noted the propensity for their teachers' and textbooks to acknowledge singular events or singular people related to American Indian history, without providing the larger contexts that reify these people and events. Anna notes, "You know, I learned about the pilgrims, you learned Squanto, but you never learned about his tribe or anything like that. It was just strictly that one person. And it was a singular event, which was Thanksgiving." Her content knowledge of American Indian people, therefore, was limited and restrictive. Other teachers noted similar phenomena; Michelle stated "Maybe we learned about Sacajawea…I'm sure that we learned the pilgrims were helped by Indigenous people. I don't think we ever even learned that tribe name or anything like that." Therefore, from these teachers' attestations, tribal history was nil in their classrooms, with the curriculum opting to teach about a singular person, or to describe Indigenous people in abstractions, thus denying them the tangibility of their tribal affiliation. This is further perpetuated by the curriculum's presentation of Indigenous people as non-existent in modern contexts.

Problematic College Content

Though colleges and universities have largely been constructed as sites of liberalism and social justice, Indigenous education remains as problematic in these arenas as it is in K-12 systems. One teacher noted having taken a class in college that focused on Indigenous peoples, though the class was taught by a white professor. As an activity, Angie notes:

> We went and spent a weekend at a place in the woods where this guy that was Native American had a camp where he tried to show what it was really like to live as a Native American would have in the mountains. But I think it was a little contrived as well. Cause there were teepees and I don't think there were really teepees in like the mountains of North Carolina.

She also stated that she remembers "sitting in a circle inside a big teepee" and being required to cook a Native American dish for class one day. Therefore, like many teachers K-12 experiences, this appears mainly performative in nature, and serves to reify pre-existing stereotypes of Indigenous people as teepee-dwellers and as one-with-nature.

Others noted taking classes in college that focused on race, but mostly excluded Native people from the content. Michelle notes, "when we talk about race in my education classes, it was always like, yeah, students identify as Black or African American, students who are Latinx or Hispanic, Asian students and then white kids. I don't even remember it being any kind of space for American Indians." Similarly, Anna notes:

> there was not much conversation even in college because, you know, once you get into your major, you kind of end up choosing your track and mine, I think I had a North Carolina history class, so I know Natives were mentioned, but I can't say that I learned of any specific tribes, traditions or anything like that. And still, you know, college, my focus

> was the New South. So, post-reconstruction, post-Civil War, that's what I was zoned in on. So, that's really all what my classes reflected.

This teacher, though acknowledging not learning about Indigenous people in her classes, seems to approve of this disacknowledegment, believing that the New South did not include Indigenous peoples, despite her acknowledgement of the tribes in North Carolina today. This teacher exhibits some of the dissonance that many Americans have adopted about Indigenous people.

Despite these teachers lack of exposure to Indigenous content, one teacher did note learning extensively about Indigenous people, and credits this to her having attended a historically Black college or university (HBCU). Tammy notes "I went to an HBCU. That was my first experience understanding exactly the experience of Native people in this country… You know, broken policies with the US government…we focused on it 'cause we compared it also to Africa, the genocide that was happening..." Therefore, her University provided an explanation of Black historical oppression through the lens of similar American Indian historical oppression, with both being rooted in colonialism and white supremacy. This connection made the suffering and trauma of Native people in America all the more real to this teacher, by providing her complementary examples of brutality.

Self-Teaching

Though most teachers learned little about Indigenous people in K-12 or college, many teachers noted having to self-teach Indigenous content, or being shocked when learning new things about Indigenous people. Anna notes:

> When I student taught, I learned a lot from the teacher that I was working with about history in general. And from there, it was interesting to see eighth graders at the time who were, you know, 12, 13 who had already formulated their opinions of [Columbus]. He's a

> rapist and he destroyed Natives and they were teaching me as a 24-year-old woman, because it's just something that wasn't taught growing up.

Anna also notes believing that students in her generation were not encouraged to challenge the text, or to consider history from multiple perspectives in the ways that she sees her students doing today.

Angie experienced a similar phenomenon, and states "teaching this stuff is really what has taught me. You know, I don't feel like you learn as much as a student, as you do as a teacher." Other teachers noted learning facts about Native history post-college that were mind boggling to them; Karen stated feeling shocked that she "didn't learn until [she] was a full-grown adult about the sterilization of Native American women, the forced separation through the use of foster care." Though teachers uncover many of their blind spots through the art of teaching and through self-learning, many others continue teaching as they were taught Indigenous history and find it difficult to go beyond the text.

Teaching and Uncovering Problematic Indigenous Content

Teaching Problematic Content

Though the teachers in this study exhibited concern as to the state of Indigenous education and curriculum in North Carolina, many unwittingly exhibited teaching practices that were similarly concerning or uninformed. Though Angie indicated that her college learning experiences about Native people were fraught with stereotypes, she employed similar practices with her students. She noted doing a "buffalo skin story" and "doing the stories in a circle with the drawings and things like that." When probed for more information, she was slightly evasive, and stated, "you know, that they used to use the Buffalo skin. Now they use the skins for every part, to make the things and you know, um, plains and it's the way they would tell a story with

pictures." Additionally, when reflecting on Manifest Destiny, Angie expresses and teaches sympathy for colonizers who invaded Indigenous land and massacred countless Indigenous people. She notes:

> So, you know, the Puritans were really religious. Well, this helps to explain why they thought it was all okay. Because based on their interpretation of what the Bible says, it was God's will for them to do that. And they didn't think anything of it. So it wasn't that they were being like malicious. They thought that's really what God's destiny was, was for them to take over this earth.

Therefore, though the Bible was used throughout the founding of America for various evils, including slavery and the genocide of Indigenous people, this teacher sought to not only explain away the Puritans and other colonial forces behavior, but to characterize these acts as non-malicious.

Other teachers acknowledged that they taught only up to the Trail of Tears in regard to American Indian history, leaving students with an image of Natives as definitively removed from the American narrative. Corey notes, "in the lesson than I do in the first unit, we just talked about the pre-contact tribes. So, I break it down into regions, so we talked Cherokee and then Catawba and then Tuscarora - that's historical. And then we come back to the Cherokee, of course with the Trail of Tears. I think that's pretty much it."

Other teachers critically reflected on weak spots from their first years in teaching. Michelle noted "there are things that I taught my first year, that the more that I learned I'm like, hmm, that was more stereotypical, like the like stoic thing of [how] Powhatan never would have done wars, you know, very much like 'let's talk about things' and it's like, well, that's not really true. They were totally into resistance…the more I learn, the more it kind of becomes more

nuanced." This teacher, though acknowledging a problematic area of her past teaching, through both learning and reflection, changed the course of her teaching from depicting Indigenous people as always passive and peaceful, to a more nuanced and truthful depiction of both hospitality and resistance.

Lack of Knowledge of North Carolina History

Beyond teaching stereotypical and problematic content, many teachers had little to no knowledge of North Carolina's tribes, though all were North Carolina teachers, and almost all (86%) taught either 8th grade Social Studies, which focuses on North Carolina history, or 10th grade US History. When asked about her content knowledge of North Carolina's tribes, Anna noted, "usually when I teach, well, of course I don't know the exact number of tribes, but I know it's like 20 plus specifically in North Carolina." There are eight tribes in North Carolina. When asked if she knew the name of any tribes in North Carolina, Karen stated "if I had to name them all, like specific ones, no."

Similarly, Corey stated "I mean, I know a little bit now just from trying to teach my own class about it." Angie indicates a similar lack of knowledge and teaching about Indigenous peoples, noting "Not a lot. Just about where, where they were located around the South Carolina, North Carolina border and that um, they seem to assimilate faster than some of the other tribes into the English way of life." This teacher also teaches 8th grade Social Studies. Therefore, most teachers in this study indicated a provincial knowledge of Indigenous history at best, that was further eroded by their lack of knowledge of North Carolina Natives, despite most teaching North Carolina specific curriculum.

Problems with Curriculum

Teachers' lack of knowledge was further, if not completely, complicated by problematic renderings of Indigenous history and people as savage and vanishing within the curriculum. When asked about Indigenous inclusion in the curriculum, Tammy noted, "it is not really a part of the curriculum. They really skip it in eighth grade and go straight to colonization." Tammy acknowledges that Indigenous people are presented only as the initial interactors with colonizers, but that this is a brief part of the curriculum as textbooks are eager to sidestep these realities. When asked if she only taught the curriculum given to her as it is presented, Tammy further noted that students would:

> leave with leave with the mindset that all the Native people were killed out, it was a complete genocide of those peoples and that the only people who survived really are the Cherokee, that's really what they would walk away with. That mindset of savage, and this is what, you know, they fought King Philip's war, they fought, they fought hard, but they lost, you know, they sided with the, in the French and Indian war, they sided with, um, the French.

Tammy notes that at other times in the curriculum Indigenous people are either presented as savage or as the perpetual losers in the early American narrative – their consecutive losses are cumulative, and are depicted as an inevitability of the growing strength of the Union which resulted in their eventual removal from the landscape and from curriculum.

Corey notes a similar phenomenon, stating "I think Native Americans have become a sort of a side character in the American story because the white folks are put on the main stage and then they just become sort of a means to an end…I think they just become sort of this kind of sad figure that white folks just had to overcome." Corey, like Tammy, notes the curriculum's propensity for these narratives of Native people as the inexorably defeated, and even as

unworthy opponents. Iva noted a similar concept within the curriculum of Natives as "not living people" and that their histories are "over and done with" because they were "all wiped out and killed."

Anna indicates a similar view of the curriculum, stating "I think the issue with the textbook is that it definitely paints a single story of Natives. So, kids tend to think they're these mythical beings and not that they're real people." She notes that in the brief moments where the curriculum and textbooks do shed light on Indigenous history that these are singular events, chapters, lessons. Anna states:

> when we have to talk about the Indian Removal Act under Andrew Jackson's presidency…the kids are like, 'Oh, that's so sad, that's so cruel' and it's onto the next thing for them… But I think as a collective, when it comes to Native history, it is one chapter. And then it's mentioned again in the year 1830. So, from 1492 to then 1830, you only hear two stories…Thanksgiving or the Trail of Tears, and that's it.

Similarly, Karen notes that "maybe a total of a day would be the curriculum" on Indigenous people and history. Therefore, the removal of Indigenous peoples from their homelands as presented in the text is mirrored by their curricular removal and erasure that situates them as perpetual side notes, and as minor blips in the telling of an otherwise just Union.

Pushback from Colleagues and Others

A few teachers indicated experiencing pushback from their colleagues or from family members when discussing their approach to curriculum. Michelle notes problems with the North Carolina state standards, calling them "vague," which leaves them up to interpretation of teachers less committed to teaching Indigenous history, and therefore more prone to acquiesce to erasure. She notes other teachers who are unwilling to teach Indigenous history as the first unit

in the US History courses who say “I can't put my first unit as Indigenous history ‘cause then we're going to get behind,” and notes that her students are confused when her course does not begin with Columbus, but with Indigenous civilizations pre-colonization. She indicates that this is outside of the curriculum, and how instead of prioritizing rote memorization of the names of Presidents or facts about the American Revolution, she opts for a more inclusive American story. She also notes that when she first began teaching, another teacher offered his PowerPoints to her, and on one slide he listed the definition of colonization as “when somebody moves to a new place.” She opted not to use his materials due to his lack of knowledge, expressed concern about what other students are learning, and noted that others in her department are “pretty dismissive” of her success in teaching with her students.

Angie also noted that a teacher in her school showed a video in class that depicted the struggle of marginalized groups in this country as a Monopoly game where they “didn't get a turn for 400 turns.” Conservatives in her area complained and she was nervous about meeting with me or including more truthful Indigenous content in her classroom. She also noted that her father said, “you're not one of those teachers that teaches about how bad the white man is, are you?” And that to that she stated “yeah, I kind of am.” Therefore, teachers in conservative school districts or teachers with conservative family or friend groups are more likely to face pushback than teachers without similar constraints.

Whiteness in Teaching

Several teachers indicated interrogating their Whiteness within their teaching paradigms and indicated occasional discomfort with teaching certain topics or in conversations about race with students. Iva noted “I'm a white lady. I fit the profile of like an average American teacher, as a white woman. So, I think about that a lot…my school community is mostly white. Not all,

but mostly, but I'm like, it's good for everybody to understand that history is not just white people." Iva indicated that teaching Indigenous history can therefore feel uncomfortable due to her desire to do it justice. Karen indicated a similar experience with her own whiteness, noting "to be a white social studies teacher, I feel like you have to be aware of so many things that white people have done in history, and accept your ancestors' role in that. Or even your own family's role in that." Karen's discomfort therefore is rooted in her own whiteness, and white peoples' ancestral role in the violence and erasure of Indigenous people, while she teaches about this violence and erasure in the classroom.

Michelle indicated that her discomfort as a white teacher is rooted in the reality that there are no Indigenous teachers at her school. She states "what harm is still being perpetuated by doing this as a white person…we don't have any teacher in my knowledge who identifies as an Indigenous or American Indian. And so that's a problem." Michelle grapples with her own identity as white, while teaching about Indigenous erasure to her students, but also realizing that this erasure is in play in the staff demography in her school. She also notes another time when she was teaching a class composed of all minority students, when one student said, "does it feel lonely to talk about race when you're the only white person?" She expressed that she thought this student was "the sweetest" but also felt unnerved that rather than focusing on the oppression of marginalized groups in American history, the student seemed more concerned with her feelings as a teacher and wanting to make her comfortable. This indicates one way that students might center and protect Whiteness even in spaces where they are being encouraged to interrogate and even denounce it.

Resisting and Deconstructing Problematic Curriculum

Deconstructing Stereotypes

As these teachers are aware of the power and occasional discomfort of their whiteness when teaching about Indigenous history, they also increasingly grapple with the stereotypes the curriculum presents, and many sought to deconstruct them in their classrooms. Karen underscored the importance of this work, stating that her students "started to kind of make them more like individuals, rather than just very vague labels." This work of reifying Indigenous identity is critical for teachers committed to social justice and inclusion. Rather than allowing the mythology of Indigeneity as presented in the curriculum to stand, teachers must demystify and make real Indigenous histories and peoples. Similarly, Anna states, "when we talk about certain groups of people, the kids don't think they're real…it's one of those things where I have to work really hard for them to understand like, 'Hey, a Native is not a unicorn, they're a living breathing person.'" Therefore, it becomes the job of the teacher to help students unlearn, and to therefore unteach, harmful stereotypes about Indigenous peoples' that have been allowed to persist throughout their schooling.

Another teacher discussed dismantling stereotypes through providing personal and familial contexts. Michelle discussed undoing the stereotype of Indigenous people as being more prone to alcoholism:

> Pretty often students bring up 'isn't alcoholism a huge problem with Indigenous people?' And then I'm just like, 'Raise your hand in here if you know somebody who has an alcohol problem?' And every single kid raises their hand. I grew up in a family of alcoholics. All of us grew up with somebody in our family who was an alcoholic. And so yes, that is a problem. And it's not unique to Indigenous people.

Michelle discusses the importance of eradicating this stereotype, which further reifies Indigenous people by comparing them with others who students have personal relationships with. Michelle

goes onto say "what are we really trying to do when that becomes what we associate [alcoholism] with? You know, what I was trying to teach my kids, what are you letting yourself off without actually having to think about…what kind of myths allow you to do something that doesn't line up?" Michelle highlights a larger point about the danger of limiting a group to a "single story" that only allows that group to be one thing, while your own group is afforded all the complexities that humanity provides (Adichie, 2009). Therefore, in this example, if a few Native people are alcoholics, then all are, but if a few individuals of the students' racial demographic are alcoholics, these individuals are the exception and not the representatives of the entire group. It is imperative that teachers engage in this work of providing nuance, humanity, and a plethora of examples of Native people so that students unlearn stereotypes and replace them with more holistic viewpoints.

Challenging Curriculum

Within the framework of deconstructing stereotypes, many teachers are also engaged in the work of challenging curriculum. Corey states that the "the inclusion of any Native American history is a challenge to the system. I mean that's because back when we used to have final exams, you weren't going to get a final exam question on anything having to do with tribes. So, the inclusion of that is sort of a step away from the curriculum." In keeping with other teachers who discussed the lack of Indigenous history, Corey's position is that any way that teachers teach about Native people is a challenge to a system that is mostly bent on providing narratives of White dominance.

Similarly, Tammy notes challenging her colleagues to "decolonize their curriculum and to stop whitewashing and [start] telling a diverse story of America - the good, bad, and the ugly…because when everybody's story is told in this story of America, then…we can see the

wholeness, we can see the fullness, we can see how everybody has contributed to the success the failures of this country." Tammy's commitment to Indigenous history, to moving beyond whitewashed narratives, is not isolated to herself and to her classroom. Instead, she seeks to garner support and allies amongst her colleagues. She also partnered with an Indigenous social worker to develop a more Indigenous-centered curriculum for her class, which highlights the strength of intersectional collaboration.

Michelle also notes how critical it is to undo the harmful past teachings many students have been exposed to. She states teaching students about "terminal narratives and the way that in history you hear the first or the last - it's like, the first European settlement and the last Indigenous thing. And it's this false idea that Indigenous people have stopped existing…And then we read some of the accounts of how Columbus treated the Taino people." Deconstructing this idea of a terminal narrative dispels the myth of Indigenous extinction and exists in stark contrast with the curriculum's refusal to mention Native people in modern contexts.

Envisioning a New Curriculum

Though teachers remain complicit in the system that erases Indigenous histories and stereotypes Indigenous people, many teachers, including those in this study have demonstrated a commitment to truly restorative and socially just work. Many teachers discussed their vision of a new curriculum, of an alternative classroom that centers and prioritizes Indigeneity. Tammy boldly notes the following:

> We have to work with our state representatives to make sure that our curriculum tells the story of everybody it represents. I mean, everybody in this country, this whitewashed 'white people are so great to save you' - that's just not going to work. And…when I went to college and found out all that my people had contributed, it made me a different

> person. It changed my mindset. And why can't we do that for all children? Why we can't do that for everybody…because every one of those groups have contributed significantly to where we are as a country...And this curriculum does not represent us.

Tammy implores upon the necessity of state representatives in this framework to create systemic change in all schools, not just the ones with teachers going against the grain. Therefore, when teachers, legislators, and other stakeholders are exposed to the knowledge of Indigenous people, they will often respond to it. Many want to create more culturally relevant classrooms but do not know how or have the proper resources to do so. Tammy indicates that knowledge is centric to this systemic change, and that the ownness is not just on teachers' shoulders, but on all of those in power.

Indigenous-related coursework

Six teachers provided examples of Indigenous-related coursework from their classes. Three teachers provided several examples of problematic Indigenous content, while three other teachers provided more culturally responsive examples. The first three examples will showcase problematic content. Below is one image Karen used in her classroom when showing a video about Indigenous peoples before Columbus:

Figure 5

Teacher Slide Depicting Pre-colonial Native Life

Here is a second image used on one unit when discussing Indigenous peoples:

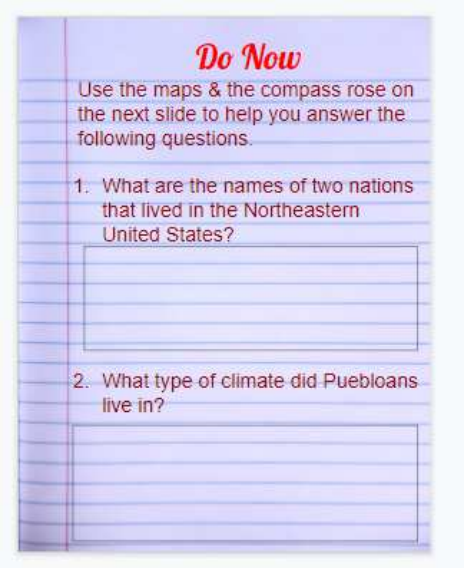
Figure 6

Teacher Slide Social Studies Unit

The picture at the bottom features Native American men, feathered and leathered, with one holding a bow and arrow. The picture below is an example of coursework assigned during a class session.

Figure 7

Teacher Assignment – Northeast and Pueblo Nations

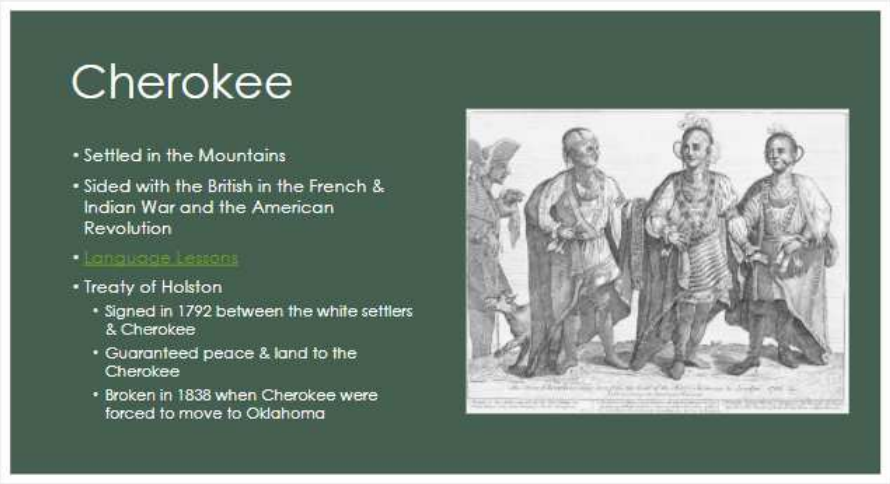


Karen's classroom content reflects much of what our conversation also reflected. She seems quasi-committed to teaching Indigenous histories, and therefore does teach about Indigenous peoples as more than a footnote, but still displays stereotypical imagery in the classroom as well as class content that erodes the modern-day realities of tribes today (i.e. the assignment asking for the names of two nations that *lived* in Northeastern United States).

Corey utilized similar imagery in his classroom, presenting Indigenous people only within the constraints of antiquity. His inclusion of Native content in the classroom was one slideshow with eight slides about a few tribes in and around North Carolina, as well as one article about the Trail of Tears. One of his presentation slides is featured below:

Figure 8

Teacher Slide on Cherokee

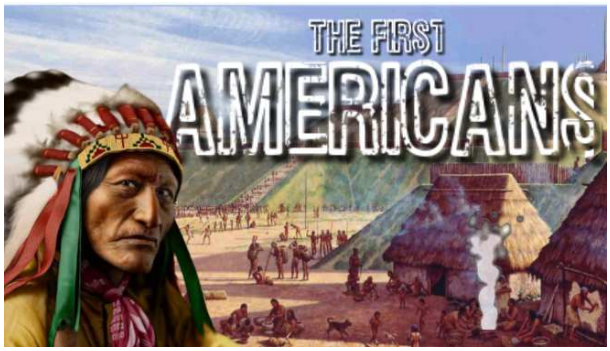


The brevity of Corey's presentation of Indigenous content in his classrooms, particularly since he teaches 8th grade Social Studies which focuses on NC history, is concerning.

Angie's classroom content contained similar themes. Below is one slide from her presentation about Indigenous peoples:

Figure 9

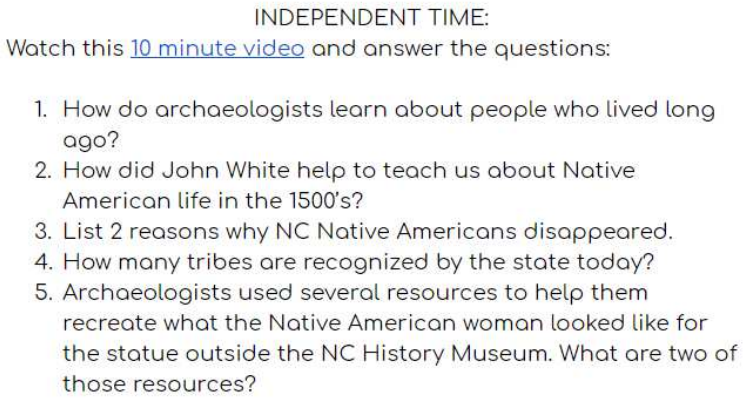
Teacher Slide on The First Americans



Additionally, and perhaps most concerning, is this assignment she provided students:

Figure 10

Teacher Assignment on Archaeology and Native Americans



INDEPENDENT TIME:
Watch this 10 minute video and answer the questions:

1. How do archaeologists learn about people who lived long ago?
2. How did John White help to teach us about Native American life in the 1500's?
3. List 2 reasons why NC Native Americans disappeared.
4. How many tribes are recognized by the state today?
5. Archaeologists used several resources to help them recreate what the Native American woman looked like for the statue outside the NC History Museum. What are two of those resources?

Question #3 states: *List 2 reasons why NC Native Americans disappeared.* She then provides a contradictory follow-up question that states: *How many tribes are recognized by the state today?* Therefore, not only is she ascribing to the belief that Indigenous North Carolinians are extinct, but she is simultaneously asking students to list the tribes existing in the state today. This highlights Tuck & Yang's (2012) point about providing "multiple simultaneous and conflicting messages about Indigenous peoples" (p.9). In addition, she provides an article about the Trail of Tears from a white soldier's perspective. Most Native students in this study complained about stories of Indigenous people being rooted in Eurocentric perspectives, and the inclusion of this article, rather than one presenting Indigenous perspectives, further highlights the issue.

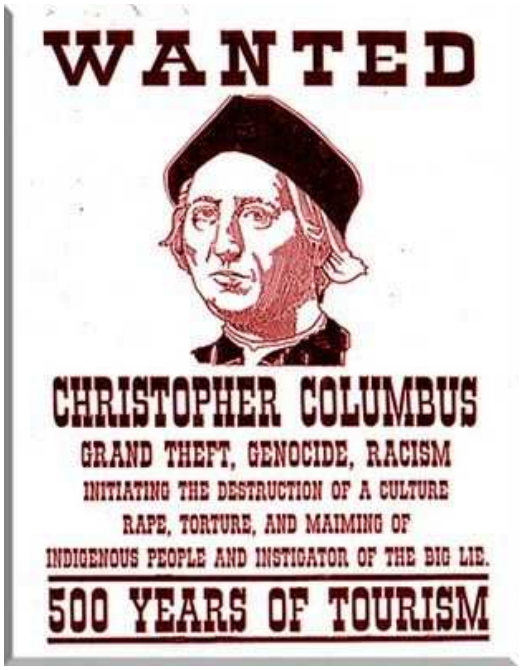
Though these three teachers provided negative examples of classroom teachings on Indigenous people, three other teachers provided positive examples. Michelle used various visuals in her class to shed light on the reality of Christopher Columbus, featured below:

Figure 11

Teacher Slide on Christopher Columbus and Terrorism

Figure 12

Teacher Slide – Christopher Columbus Wanted Poster



She supported this imagery through providing articles and historical accounts of Columbus' relations with Indigenous people, as well as through the use of worksheets and activities that

encourage students to consider Columbus Day in the context of this information, as well as the push for Indigenous Peoples' Day. Additionally, Michelle provides her students with other texts related to the brutality of colonization. One issue, however, is that Michelle does not provide complementary examples of Indigeneity today nor does she include any focus on North Carolina's tribes.

Tammy also provides an array of content related to Indigenous peoples, including an entire presentation focused on deconstructing myths and stereotypes, that includes videos and examples. Below is a project she assigned her students for Native American Heritage Month that focuses on modern-day activism of Indigenous peoples and communities:

Figure 13

Teacher Assignment for Native American Heritage Month

Native American Heritage Month Project

Project Brief

In celebration of Native American Heritage Month (November), we will be doing a three part research project that will be shared as an exhibit for ESA. Part 1- (*Group*) You and your group will research and put together a summary of one of the eight tribes of North Carolina. Part 2 (*Individual*) You will research an activist who has played a role in bringing awareness to various issues in the Native American community. You will put together a summary and photo to be displayed. Part 3 (*Different Group*) You and your group will take on 3-5 myths that many people believe are true for Native American people. You will identify why this myth exists and share what the truth actually is.

PART 1: Tribes

- 1-2 page summary of Tribes history, tribal lands, language, cultural practices and issues that they are fighting for.
- 2-4 pictures of people from this tribe

NC Tribes

1. Eastern Band of Cherokee
2. Coharie
3. Lumbee
4. Haliwa-Saponi
5. Sappony
6. Meherrin
7. Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation
8. Waccamaw-Siouan

PART 2: Activists

- (Full page size) Photo of activist
- Personal summary of activist

Activists

1. Sharice Davids, Congresswoman
2. Deb Haaland, Congresswoman
3. Edgar Villanueva, author and financial activist
4. Ashton Locklear, olympic gymnast
5. Dyami Thomas, activist and speaker
6. Peggy Flanagan, Lt Governor
7. Bethany Yellowtail, designer and clothing designer
8. Joy Harjo, author and poet
9. Púa Case, activist and teacher
10. Damen Bell-Holter, basketball player and activist
11. Frank Waln, singer/songwriter
12. Supaman, singer/songwriter
13. Brooke Simpson, singer/songwriter
14. Jefferson Keel, NCAI president
15. Amanda Blackhorse, activist
16. Tommy Orange, author
17. Gyasi Ross, activist and podcast host
18. Tanya Jo Hall, comedian
19. Adam Beach, actor
20. Rep. Ruth Buffalo, state representative
21. Winona LaDuke, environmentalist
22. Luana Ross, scientist
23. Dyani White Hawk, artist and curator
24. Metika Wilbur, researcher and podcast host
25. Mark Charles, speaker and presidential candidate
26. If you have another person not on this list please get it approved

Summary Key Points

Include the following information in your product
-General information about your activist (tribe, family history, etc.)
-What cause/issue did they fight for
-What outcome/change came as a result.
-What obstacles or barriers did they have to work through.
-What else was going on in the world that might have influenced their activism.
-What are 2 or 3 lessons/traits that your activist showed that you can emulate or copy?

PART 3: Myths

- Summary that includes why the myth exists and what the truth actually is.

Myths

1. All the real Indians died off
2. Don't all Natives live in a teepee?
3. Columbus discovered America
4. Thanksgiving proves Indians welcomed pilgrims
5. Indians were savage and warlike

6. Indians should move on and forget the past
7. Europeans brought civilization to the backwards Indians
8. The US did not have a policy of genocide
9. US presidents were fair minded towards Native Americans
10. The only real Indians are full bloods
11. The US gave Indians their land back with reservations
12. Indians are wards of the state
13. Sports mascots honor native Americans
14. Native American culture belongs to all Americans (I can wear native regalia as a costume)
15. Most Indians are poor and in government welfare
16. Indian casinos make them all rich
17. Since Indians are against pipelines they are anti science
18. Indians are naturally more predisposed to alcoholism
19. What's the problem with thinking of Indian women as princesses or squaws
20. Native Americans can't agree on what to be called
21. Indians are victims and deserve our sympathy
22. Indians get to go to school for free

This project highlights the importance of centering Indigenous people in modernity, deconstructing stereotypes, and teaching students about the tribes close to them.

Anna created multiple presentations that not only discussed tribes in historical contexts, but in modern contexts as well. Below are a few examples of her content:

Figure 14

Teacher Slide on NC Natives

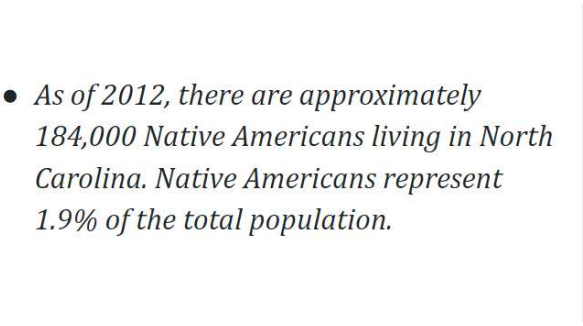


Figure 15

Teacher Slide on the Navajo Nation and COVID-19

Anna not only presented information about the impacts of colonial brutality on Indigenous peoples but provided complementary stories of resilience and resistance. She included many slides on North Carolina tribes, as well, including the Lumbee, Cherokee, and Tuscarora. She discussed modern struggles of Indigenous peoples, including their participation in the Civil Rights movement, as well as their struggle today with COVID-19. She also provided complementary projects and activities for students to complete to reify the information they were taught during lecture; below is one such example. Therefore, her content is critically rooted in presenting the range of Indigenous history, from antiquity to modernity.

Figure 16

Teacher Assignment on Natives Historically and Today

Question	Answer	Where did you find the Answer? (Citing)
Original homeland (where they lived prior to the Europeans?)		
Current homeland (where they live now?)		
Primary staple foods (at least three)		
Clothing material (how was it made and what was it made out of?)		

Language (do they have their own and/or is it related to another language?)		
Writing/numbers (did they have a written language or use a number system?)		
Technology (what tools did they use and how were they constructed?)		
Important religious beliefs and/or symbols		
Important festivals/celebrations (what were they for and when did they happen?)		
Challenges facing people in 1500's to 1800's		
Challenges facing the people today		
Important figures from the tribe		
One interesting fact that you found		

Therefore, though many teachers provided content that deepened stereotypical thinking about Indigenous peoples, many others provided content that challenged these notions, and encouraged students to think about, write about, and research tribes today.

Conclusion

This research was guided by three sets of questions featured below; the corresponding answers to these questions based on the findings from this chapter are thus included:

1. *What have Native students and non-Native teachers learned and internalized about American Indian history, culture, and life via present/past curriculum?*

Both Native students and non-Native teachers have been exposed to stereotypes of Indigenous people that are harmful and untrue. All indicated witnessing the erasure of Indigenous histories, whitewashing of Indigenous perspectives, and performing Indigeneity in the classroom. Both groups are left particularly confounded by the competing mythologies of Indigeneity presented in the classroom – of Indians as simultaneously savage and servile, predatory and passive, hostile and hospitable, obliterated and omnipresent. Native students have

their own families and communities as reference points of rebuttal, but non-Native teachers, who are often unconnected to Indigenous communities, internalize and pass on these paradoxical narratives to their students.

2. *How are students' and teachers' conceptions of American Indian people stereotyped? How does the invisibility of Native narratives in the classroom impact students and teachers?*

Since both Native students are non-Native teachers report being exposed regularly, past and present, to stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, they found it difficult to resist these narratives. Non-Native teachers often reinforced these stereotypes in the classroom, teaching mythologies of Indigenous people rather than authentic histories, or, and perhaps worse, teaching little to nothing about Native people at all. Though most teachers acknowledged a desire to do justice to Native narratives in the classroom, few incorporated such into their content; this indicates that their views of Native people are more stereotyped than they are willing to acknowledge.

Though Native students did not indicate ascribing to stereotypes about Indigenous people, they did report feeling invisibilized, othered, and deeply frustrated as they repeatedly witness their histories reported as footnotes or fallacy in the classroom. These feelings are compounded by the lack of Indigenous students or teachers in urban schools; Native students are left feeling alienated by both the curriculum and the community. Though teachers might not readily ascertain the ways this invisibility impacts them, they do acknowledge a desire to teach more thorough Indigenous histories but feel compelled by the curriculum and the textbooks to avoid doing so. Therefore, non-Native teachers feel pulled in opposing directions, simultaneously towards both justice and erasure, and most often opting for the latter.

3. *In what ways do students resist these stereotyped narratives? In what ways do teachers resist?*

Despite these systemic challenges, many Native students and non-Native teachers alike find ways to resist the stereotyped narratives in the classroom. Native students do so by speaking up, challenging teachers, confronting their peers, teaching their class, and teaching themselves. Though many non-Native teachers in this study acquiesced to the system's settler colonial goals, many others demonstrated a commitment to teaching Indigenous history and modernity fully, as evidenced by their lesson plans, readings, and assignments. Though both sets of participants expressed frustration with the system – non-Native teachers with the curriculum, and Native students with their teachers – both also engaged in imagining classrooms truly demarcated by inclusion.

Currently, Native students feel unduly burdened with the task of surviving as an Indigenous scholar in a setting ill-created for their needs whilst also trying to teach themselves, their peers, and even their teachers about Indigenous histories. Teachers who desire a truly culturally responsive curriculum are burdened with the reality that their textbooks are almost totally oppositional to that purpose. This research imagines a reality where Native students are at last allowed to be students, and where teachers are provided a curriculum that they can teach without caveat.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Though the last chapter provided narratives from students and teachers about their experiences with anti-Indigenous curriculum in the classroom, this chapter will analyze this content within the context of the literature presented in Chapter 2. In Chapter 4, we learned that Indigenous students are faced with a plethora of ills including anti-Indigenous curriculum, macro- and microaggressions from teachers and peers, and the erasure of Native histories from the classroom. These students enact various forms of social, familial and personal capital to combat these issues as they build their stores of resilience in the face of mounting school-based challenges. Teachers, too, are ensnared in this web; they also have been thoroughly subjected to Indigenous stereotypes and anti-Native curriculum. Some teachers resist propagating such in their own work; others, however, continue to peddle it in their classrooms. Both populations – Native students and non-Native teachers – are critical rungs in the pathway towards decolonizing curriculum and creating transformative sites of education for all students.

Literature indicates that Native histories are either erased or stereotyped in the classroom (Chandler, 2010; Moore & Clark, 2004; Pewewardy, 1998; Shear et al., 2015; Stanton, 2014), and this study supports this literature, as well as provides personal accounts of the ways these degradations impact Indigenous students. From these stereotypical lessons and readings that all students, Native and non, are subjected to, problematic ideas about Indigenous people take root and manifest themselves in various ways. For example, literature shows that most teachers are taught stereotypes about Indigenous students in the classroom (Higgins et al., 2015; Pewewardy, 1998; Stanton & Morrison, 2018); and our study shows that in turn, teachers regurgitate this misinformation to their students.

A common thread amongst both students and teachers was that they have both been taught mistruths about Indigenous peoples, have both experienced the ways that Native people are expunged from curriculum. The difference is that non-Native teachers are rarely, if ever, forced to confront this reality, while Native students cannot escape it. In considering this inescapability, I return to Jordan, the Native student who cried when I told her that the Thanksgiving story she was taught in school was not true. She said of her teachers: "I just feel like they've been feeding me the wrong information." Her use of "feeding" is apt. We are fed by those we trust, those we are entrusted to, those we expect to do us no harm. However, in this moment, Jordan grapples weepily with the reality that she has been deceived and is perhaps also considering what other deceptions she has digested. A key tenet of Brayboy's TribCrit (2005) is that Indigenous people fundamentally desire and require self-determination, which is defined as "the process by which a person controls their own life." How can Indigenous students control their own lives when they are fed lies about their histories? How can autonomy and sovereignty be maintained within systems that purposely seek to malign it?

Though the resilience of these students is clear, what does it say about our schools that they are something Indigenous students must become resilient to? Another student – Brandon – struggles with the question: *well, why didn't I learn that*? He talks about finding out interesting information about Indigenous history and wonders why he had to stumble upon this information in his personal time and was not exposed to it in the classroom. Similarly, non-Native teacher Tammy notes "when I went to college and found out all that my people had contributed, it made me a different person. It changed my mindset." Though Brandon is only 12, he is developing a burgeoning awareness of the dissonance between authentic Native history and the bastardized version taught in the classroom. How might the course of his life be altered if he were taught

about the contributions of Native people in a substantive way (Carjuzaa et al., 2010)? If he saw himself reflected in the curriculum, if his peers and teachers recognized the collective Indigenous resilience that has persisted into modernity (Carjuzaa et al., 2010)? Tammy was not provided these realities until she went to college and it was transformative for her. So, too, must schools become these sites of transformation rather than sites of trauma (Love, 2019).

While schools should seek to become emancipatory spaces for the students and communities they serve, Native students know better than to wait. Brayboy's TribCrit contends that "Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification" (2005, p.429). Native students are not excluded from these desires; they enact them just as their nations do, forging a unique form of educational sovereignty in contrast with the colonial underpinnings of their schools. Lumbee attorney and activist Arlinda Locklear noted in her work on fighting for federal recognition (the process by which the federal government acknowledges an Indigenous tribe as sovereign) for the Lumbee that "when you start working with non-federally recognized tribes, you see that the exercise of [sovereignty] is independent of the federal government. That's where you see self-determination in its purest form." (Lowery, 2018, p.10). Just as non-federally recognized tribes like the Lumbee work outside, against, and in spite of the American government, so too do Native students maneuver in and around the schools that similarly disacknowledge them.

Native students resist, refuse, challenge, and self-teach themselves into a form of educational sovereignty that makes them a distinct, ungovernable entity. Like Lena whose classmates made fake headdresses while she "refused to make one," or Brandon who confronted the teacher who said, "what did Indigenous people do to get a day?", or Beth who refused the Black/white binary, saying, "no, I'm Native American…that's my identity. That's what I am" –

these students exemplify the ways Indigenous students declare themselves sovereign in spaces that seek to erase, destroy, or misname them. It is often their Indigenous mothers who have led them to such protestations. Just as Native women are centric in our societies and families, so are they also in governance and education; their guidance and teachings have paved a path for Native students to create mechanisms of self-determined schooling for and by themselves.

As Native students continue to engage in acts of resistance, autonomy, and refusal in schools, I am mindful of Audra Simpson's work on refusal and "how refusal worked in everyday encounters to enunciate repeatedly to ourselves and to outsiders that 'this is who we are, this who you are, these are my rights'" (Simpson, 2007, p.73). As Indigenous students emphatically and sacredly continue to declare their rights, sovereignty, and Indigenous identities, the politics of refusal and its connections to TribCrit will continue to be critical to future research on this subject and to the persistence of these students in schools.

Both students and teachers also highlighted another key aspect of TribCrit in their experiences – of education as "rooted in imperialism" and "White supremacy" (Brayboy, 2005, p.429). Students and teachers discussed at length the ways that Indigenous people are erased, while stories of white heroes are told and retold. Natives are constructed as side characters, a means to an end, as the perpetual and inevitable losers in a larger, more important narrative of white dominance and triumph.

As the contributions of Indigenous people and POC more generally continued to be downplayed or erased, the one predominant structure that is never underscored, never devalued, forever ubiquitous is Whiteness. Most teachers are white, most history is taught from a white perspective, most heroes taught are white, most films made focus on white perspectives – these are but a few of the ways that whiteness is prioritized in our society and schools. Space is

always made for it. All else is peripheral. While students did not directly name or call out whiteness, they allude to it in musings about why Native history is excluded, why they have never had a Native teacher, why what they know about Natives is what they have taught themselves. And though teachers are clearer in their indictment of whiteness, in possessing an awareness of its harmfulness in their classrooms, most leave it at that – awareness and not action. They decry the centering of whiteness in curricula but do nothing to decenter it; bemoan that Native history is not taught more but do little to teach it. Therefore, Whiteness remains durable because those most equipped to dismantle it remain engaged in upholding it.

Similarly, just as Native people are characterized as animalistic, savage, and childlike in textbooks and children's' books (Chaudhri & Schuau, 2016; Stanton, 2014), both students and teachers report witnessing these stereotypes recur in their classrooms. Native students seek to disrupt these stereotypes, while non-Native teachers disrupt and acquiesce to them, or tiptoe the line between the two. Similarly, non-Native teachers also report the curriculum's tendency to depict Indigenous people as passive and inactive which is similarly reflected in literature (Stanton, 2014).

Many non-Native teachers also contributed to these stereotypes by presenting Indigenous people within imagery that conjures stereotypical thinking. For example, Angie, Karen, and Corey all presented pictures of Indigenous people situated in antiquity, or alongside buffalo, teepees or feathers. Other imagery featured Natives holding bows and arrows. These teachers, therefore, did little to deconstruct stereotypes, and instead further ushered their students into internalizing them. For example, though Angie stated that during her K-12 years as a student she remembers seeing "just those typical images…you know, of what Native Americans look like with the headdress and things like that…" throughout many of the slides she used in her

classmates, Indigenous people were presented as wearing headdresses. Therefore, while many teachers believe that such imagery is problematic, they still employ them in their classrooms without providing context, deconstructing their meaning, or providing examples of Indigenous people in modernity.

One of the most concerning moments from the conversations with teachers occurred when a teacher commented that the role Puritans and other Christians played in conquering America "wasn't that they were being like malicious." This highlights another point in the literature, of the romanticization of colonization, of its divine inevitability, of its presentation as being the will of God Himself (Moore & Clark, 2004; Shear et al., 2015, Trafzer & Lorimer, 2014). This teacher considered herself hyper-committed to teaching culturally responsive history, and yet she made this statement. Therefore, even the teachers who proclaim that they are pro-Indigenous hold spaces for White supremacy and settler colonialism. Other teachers demonstrated similar allegiance in their lack of knowledge of Indigenous people, despite teaching NC and US history/social studies courses. When you do not do the work of including Indigenous people in course content, then you instead do the work of subconsciously ascribing and aligning with White supremacy (Frankenberg, 1994; Higgins et al., 2015).

Other Indigenous-related coursework provided by teachers was similarly telling. Though many teachers indicated presenting pro-Indigenous content in the classroom, the materials they sent indicate that that is not true. Many of these teachers presented stereotypical imagery, only briefly discussed Indigenous people (one unit or lesson) and confining them to those spaces, or only presented Indigenous people in antiquated contexts (Shear et al., 2015). Therefore, this part of the study was critical in illuminating blind spots that teachers were eager to ignore or simply did not realize were problematic.

Similarly, Tuck and Yang (2012) discuss the ways that settlers seek absolution for their peoples' ancestral role in violence against Indigenous people, and for their own role in perpetuating Indigenous erasure. Teachers enact this absolution by placing the sole blame on the curriculum rather than acknowledging and reflecting on the ways that they are agents in Indigenous erasure. They treat the curriculum as this ubiquitous being that totally usurps their autonomy as teachers, which is contradictory to other aspects of their teaching in which they express having too much freedom. For example, some teachers complained that North Carolina state standards are too vague in terms of Indigenous history, which allows for multiple interpretations. Therefore, the complaints that the curriculum is too strict while stating that the standards are too lax do not mesh.

When considering this research in the context of North Carolina, with its rich Indigenous history and its persistent Indigenous presence, it is unfortunate that more students do not report having learned about their tribe(s) in the classroom, nor do their teachers report teaching them. Despite most teachers teaching 8th grade Social Studies, which focuses on North Carolina history, no teacher was able to name the eight tribes of North Carolina. A few of the teachers were able to name the Cherokee and the Lumbee, but even fewer went beyond knowledge of the name and into rooting the histories of these peoples into their classrooms. Instead, most students report being subjected to stereotypical imaginings of Native people, or – and perhaps worse – nothing at all.

Only a single student reported a teacher teaching about her tribe – the Lumbee Tribe – in the classroom; she learned about her Tribe in the context of the theories surrounding the Lost Colony, which were a group of European settlers who mysteriously vanished in the 1500s (Lowery, 2018). Many believe that the Lost Colony joined with a nearby Native tribe, and that

the Lumbee tribe is the result of this coupling; however, this theory has been widely debunked (Lowery, 2018). Therefore, this student did not learn anything tangible about her people, but instead was fed a theory, a conjecture, a suspicion about an entire nation of people with an otherwise fascinating and full history well-worth documenting in the classroom, particularly as it relates to North Carolina history. Yet again, rather than presenting this information, the Lumbee are reduced to a mythology, much as Indigenous people are similarly minimized and obfuscated. This is in line with TribCrit's tenet of education being "intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation" (Brayboy, 2005, p.430). Rather than creating space for authentic Indigenous narratives in the classroom, their stories are instead swallowed up by white ones, with Indigenous erasure making way for white supremacy.

Native students, though, live their lives authentically as Indigenous – they go home daily to their Indigenous families, they travel to their Indigenous communities, they participate in Indigenous events and ceremonies. All of this to only later be subjected to class content that depicts them as savage, as docile, as nonexistent (Chaudhri & Schuau, 2016; Stanton, 2014). How are they to come to terms with these dueling realities? With no mention of their people? With their teachers saying one thing but their lives attesting to another? Native students are entangled in what Brayboy's TribCrit calls a "liminal space" that Indigenous people occupy. These students exist in schools where misinformation is presented about their people that they must resist to maintain their cultural integrity, but to which they must also succumb to succeed fully and not be classified as deviant by teachers. Therefore, Indigenous students face the difficult task of seeking success in schools predicated upon their removal.

As Native students traverse this terrain, navigate the Black/white binary in the South, and experience the overall degradation of Native people in schools, they manage to find ways to

persist, resist, and excel in these spaces. Students used their resources, including smartphones to fact-check teachers and their families' ancestral knowledge, to create space for themselves within their schools. Even if the students did not challenge their teachers, they found solace in the knowledge that they had the truth. Though this is not a total consolation, it does provide some form of peace. Students wielded this knowledge in multiple ways – by either electing to teach their class, by correcting teachers, and sometimes by remaining silent. All are used as mechanisms of survival. Teacher silence, however, is complicity (Castagno, 2008; Pewewardy, 1998; Polluck, 2001). When teachers decide not to challenge curriculum, they decide that their students do not deserve access to truth. They decide to allow students to be subjected to inaccuracies. They decide to commit to White supremacy (Higgins et al., 2003; Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2005). It is a dangerous marriage.

As Native students manage teacher complicity and confront their own, schools must become sites of transformation and social justice (Love, 2019). They must find ways to center Indigenous people rather than pushing them to the margins. Students are increasingly seeking these remedies. Teachers must find ways to spark this change, within the system, within their schools, within themselves. This change is necessary, and as Native students are increasingly being armed with the truth, inevitable.

During and after these conversations with students and teachers, many memories of my own experiences in K-12 and higher education arose. I remember one of my peers approaching me after class and saying, "you always talk about being Lumbee in class, but you never talk about your other side." I was perplexed. It took me a few moments to realize that he thought I was biracial. When I reminded him that I have never indicated that I was anything other than Lumbee, he looked perplexed. How could I, who looked so different from media and textbook

representations of Indigeneity, be wholly Indigenous? I remember another time another student came up to me during an icebreaker in class. She told me that she had been hoping to meet me to tell me that when she was a child, she was a member of the Indian Guides program at the YMCA and that, through this program, she was "a member of the Hopi Tribe." She was beaming as she shared with excitement all the different ways she had participated in the cultural appropriation of Indigenous people, and did not realize that as an adult, and as a person who identifies as a culturally responsive educator, that this was extremely problematic and offensive. That she thought I would share her excitement still astounds me. I could fill the rest of the pages with more stories, more indignations, but I only share these two examples to show that the kinds of stereotypes Native students are exposed to do not stop at K-12. They persist at the University. They persist in the workplace. Education though, and particularly K-12, lays the groundwork and establishes the foundation upon which all the rest lie. If we can get at the root, the problem will die; and if we can plant a new seed, solutions can spring forth. Below, several sets of such solutions and recommendations for future research, for curriculum developers, for teachers, and for Native students are listed.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research adds to the literature that characterizes curriculum as inherently anti-Native by demonstrating the ways that it harms Indigenous students, as well as the ways non-Native teachers complicate the issue. Future research on this issue might expand beyond North Carolina and beyond the South to determine the impacts of curriculum on other non-Southern Native American students. Additionally, this work could be strengthened by quantitative data. Data that seeks to know quantitatively how Native students are impacted by anti-Indianness in the classroom could be a powerful asset to this research. For example, Native students' academic

performance could be assessed in conjunction with their experiences of anti-Indianness in the classroom. Other questions might include the percentage of Natives who have had Native teachers in the past or other Native peers in their classrooms. Assessments of schools with Native mascots could also be done to determine the impacts of such constant anti-Indian imagery on students.

Recommendations for Curriculum Developers

Curriculum developers play a key role in this issue. Many teachers are overburdened by their jobs, having to create new lessons for every single day, complete mounds of paperwork, as well as manage the multiple attitudes and personalities of students and parents. They have one of the most difficult jobs in the world, and certainly one of the most important. They are major influencers in our children's life. Providing them with a curriculum that centers Indigenous people, tells Indigenous stories, and presents Indigenous people in modern contexts as real, living, and vibrant people is one way to make their jobs less daunting. Providing them with the resources they need to make necessary changes in their classes is critical to ensuring that system-wide changes occur. Below are several actionable steps curriculum developers can take to provide comprehensive and thorough Indigenous education and content.

- When developing content specific to a state, find out the tribes currently living in that state and review those tribe's websites. Use this tribally-centric information to develop curriculum on all of the tribe's in that state.
- The State of North Carolina also has several urban Indian organizations, a State Advisory Council on Indian Education (SACIE), and NC Commission of Indian Affairs, Indian Education Departments, and several other grassroots, Indigenous-led organizations

(NCNAYO, United Tribes, AIWPN) that are available to consult to develop curriculum specifically for North Carolina.

- Include substantive content on Indigenous people both historically and in modern times. Indigenous people have been involved in every facet of America, and predate the creation of America. Include content on them from pre-contact as well.
- Hire Indigenous curriculum developers. The more diverse the team of developers, the more inclusive, complex, and dynamic the curriculum developed. Native people deserve a seat at the table in the creation of content related to their histories and lived realities.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

Though many teachers are exposed to anti-Indigenous curriculum in their years as K-12 students, as well as other Eurocentric standards, it is critical for teacher preparation programs to begin doing the work of decolonizing and implementing social justice framework and pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Though teachers cannot be experts on every facet of their field, they can be taught to be critical thinkers and to examine content from a social justice lens. Teacher preparation programs should work to deconstruct stereotypes in teachers about Indigenous people, and challenge and replace their preexisting knowledge (Pewewardy, 1998). Additionally, Indigenous knowledge should be emphasized in every single preservice teacher course available, not just in the context of Social Studies, History, or Literature. Indigenous people and knowledge a part of every facet of human life and this should be acknowledged across course contents, not as a single subject, course, unit, or lesson. Providing preservice teachers with continuous access to Indigenous knowledge and creating pathways for them to collaborate with and learn from Indigenous people will be critical components of any teacher preparation program that is invested in decolonial work.

Below are some actionable steps that teacher preparation programs can take to establish a pro-Indigenous environment:

- Hire Native faculty. Native professors can be instrumental to this systemic change but should not be responsible for the bulk of the work.
- Recruit Native preservice teachers from within the University and from tribes local to the University.
- Partner with local tribes and organizations to revise curriculum, create programs, and establish long-term collaborative goals.
- Ensure that Indigenous people and history is included in every facet of curriculum.

Recommendations for Teachers & Educators

Teachers and educators must envision themselves as change agents to create change in the classroom and in the minds of their students. Many Indigenous students like the ones in this study have been and will continue to be exposed to anti-Indian comments from teachers, from peers, from the media. Teachers must disrupt these realities for Native students and be a teacher who stands in solidarity with them. Even if the curriculum never changes, if the textbooks remain the same, teachers have a role in being a bright spot in an otherwise bleak reality for many students. Several teachers that I spoke with actively challenge the curriculum, assign Indigenous texts, do land acknowledgements, and teach about Indigenous people today, among a whole host of other social justice related activities. All teachers must engage in this work and go even further. Space must be created for Indigeneity.

One teacher discussed moving beyond whitewashed curriculum and mentioned the paper headdress/vest activity that is popular during many Thanksgiving lessons. To that she stated, "we not doing that." Many more teachers need to adopt this ideology. Just because it has been

done for so long does not mean it is right. Students deserve teachers who self-analyze and critique their teaching, who do not engage in tradition for the sake of tradition, but who interrogate all practices to determine if they are just or unjust. If they are the latter, teachers must say "we not doing that." Below are some recommendations for teachers in providing Indigenous education:

- Read articles or books or listen to podcasts about tribes local to your city or state.
- Most tribes have a website. Find out the names of the tribes local to your state and review their websites.
- Teach Indigenous content all year, not just during Native American Heritage Month. Native students are Native beyond those periods, and non-Native students need year-round exposure to disrupt pre-conceived stereotypes.
- Teach about Indigenous people both historically and in modernity.
- Partner with a trusted colleague to create inclusive curriculum if the task feels too daunting to complete alone.
- Research stereotypes about Indigenous people. Examine the way your textbook or your lessons might replicate these stereotypes and work to eradicate this in favor of more nuanced and realistic portrayals of Indigenous peoples.

Recommendations for Native Students

I want to finish this work with those most important to it, those at its very core – Indigenous students. This work was created for you. Your stories are so important, and I wanted to tell others about your experiences. The strength and perseverance you have shown is incredible. Though for teachers, Universities, and curriculum developers, I had lengthy recommendations for what they need to do, for you I have no such list. You are already doing

more than your share. You are already bearing a disproportionate brunt of a burden you should never have had to carry. I only recommend that you keep speaking out when you feel that you need to, keep protecting and preserving your mental and cultural health when you need to, and keep connecting with other Indigenous people as much as possible. Sharing stories is a form of healing. It's how we build community, solve problems, and express ourselves.

I hope that for the Native students in this study, that you feel that I provided you an outlet to express things you never knew you needed to express, and to also self-reflect on your own strength as well as the collective strength of all the Indigenous people rooting and rooted for you. For any Native students who might be reading this now who were not in the study, perhaps other doctoral students, or undergraduates – reading these stories might feel like a trip down memory lane, or a trip to just five minutes ago when a classmate made an anti-Native comment to you – this work is for you, too. We are all in this together and there is a circular rhythm to this – the Native students will become the scholars who will write works like this, and the Native scholars who write works like this were once the Native students. As Native scholars we do not create work that is separate from ourselves – we create what is critical for the collective success, strength, and survival of other Indigenous people. Native K-12 students are also engaged in this, though perhaps unknowingly – every time they speak out, every time they teach themselves or teach others – they resist and persist in ways necessary to the futurity and visibility of Indigenous people. So, to all of the Indigenous students and scholars out there reading this – keep resisting and persisting.

Conclusion

Students, parents, teachers, curriculum developers, administrators and more are all stakeholders in this critical issue. When Indigenous histories, stories, and peoples are valued, the

curriculum and climate will be reflective of this. Indigenous students will feel respected, seen and heard, and will see an institutional acknowledgement of their ancestors as well as of modern-day Indigenous leaders. All students thrive in contexts that do not degrade other cultures, but that pay due homage to all peoples who have contributed to the world and to America (Carjuzaa et al., 2010). Eurocentrism and White supremacy are harmful to all students, but a classroom that centers truth and justice is critical to helping students avoid developing racist ideology (Love, 2019). Therefore, though this work centers Indigenous students, it is important for all students. All students benefit when Indigeneity is centered. Teachers and schools are strengthened by this commitment to inclusivity, but exclusion harms us all.

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