“IT HAS JUST OPENED MY EYES TO HOW IMPORTANT IT IS”: AN ANALYSIS OF EASTERN SHOSHONE AND NORTHERN ARAPAHO TEACHERS: ENGAGEMENT WITH CRITICAL INDIGENOUS THEORIES

by

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Amanda LeClair-Diaz, titled "IT HAS JUST OPENED MY EYES TO HOW IMPORTANT IT IS": AN ANALYSIS OF EASTERN SHOSHONE AND NORTHERN ARAPAHO TEACHERS: ENGAGEMENT WITH CRITICAL INDIGENOUS THEORIES and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the first teachers in my life, my parents. Mom and Dad, I would not be who I am without your love and support. My accomplishments are because of your unwavering support.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation targeted Indigenous educators who have affiliations with both the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes in the Wind River Reservation. The study analyzed how their perspectives around curriculum and pedagogy were impacted when they interacted with critical Indigenous education theory and conversed with Indigenous education scholars. The research questions were 1) What are the ways Indigenous educators can sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho ways of life in the classroom?; 2) How will participants' teaching philosophies change from their conversations with Indigenous scholars and their interactions with Indigenous education research?; 2a) How does this experience with Indigenous theories and scholars inform the ways in which Indigenous educators sustain Indigenous knowledge and values?; and 3) How can Indigenous educators incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy? The study used qualitative methods and incorporated Indigenous qualitative research methods along with Indigenous knowledge systems. Data was gathered through self-reflective journal entries, pre/post interviews, and focus groups. Within the theme of relationality, subthemes emerged addressing Indigenous teachers' relationality to community and school, Indigenous teachers' relationships with students and their families, and relationality between teachers' and students' identities and curriculum. The second main theme was the teachers engaging with Indigenous theories and scholars. A subtheme that arose described the teachers' personal reflections regarding Indigenous theories. A third main theme that occurred was experience with Indigenous theories and scholars and interactions with Indigenous knowledge and values. The subtheme for this theme analyzed teachers' reflections after meeting Indigenous education scholars. The fourth main theme was contextualizing the process and how teachers engaged with critical Indigenous theories. A subtheme that occurred was how teachers took steps to incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy. A final theme was how critical dialogues impact curriculum possibilities. The study showed initial dialogues and ideas teachers had for centering Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy. The implications of the study were how the Indigenous teachers engaged in critical Indigenous consciousness

upon reading critical Indigenous educational theory and dialoguing with the Indigenous education scholars, a space for the Indigenous teachers to have dialogues in order to sustain their efforts toward educational sovereignty, the necessity for more research to support Native teachers confronting schools that refuse to see the benefit of critical Indigenous pedagogy, culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy, and decolonial praxis, impacts on policies, development of Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho curriculum and pedagogy, a need for more collaboration between language teachers and classroom teachers, and professional developments that focus on critical Indigenous education theories.

PROLOGUE

Han, neq newe nai Niitowuniibeii. Neq diewonlee Amanda LeClair-Diaz. Neq Sosonrih. Neq saydekah. Neq piyah Iva LeClair (St. Clair). Neq apeq Tex LeClair. Neq paavih Aaron LeClair. Neq paavih Nathan LeClair. Neq kakuh Winnie St. Clair (Welch). Neq togoq Wallace St. Clair. Neq hutsiq Roberta Palmer (Hamilton). Neq kenruh Dale Palmer. Neq kenruh Stanley LeClair. Neq kunwambe Martin Diaz. Neq gahni Yu o gowee'. Seekun davai tsande. Huuwihyu.

Tous, nenee'eesih'inoo Niitowuniibeii. Nenee'eesih'inoo Amanda LeClair-Diaz. Neneeninoo sosonoi'isei. Hiinono'eininoo. Neinoo Iva LeClair (St. Clair). Neisonoo Tex LeClair. Neesoh'oho' Aaron LeClair. Neesoh'oho' Nathan LeClair. Nei'eibehe' Winnie St. Clair (Welch). Nebesiibehe' Wallace St. Clair. Nei'eibehe' Roberta Palmer (Hamilton). Nebesiibehe' Dale Palmer. Nebesiibehe' Stanley LeClair. Nees Martin Diaz. Neyeihi' Cee'eyeino'oowu'. Nii'iisiini'. Hohou.

I am an Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho woman. My name is Amanda LeClair-Diaz. My name is Niitowuniibeii. My mother is Iva LeClair, who is Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho. My father is Tex LeClair, who is Eastern Shoshone. My brothers are Aaron and Nathan LeClair. My maternal grandmother is Winnie St. Clair. My maternal grandfather was Wallace St. Clair. My paternal grandmother is Roberta Palmer. My paternal grandfather was Dale Palmer. My other paternal grandfather was Stanley LeClair. My husband is Martin Diaz. My home is Fort Washakie, WY. It is a good day, and I'm thankful.

The first two paragraphs of this prologue are intended to express the core of who I am and how I move through the world. The first paragraph is my personal introduction in Eastern Shoshone, and the second paragraph is in the Northern Arapaho language. Even though I am an enrolled citizen of the Eastern Shoshone, I also have familial roots in the Northern Arapaho tribe

through my maternal grandmother. I chose to begin this dissertation with my languages to ground me as an emerging Indigenous[1] scholar and to remind myself of the responsibility to my communities (Absolon & Willet, 2005).

I rarely heard Eastern Shoshone or Northern Arapaho languages in my childhood, but there were other ways I was taught and socialized to carry myself as an Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho woman. One of the most prominent teachings my parents passed on to me was the importance of sharing with other people. Whether it was sharing food or other resources we had, this act was about taking care of others and treating other people how you want to be treated. When my mother discussed sharing, she told me stories about her mother, my grandmother, Winnie. Grandma Winnie was born on the Wind River Reservation in 1924, six months after Indigenous people were considered citizens of the United States of America. She lived through not being able to enter businesses in the nearby border town of the reservation, being a boarding school student, and not being able to vote until 1965 (Aadland, 2019). Through all of these lived experiences, my grandmother made sure to always share what she had with other people. My mother told me stories of how when my Grandma Winnie married my Grandpa Wallace, they had to learn how to ranch and farm or be relocated to the city. So, my grandparents became ranchers so they could stay in their home. Grandma Winnie kept a garden, and any extra produce she had, she shared with people in the community. My mother also told me how my grandmother shared other resources besides food. When Bill Clinton was running for presidency in the early 1990s, my grandmother campaigned for him on the Wind River Reservation. She called community members, made sure they knew where to go vote, and registered people to

[1] Both terms Indigenous and Native are used in the study. Indigenous is used more in a global context for original people around the globe while Native is used to describe original people in the U.S. Indigenous is used to describe the participants of this study and to discuss critical education theory and movement that centers Indigenous knowledge because these are local as well as global issues (Kovach, 2009).

vote. Through these stories my mother shared with me, she revealed the importance of reciprocity and how this act strengthens the resiliency of Indigenous communities. The impact of sharing and taking care of other people is beneficial to current community members and to future generations of tribal nations.

I have always carried my Grandma Winnie's actions close to my heart. My hope for this dissertation is to practice my grandmother's teachings and actions. I have had the privilege of attending graduate school and dedicating time to study and obtain knowledge that is critical to Indigenous education and teacher education. This study is a chance for me to share resources and information that I have learned with my community. There are so many people and institutions from my tribe who have supported me while I attend school. Similarly to how they've taken care of me, it is now time for me to take care of them by sharing knowledge I have learned.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There are specific memories I have pertaining to my educational experience as a young Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho woman. In preschool, I recall a girl bringing to class a very popular doll that came with a spoon with retractable cherries. You could hold the spoon up to doll's mouth, and the cherries would retract into the spoon. It gave the illusion that you were feeding the doll. I remember the doll my classmate brought to class had blonde hair, blue eyes, and white skin. I asked her if I could hold it, and she allowed me to cradle the doll in my arms. I remember telling her I wish I could have a doll like this. She looked me in the eyes and told me I was too dark to have that doll. She then grabbed the doll's leg, pulled it out of my arms, and walked away from me. It was the first time I realized I was different than other students in my class.

Another incident that happened when I was in grade school. A peer who would call me squaw multiple times over the years. His justification for this action was that his great grandfather had raped a Native woman so to him this gave him the right to call me a slur. In high school, I was in a vocabulary high school class where another peer and I were somehow on the topic of when Europeans and Native people first encountered each other. I remember saying Native people had ways of teaching and learning that existed prior to European contact. She replied to me saying that "without us" – meaning her European ancestors – Native people wouldn't have "real" education, and that I should be thankful.

Unfortunately, I have a multitude of stories like these that were distracting to my learning and made me feel like an outsider during my entire educational experience. At the time, I subconsciously knew what I endured was racism, but it was hard to express that especially when I had peers who believed racism was non-existent. It wasn't until I was in college when I

encountered a former high school peer, and we began discussing our experiences in school. I revealed how I felt people in our school had treated me differently than our other peers. I remember her eyes softening as she looked at me, she nodded slightly, and she confirmed that I had absolutely been treated vastly different than the white students at our school.

After I had the words to express the racism I endured and validation from someone who had witnessed what I had gone through, I realized I wasn't treated the way I was because I was bad or strange. The experiences I had were caused by my identity as a Native woman – something I never would want to change about myself. Over the years, these incidents along with others not listed lead me on a path to ask how can schools, teachers, administrators, and families disrupt harmful rhetoric, beliefs, and systems that are so rooted in settler colonialism? How can Native students' feel safe and included in their own education rather than outliers? While my dissertation is a culmination of my doctoral program, it is also driven by my past and is an initial vision of how to achieve an educational experience that honors Native students' authentic identities.

This chapter focuses on my own personal interest in the topic of Indigenous education and the broad history of Indigenous education. The chapter then moves to Hipp's (2019) book *Sovereign Schools* and its focus of Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho community members' self-determination movement over education for their youth. The chapter then focuses on current contemporary critical education theories which include culturally sustaining pedagogy, culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy, critical Indigenous pedagogy, and decolonization. Then, the focus of the chapter shifts to settler colonialism and curriculum violence enacted on Indigenous peoples, Indigenous qualitative research, the study's research questions, and the study's theoretical framework. Thereafter, the significance of the study which

includes sustaining Indigenous identities – moving beyond boarding school history and curriculum development from within communities is featured. Then, the conditions of the study and the organization of the chapters are presented.

Indigenous Education

My Story

I am an enrolled citizen of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe with descendancy from the Northern Arapaho Tribe, and I am from the homelands of the Tsis tsis'tas (Cheyenne), Sosoni (Eastern Shoshone), Hinono'eino' (Northern Arapaho), Očéthi Šakówiŋ (Lakota, Santee, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Sisseton, Lower Yanktonai, and Upper Yanktonai), and Apsaalooké (Crow). Due to colonization and actions that support settler colonialism, these homelands were compartmentalized. These communities listed were forcibly relocated to other areas within the United States. My tribes, the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, were forced to live together on what is now known as the Wind River Reservation. Once both tribes were required to live on the Wind River Reservation, many people created families together and a myriad of their descendants have lineage to both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities.

Even though I grew up on a predominately Shoshone side of the Wind River Reservation, my family and I lived next door to my grandmother who was Arapaho. My life perspective was influenced and nurtured by values and knowledge systems that generations of family members had been guided by. Despite the importance of these ways of knowing systems in my life, I quickly learned where and when I could express my perspective as an Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho woman.

I attended school in the bordertown that was sixteen miles from the reservation. The schools I attended were predominately white, and I experienced multiple racist incidents. I felt

my experience as a Native woman was constantly silenced by peers and in the curriculum. My senior year of high school, I took a variety of Advanced Placement Courses for both high school and college credit. For my history credits, I was required to take World History and American History. I remember my mother expressed how she didn't understand why my peers and I were required to take courses such as the history courses as World and American History, yet learned nothing regarding Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho histories and laws. It made me aware of how certain perspectives were valued and amplified not in just these history classes, but in my education in general.

I soon realized this exclusion of Native people's viewpoints in terms of the local and national history of our homelands and country is not only limited to predominately white institutions but is inclusive of the curriculum used within Native schools. When I worked as a paraprofessional in an elementary school in my home community, I noticed Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho perspectives were largely excluded from the curriculum, despite the student body of the school being predominately Native. Despite this school being located on my home reservation, the staff and administration is predominately non-Native (with a large portion identifying as white). The time I worked at the elementary school in my home community made me reflect on my own educational experience and how some voices were being prioritized over others in the curriculum. I also wondered if Native teachers could have more time for discussions about what culturally relevant lessons would look like for Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho students, what actions could occur? In addition, how can new critical Indigenous theories inform Native teachers' dialogues and actions? Specifically, how does understanding the history and local context of education on the Wind River Reservation inform how we conceptualize Indigenous education today, which I turn to next.

History of Indigenous Education

The colonizing methods used by teachers and administrators were fatal to countless Native youth. The U.S. federal government classifying Indigenous people as wards and overruling Indigenous parents' say of their children had somber outcomes (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). In many cases, Indigenous children died at boarding schools due to poor living conditions, disease, abuse, and trauma and were buried at the schools' grounds (Landis, 2006; Little, 2017; Piccard, 2013; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Today, many of these children's remains are still located at the grounds of these boarding schools. In O'Gara's (2021) documentary *Home from School: The Children of Carlisle*, the nearly decade-long efforts of the Northern Arapaho Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Northern Arapaho tribal members' to bring home "…the remains of three Northern Arapaho children buried at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania" (Perez, 2021). The names of the children were Little Chief, Horse, and Little Plume. The emotional turmoil of these children dying and being buried far from their homes and families still impacts community members today. Yufna Soldier Wolf, who is a member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe and a descendant of Little Chief discussed how the absence of these children was felt for generations by their families and community members (Perez, 2021). Soldier Wolf states,

> This is a spiritual journey…Keep that in mind, this is a personal journey for every tribe that goes through this process because they're put on this path to come back. And they can't receive their full lifecycle when ancestors are sitting on the shelf, waiting to be reburied, waiting to meet their relatives again. So it's a real special, unique, sacred process. (Edwards, 2021)

Soldier Wolf's statement around the necessity of bringing home the three Northern Arapaho youth speaks deeply to the well-being of our ancestors and how it's important to care for them even once they leave this world. The quote also speaks to how coming together as a community to determine how to care for those affected by past traumas impacts the process of healing for descendants. Most importantly for Little Chief, Horse, and Little Plume, they were able to return home and be put to rest in ways that were familiar to them and their ancestors. The Northern Arapaho Tribe repatriating Little Chief, Horse, and Little Plume shows how Indigenous knowledge systems are ever lasting for Indigenous people. For me, it highlights how Indigenous education is paramount to the well-being of Indigenous youth and their communities.

Indigenous education existed well before contact with European settlers (Au et al., 2016; Mack et al., 2012; Ma Rhea, 2015). Definition of Indigenous education is unique to each Indigenous community and their ways of knowing, but essentially, it is described as teachings "and/or the ancestral knowledge from which it stems" (Kana'iaupuni & Kawai'ae'a, 2008, p. 69). Once contact between tribal communities and colonial settlers occurred, Indigenous education was condemned. Over the decades, church and state in the United States formed a partnership "to advance the common project of white supremacy…" (Grande, 2004, p. 12). Even though these assimilation efforts caused irrevocable damage and trauma to communities, many facets of Indigenous education remained and were passed down in families generationally.

Westernized education is largely viewed as an individual process and still exhibits colonizing tactics that Native people have endured (Cajete, 2015). The onus for learning and succeeding is largely placed on the student. Students from Native communities are taught to think not only about themselves. Lessons about their roles and responsibilities in their families and larger communities are instilled in them from their immediate and extended families. Native

students and their families understand the importance of education, but often how classroom knowledge connects to knowledge systems and ways educational institutions can unite with the community are absent (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). I now move focus to highlight an example of Native families from the Wind River Reservation who enacted an educational movement to center Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies in classrooms.

Sovereign Schools: Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Education

An example of educational research that highlights the Wind River Reservation, Indigenous education, and the importance of centering the knowledge systems of both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in the classroom is Dr. Martha Louise Hipp's (2019) book *Sovereign Schools*. This book focuses on various Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho families engaging in self-determination by creating their own public schools in the Wind River Reservation town of Ethete starting in the 1960s.

Sovereign Schools provides a necessary history about both the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes and the subject of education. It focuses on the forced Westernized education that community members received from Westernized schools, and how they asserted their sovereign rights to establish a school (now known as Wyoming Indian High School – the establishment of this school also lead to Wyoming Indian Elementary School and Wyoming Indian Middle School) that would value tribal values and morals at all educational levels. Hipp, a former school psychologist that served the Wyoming Indian school district for a multitude of years, collaborated with community members to publish this work in a way that is true to their experiences. *Sovereign Schools* provides insight into Wind River community members' efforts to assert self-governance in regard to Indigenous youth's education and how this movement fits into the larger conversation of community-led educational activism.

During the civil rights movement in the 1960s, Native communities saw opportunities to separate from government control of their schools and enact sovereignty regarding Native youth's education (Hipp, 2019). For parents on the Wind River Reservation, one defining moment that motivated them to be the leaders of schools "…was an attempt by white teachers to 'reorganize' the Indian school money for the purpose of providing their own children with three separate schools" (Hipp, 2019, p. 51). Native youth's options for high school were attending school off the reservation in non-Native schools, attending predominately non-Native schools located on the reservation, or traveling to out of state boarding schools (Hipp, 2019). The incident with white teachers mismanaging school funds, lack of culturally centered schooling, and Native students experiencing consistent racism from white peers in the schools off of the reservation inspired Wind River reservation parents to create a public high school on the Wind River Reservation. Hipp's (2019) *Sovereign Schools* illuminates a time where Wind River Reservation parents and community members collaborated and discussed what curriculum and pedagogy should look like for Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho students. There is a need to revisit and expand this initial effort to assert our sovereignty by engaging with what new forms of critical Indigenous theories can offer, which I turn to next.

Contemporary Critical Education Theories

At the turn of the century, we have seen a growth of Indigenous scholarship that has been resourceful for not only Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy, but for Indigenous teacher and teacher education. For Indigenous educators (both teacher candidates and current educators) and Indigenous communities, the increase of Indigenous scholarship is a reminder of the knowledge that already exists in Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies and how it is possible to center curriculum and pedagogy in these ways of knowing. In what follows, I provide a brief overview

of key theoretical frameworks that have informed my own thinking about education in general, and more specifically, Indigenous education. First, I start with Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP)

Culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) "…seeks to perpetuate and foster – to sustain – linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation" (Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 1). Instead of asking how curriculum can respond or make learning relevant to historically oppressed communities, it asks what are ways knowledge from these groups can be sustained within education. CSP considers that historically oppressed groups don't have one, homogenous experience. It allows room for educators to answer the question, "what is the purpose of schooling *in pluralistic societies*" (Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 1). CSP and its focus on sustaining cultural pluralism is imperative to educational research that centers more than one tribe's perspectives, like the Eastern Shoshone and the Northern Arapaho Tribes. Even though both tribes are connected to the Wind River Reservation, they are distinct from one another in their worldviews and knowledge systems. A conceptual framework like CSP makes it possible to speak about two tribes' epistemologies and ontologies and how even though they are different, they can co-exist and are vital for community members and the Wind River Reservation.

Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy (CSRP)

For Native communities, culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP) centers their issues, perspectives, and calls for CSP's lens to include and support revitalizing Indigenous languages and knowledge systems and what is means to sustain these in contemporary times (Coulter & Jimenez-Silva, 2017; Lee & McCarty, 2017). CSRP is defined in three parts which include: 1) acting upon unequal and unbalanced jurisdiction and disrupting and changing damage caused by colonization; 2) reclaim and revitalize traditions, languages, and knowledge that

colonization has impeded; and 3) responsibility that's centered in the community (Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 62). CSRP amplifies Native communities' right to educational self-determination and acknowledges how this theory is enacted will differ from community to community. For Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho education, CSRP can create sustainable connections between both epistemologies, disrupt the cycle of colonization that still affects education and other institutions in communities, and acknowledge they are distinct groups with responsibilities to their unique groups and to the larger Wind River Reservation community.

Critical Indigenous Pedagogy (CIP)

Similar to CSRP and CSP, critical pedagogy's objective is to unsettle inequalities and oppression "…through a pedagogical process that empowers students and teachers to create social change in their communities (Darder, Baltodando & Torres, 2013; Freire, 2002; Kincheloe, 2008)" (Garcia & Shirley, 2012, p. 80). Specifically, it's based in Indigenous communities' connections to the land and opposes settler colonialism imposition on sacred sites (Garcia et al., 2021). CIP's focus is to pushback and disrupt the effects of colonization, which include resisting how Westernized society defines Indigenous identity (Garcia & Shirley, 2012; Grande, 2004). It is committed to defending Native language revitalization and knowledge reclamation through teaching methods (Garcia & Shirley, 2012). CIP is also dedicated to the educational sovereignty and acts of reciprocity between education and Indigenous communities (Garcia & Shirley, 2012; McCarty & Lee, 2014). For research that focuses on Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities, CIP provides educators with a framework that requires pedagogy and curriculum to focus on how tribes' epistemologies, ontologies, and land can be centered in classrooms and sustained for future generations.

Decolonization

A definition of decolonization is reflective of the members of an Indigenous community and their beliefs around relationships to each other, the land, bodies of water, and beings that are not human (Sium et al., 2012). It is a concept that is not finite and can take a lifetime to understand what its true meaning is. One explanation of decolonization from Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) states it's "a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels" (p. 22). The engagement decolonization participates in is deconstructing policies, philosophies, and actions that have supported imperialism and colonialism. What is vital to remember when working towards decolonization is that its main objective is "the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1). It is important for educators to keep this at the forefront of their efforts when working in Indigenous communities and thinking of ways to participate in decolonization that will move towards fulfilling the goal of returning land to Indigenous communities and amplifying Indigenous ways of life. One way can be through decolonial praxis (Garcia, 2021).

Both Native and non-Native educators can benefit from decolonizing praxis, which is an engagement in "…sustaining Indigenous knowledge, values, and language…" and a way "…to understand, interrogate, and confront systems of oppression and dehumanizing experiences that impact our right to exist as Indigenous peoples" (Garcia, 2021, pp. 145-145). For Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities, Native and non-Native educators self-reflecting on ways education privileged (or limited) their perspectives, how their educational experience affected them, and what they're doing in their pedagogy to ensure the information they're teaching amplifies the importance of land back for Native communities, language revitalization, and centers Native epistemologies and ontologies.

Settler Colonialism and Curriculum Violence Enacted on Indigenous Peoples

The history of education in general has been rooted in colonialism, which creates injustices for diverse communities. Today, focus has moved from expanding land ownership and displacing Native communities to preparing students for the free market. Ayers and Ayers (2011) speak of "…a faith that the free market, especially a market that is not so free when dominated and controlled by the west – would solve all problems and make the west ever richer" (p. 96). An education that values the free market is individualistic and competitive with a primary focus of situating oneself ahead of other individuals within the global market. In the context of education, if a student falls through the cracks, the onus is placed on them and their family's actions while the system goes unanalyzed. However, Ayers and Ayers (2011) ask what education can look like when it is recreated "…from the ground up" (p. 96) and what happens to education when teachers, administrators, students, families, and society in general view education as a "journey" rather than a "commodity" (p. 99)?

For Indigenous education, the concept of a free market takes on new meaning due to Native ideologies, sovereignty, and land as pedagogy. Schools haven't focused on how Indigenous education fits into this concept of the free market. Rather, it has focused on how to either erase these ways of knowing and homogenize Indigenous students to embrace Eurocentric morals and values so they can fit better in this idea of a free market or how to compartmentalize Native epistemologies, ontologies, and lifeways into safety zones (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 3). Safety zones were flexible boundaries created by schools that determined which Native practices, belief, and art were "safe," aesthetically pleasing, and profitable to non-Native people (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 3). Anything that fell outside of that safety zone was considered dangerous and unproductive to the teaching objective of assimilation. Possibly the

longest form of assimilation that has been consistently present and supported in schools is curriculum violence (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2010). Curriculum violence is described "…as the deliberate manipulation of academic programming in a manner that ignores or compromises the intellectual and psychological well-being of learners" (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2010, p. 2). It happens when groups of people's voices, experiences, and knowledge systems are excluded from learning materials. Curriculum violence is the reality for various underrepresented groups. Particularly for Indigenous people, the definition of curriculum violence is the summation of their educational journeys.

As a result of this violence, Indigenous people have answered the call to reconceptualize curriculum. This can be seen in Sabzalian's (2019) work and her appeal for "an anticolonial approach to civic education" that amplifies the deep connections Indigenous people have to places and how this affects their identities (p. 311). It is also present in Bang et al.'s (2012) efforts to "desettle" science education and deconstruct "knowledge-power relations" (p. 302). Finally, the necessity of reconceptualizing curriculum is present in Lees, Laman, and Calderón's (2021) article to disrupt settler colonialism within early childhood teacher education by centering land education, which amplifies Indigenous communities and epistemologies.

Given the context of Indigenous education in the U.S., Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho education, and the driving forces impacting public education, my research is driven to what does a reconceptualization of education mean for Indigenous educators? What happens to education when teachers begin to critically reflect and discuss what type of curriculum they're teaching? What happens when educators being to question assimilationist curriculum and teaching methods? When the focus turns towards Indigenous educators, what happens when they critically look at education and ask why their perspectives are not centered in their learning

materials? In order to being re-envisioning education, a space for critical dialogue and reflection for teachers needs to be initiated and nurtured and re-visited multiple times (Freire, 2005). For this dissertation, reflections and perspectives from interviews, focus groups, journal entries and messages from Indigenous teachers are featured in order to show the beginning stages of dialogues that resist a settler colonial focused curriculum and pedagogy in education. The next section focuses on the Indigenous qualitative research, the research questions, and the theoretical framework for this dissertation.

Indigenous Qualitative Research

For generations, researchers have acquired data using a positivist paradigm from Indigenous people in ways that weren't conducive to tribal communities. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) states, "The word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (p. 1). After analyzing the characteristics of the positivist paradigm and learning how Indigenous people are treated, it is no surprise a positivist paradigm research method is not trusted in tribal communities as it has undermined Indigenous knowledge and community members. For Indigenous qualitative research methods, researchers must be transparent about their work. To achieve transparency, researchers must indicate their relationship to their research interests and the people they are asking to be a part of their study. In addition, Indigenous research methodologies embody Indigenous epistemologies that are the foundation of Indigenous identities (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Kovach, 2009). They are teachings and values that are specific to Indigenous peoples, their communities, and the environments their communities exist in. These knowledge systems are the processes of how community members come to know these teachings and values (Cajete, 2015; Moreton-Robinson, 2013). According to Kovach, Indigenous epistemologies concentrate "…on the

metaphysical and pragmatic, on language and place, and on values and relationships" (p. 57). Finally, this research process disrupts stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, amplifies Indigenous voices and perspectives, and maintains "knowledge that carries hope and promotes transformation and social change among the historically oppressed" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 40). As such, Indigenous research methods has been the most supportive for the vision of my study with my home community.

This study provides an opportunity for educational scholars to learn from Indigenous educators who have personal and intergenerational connections to the Wind River Reservation. Their lived experiences, how these affect their teaching, and the ways they engage Indigenous students in their classrooms offer a unique perspective that would inform both the community and Indigenous education broadly. I dedicated this dissertation to Indigenous educators from the Wind River Reservation. I had the opportunity to learn from them about their thoughts on culturally sustaining pedagogy, critical Indigenous pedagogies, and Indigenous education. Altogether, there were 10 participants for this study. These participants were 7 Indigenous educators and 3 Indigenous education scholars. The study included interviews, focus groups, journal entries and messages from Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho teachers teaching among the Wind River Reservation. In addition, Indigenous education scholars joined one focus group each to share their research. Data is inclusive of dialogues between Indigenous education scholars and participants.

The next section focuses on the research questions.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. What are the ways Indigenous educators can sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho ways of life in the classroom?
2. How will participants' teaching philosophies change from their conversations with Indigenous scholars and their interactions with Indigenous education research?
    a. How does this experience with Indigenous theories and scholars inform the ways in which Indigenous educators sustain Indigenous knowledge and values?
3. How can Indigenous educators incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy?

Theoretical Framework

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit)

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005) is an important theory for Indigenous peoples, their communities, and non-Indigenous allies. The foundation of this ideology is Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is an ideology and a movement that originated in the 1970s with work by Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams (Bell, 1995, p. 898). CRT is "…committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law" (Bell, 1995, p. 898). It privileges the narratives of people of color and first-person accounts. Eventually, the main argument of CRT (racism being entrenched in U.S. institutions and systems) would expand to education and other fields. For Indigenous people and their communities, TribalCrit is a way for history to be retold. It is a foundational theoretical framework for various research projects that focus on issues that are pertinent to Indigenous people and their communities. It amplifies Indigenous people's perspectives and asserts that oral stories from tribal communities are as valid as Eurocentric forms of theory. For Indigenous people, the oral stories of our communities serve as tribal

communities' foundations (Archibald, 2008; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Cajete, 2017). Further, these oral stories and the narratives that exist in our families serve as road maps. Both oral stories and our family's personal narratives are central to our communities and can span across generations (past, present, and future). They ground our communities and explain our connections to our loved ones, to land, and to sacred sites. to our environments. These stories are what motivate and guide Indigenous research and are central to the TribalCrit framework.

TribalCrit theory argues colonization is ever-present in contemporary Western systems and society. Therefore, institutions, policies, and procedures are still utilized by these systems to eradicate Indigenous people and their cultures. Specifically, colonization is perpetuated in schools through pedagogies, teaching philosophies, and curricula. TribalCrit is a transformative framework that disrupts colonization and its structures and systems (Writer, 2008). It consists of nine tenets, which are:

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, pp. 429-430)

These nine tenets have been used to critically analyze Eurocentric institutions, the tools that support these institutions, and have proven how Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing are necessary and impactful in contemporary times. The next section highlights the importance of the study.

Significance of Study

Sustaining Our Identities: Beyond Boarding School History

Historically, Indigenous youth of school age were forcibly removed from their homes and families. During the boarding school era, education was intended to "cure" students of their indigeneity by any means (Emery, 2017; Trafzer et al., 2006; Trafzer et al., 2012). This form of education was detrimental to Indigenous communities. If students returned home after their educational experience during this time in history, the hope was the restrictive methods that were forced upon them by these educational institutions would be imposed onto their families and community members. The ramifications of the boarding school era are still felt by Indigenous people and their communities (Child, 2018; Gilbert, 2018; Lomawaima, 2018; Lomawaima & Ostler, 2018). The outcomes from education during this time period included loss of languages

and cultural practices and the development of various health and mental issues. The effects have been felt not only by students, but also students' families, communities, and their descendants.

Studies have proven that when students recognize that their identities in curriculum and pedagogy are specific to their way of learning, they excel in classroom settings (see Acton et al., 2017; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Fredericks et al., 2018; Freed & Smith, 2004; Harrington & Pavel, 2013; Huffman, 2013; Johnson et al., 2014; Joseph & Windchief, 2015; May & Aikman, 2013; Partridge, 2016; Shirley, 2017; Yazzie-Mintz, 2008) and in overall life situations (see Absolon, 2016; Magnat, 2011) compared to a scripted, standardized form of education. These studies highlight the various ways Indigenous peoples have sustained their cultures, languages, knowledges, and values through collaboration between communities and schools. My study contributes to analyzing and confronting past experiences of schooling and moving Indigenous education towards healing.

Curriculum Development from Within

When curriculum is developed from within and the community's needs and perspectives are centered, the effects of education can be transformative and long-standing. What is necessary for people involved with creating curriculum that is centered in community knowledge is there must be space for students to be their authentic selves and express their thoughts and feelings without censorship (Price & Mencke, 2013). Within Indigenous education conversations, there is a significant and necessary focus on amplifying elders' and knowledge keepers' perspectives about curriculum. It is equally important to center Indigenous youths' voices too because they are the future keepers and nurturers of Indigenous knowledge in their communities, and they are aware of what's missing in the curriculum they're learning regarding Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies (Korteweg & Bissell, 2015). My study provides insight into beginning

discussions and actions towards centering specific Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies into curriculum and pedagogy.

Funding

The dissertation was awarded a Graduate Student Travel and Research Award from the Native Nations Institute.

Conditions

This study and recruitment were slated to begin just as COVID-19 began. Initially, I had envisioned having the pre/post interviews and focus groups in-person. As soon as the first case was reported in my hometown, I immediately revisited the IRB so all research activities would occur online. I planned and restructured my research activities to be conducted over the video-call service, Zoom. Considering this shift to a virtual format and the internet issues that would occur with Zoom, I initially viewed the study taking place at the time of COVID-19 as a limitation.

In retrospect this was more of a condition that, globally, we all were contending with. There's no doubt that COVID-19's reach was far and wide and caused trauma for a myriad of people. With each news story and update, my worries consumed me. I wondered if I would complete my dissertation, and immediately felt selfish knowing a multitude of people were facing COVID-19 head-on.

After my revisions to my IRB were approved, my advisor and I touched base about the next steps. I expressed my concerns and wondered how to conduct research during these uncertain times. My advisor shared how in his own work, he and his co-researcher took a moment to check-in with their participants and took time to acknowledge the stress and ambiguity caused by COVID-19, and asked participants if they needed to take a break from

research activities. My advisor shared his participants stated they wanted to continue their involvement as the work they were doing for the study occupied their minds and served as a welcomed distraction from what was occurring in the world. After this conversation, my advisor recommended once recruitment began for me to acknowledge the uncertain times and to assess how potential participants felt about contributing to a study during a pandemic. He mentioned the possibility of my potential contributors sharing the same feelings as his participants of needing a different place to focus their minds while we hunkered down in our homes.

I am so grateful for is the time and perspectives the participants shared with me during these trying moments. This study taking place during COVID-19 came with complexities. There was stress and exhaustion, yet there were also impactful moments that happened. Majority of the participants and I had relationships with one another prior to the study. Some of the contributors I have known all my life. These deep connections became more extensive as the teachers shared out their reactions about Indigenous education in their journals, conversed with the Indigenous education scholars, and entered the dreaming phase of the study.

All teachers who agreed to be a part of the study showed their interest in critical Indigenous educational theories and prioritizing relationships. While it was an adjustment to conduct research activities online – especially for the teachers who were online for 14-hour days since they were working remotely – the participants always showed up ready to engage in discussions. For me, their dedication demonstrated their desire to engage with critical Indigenous educational literature and meet Indigenous education scholars. Their commitment also showed how even in uncertain times, our relationships to one another are integral to who we are as Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho people.

Organization of Chapters

The chapters are as follows: Chapter 2: Literature Review; Chapter 3: Methods; Chapter 4: Findings; and Chapter 5: Discussions, Implications, Future Research, and Conclusion. In Chapter 2, the literature review takes up topics of Indigenous education, culturally responsive teaching, culturally sustaining pedagogy and contextualizes local research and the history of education on the Wind River Reservation. The next section defines the term Indigenous education, highlights national studies, and focuses on how the boarding school era within the U.S. tried to stifle Indigenous knowledge systems. Chapter 2 then highlights the treatment of Indigenous education by Eurocentric schooling, Eurocentric teacher education, Indigenous teacher education, and culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Systems of Indigenous education have existed for generations, provide reasoning and explanations of processes and other instances that occur in life, and were passed down by various knowledge keepers. Learning was communal and wasn't an indicator of status. Once contact between Indigenous communities and colonizers occurred, the concept of education was altered and intended to homogenize Indigenous communities to Westernized knowledge systems. Despite multiple efforts to eradicate Indigenous education, aspects of these teachings remain strong and are being re-centered by educators in their classrooms.

In this chapter, I begin by examining the history of Indigenous education. Thereafter, I transition to Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho education. Next, I look at Western constructs of teaching and teacher education. Then, I move to Indigenous teacher education. I follow with discussing contemporary movements to sustain Indigenous identities in education, and then the chapter concludes.

Indigenous Education

The field of education is often portrayed as a neutral, non-politicized area. Various educators, administrators, and other individuals who work within school districts who claim education is no place for politics are the people who are perpetuating (intentionally or unintentionally) policies and systems that hinder how children identify and how they learn. For a field that is believed to be a neutral area, the policies that are created to control students' appearances, actions, and what information they learn is modified to fulfill an agenda that supports settler colonialism and white supremacy.

Throughout history and in current times, Indigenous education has been affected by homogenizing strategies implemented by educators and administrators. These policies have had a

traumatic impact on Indigenous communities and have made schools into places of mistrust for Indigenous families and communities. The ulterior, colonizing motives of schools throughout generations have made it difficult for Indigenous students and their communities to envision how Indigenous education can be included and honored in education. Even though schooling has been a restrictive environment for Indigenous youth, their teachings have persevered because of their actions and the undertakings of their communities.

The ways of knowing that exist in Indigenous communities are distinct to each community. Indigenous education is defined as "…culturally based education of Native children by their parents, relatives, and communities (traditionally and sometimes today in a Native language)" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 8). Indigenous education includes critical Indigenous pedagogies, decolonizing education, and critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy. It is also a pathway for educators to connect to Indigenous students' homelands "…through the culture as students learn about the immediate places they inhabit and their connection to the larger world within which they will make a life for themselves" (Barnhardt, 2008, p. 133). It is necessary for people across all fields to acknowledge that Indigenous people had educational systems long before European contact, that Indigenous knowledge systems were contextual, connected to their homelands, and that these ways of learning still exist today (Au et al., 2016; Pewewardy, Lees & Clark-Shim, 2018). Even if these teachings are not included in a child's curriculum at school, they are present in a child and their families' home life.

Since contact with colonizers, Indigenous education has been dismissed and falsely represented as less than Eurocentric education. Historically, schooling for Native youth is engrained in colonization (Brayboy, 2005; Tippeconnic III, 2015). Christian churches, Christian religious leaders, and Eurocentric schools and teachers have been used to eradicate Indigenous

beliefs and assimilate Indigenous youth. Instead of Native students' knowledge being valued, they were "…largely ignored in favor of strategies, aimed at enticing them to conform to mainstream education" (Cajete, 2010, p. 1127). These strategies of colonization Native people have experienced from religious and educational institutions have created trauma that still affects Indigenous people's descendants today.

History of Boarding Schools

The boarding school era was a damaging time for Native people and their ways of knowing. The foundation of most boarding schools was militaristic and focused on Christian religion (Au et al., 2016; Brayboy, 2014; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). These institutions were created in hopes of annihilating Indigenous education by forcing Indigenous youth to assimilate to Westernized society (Adams, 1995; Emery, 2017; Lomawaima, 1994; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Trafzer et al., 2006; Trafzer et al., 2012). The first boarding school for Indigenous students, Carlisle Boarding School, was founded by military man Captain Richard Henry Pratt (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018). Colonizing methods that teachers used included (but were not limited to) banning the use of tribal languages, tradition, and culture; using corporal punishment to enforce these rigid policies; and separating Indigenous youth from their communities. Contemporarily, these methods of colonization are still present in policies that state that Native students are not allowed to wear regalia at graduations and in the overall standardization of learning materials. Western education and its continued assaults on Indigenous education have limited the purpose of education (Absolon, 2016; Brayboy, 2014). There are Indigenous people who were either survivors or descendants of boarding school survivors and have dedicated their lives to right these wrongs of the U.S. educational system.

During the boarding school era, students' families, communities, and their descendants experienced loss of languages, cultural practices, and various health and mental issues. These results also affected students' families, communities, and their descendants (Child, 2018; Gilbert, 2018; Lomawaima, 2018; Lomawaima & Ostler, 2018). Despite the efforts of the boarding school era, Indigenous Education and its knowledge systems still thrive and are present in Native communities (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Today there are movements to center Indigenous education in classrooms and learning materials (Ismail & Cazden, 2005; Martinez, 2014; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; McCarty & Nicholas, 2014; Rhea, 2015) and include youth, parental, and community members' voices in making decisions regarding inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies, language, historical events and how this applies to contemporary, Indigenous identities (Bird et al., 2013; Freng et al., 2006; Garcia, 2014; Garcia, 2019; Stanton & Sutton, 2012; Warner, 1999; Wyman, 2012). However, even though there are multiple transformative Indigenous education movements, there is still resistance and doubt from educators and administrators about how effective centering Indigenous education in curriculum can be in a classroom.

History of Indigenous Education in Relation to Native Nation-Building, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination

There is no doubt that the boarding school era had significant and long-term impacts on Native people and their communities. Narratives of boarding school survivors exist and are passed down to descendants and become a part of a family's history and their identities (White, 2018). For many descendants, stories of their family from this time period and their family members' overall schooling experiences have served as inspiration for questioning the colonizing aspects of schooling and those individuals who support these characteristics.

In Native communities, the institution and implementation of education is unique not only because of the boarding school era. It is unique due to the connection between the U.S. federal government and tribal sovereign nations. Tippeconnic III (1991) states from 1778-1871, relatively "…four hundred treaties were entered into between the U.S. government and Indian nations. One hundred twenty of these treaties had provisions that specifically mentioned education" (p. 4). Due to the history of schooling, Native communities have had to consider the U.S. federal government's role (Tippeconnic III, 1991). While the U.S. federal government was responsible for particular educational resources, the system lacked in terms of increasing the number of Native teachers and supporting education that was conducive to Native youth (Tippeconnic III, 1991). These treaties establish a responsibility the U.S. federal government must fulfill for Native communities and education. These duties are important facet of the relationship between the U.S. federal government and Native communities. It is also essential to contemplate how tribal nations assert sovereignty and self-determination regarding education in their communities.

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, Indigenous communities' forms of education existed prior to Westernized schooling. These ways of knowing are diverse and unique to each community, which can make it difficult to have a general definition of education in Native communities (Tippeconnic III, 1991). For generations, people and institutions who supported a colonized agenda made it their priority to eradicate these knowledge systems through Westernized education and its policies. The actions of Westernized education supporters did disrupt Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, but these teachings were not fully eliminated. In fact, there are examples of tribal controlled schools early in the Indigenous education movement. Both Cherokee and Choctaw Tribes had their own schools where curriculum was

taught in tribal languages and English to students and was well-received (Tippeconnic, 1999). Tippeconnic III (1999) identified the Meridian Report as influential for Indigenous education because it "called for a new attitude and approach to educating Indian students" and expressed the necessity of Native communities' languages and cultures in Native students' education (p. 4). He also recognized the 1960s Great Society programs, an overall change in policies concerning Native communities (specifically President Johnson stipulated BIA schools needed school boards), and the Kennedy Report as influential in supporting the belief that Naïve students should be able to have their languages and cultures central to their education and parental involvement should be encourages (Tippeconnic III, 1999). Beaulieu (2011) also identifies particular conferences (i.e., First Convocation of Indian Scholars at Princeton, National Indian Education Association (NIEA), Indigenous education graduate programs that were created by the Office Of Economic Opportunity established by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) at four universities (University of Minnesota, Harvard, Pennsylvania State University, Arizona State University), and William J. Demmert, Jr.'s (Tlingit) work on the Indian Education Act of 1972 and overall activism as integral components of positioning Indigenous people to become the leaders of education in their communities. These moments in U.S. history created opportunities for Native communities to think of how education could serve their youth and communities and how their educational goals could complement their language and culture. One example of how impactful these policies and work of these groups is the establishment of Rough Rock Demonstration School.

Established in 1966 on the Diné (Navajo) Reservation, Rough Rock Demonstration School was one of the first tribally ran schools that incorporated Diné language, Diné epistemologies and ontologies, and explicitly stated parents and community members were the

leaders (Tippeconnic III, 1999). Specifically, Rough Rock Demonstration School stating in the mission statement that the parents and community members instead of an institution of the U.S. federal government were in charge of their students' education acknowledged the Diné nation's capability of being in control of education in their community and that their tribal knowledge was always the correct knowledge for their youth to learn.

Similar to Rough Rock Demonstration School, other Indigenous communities have dedicated time and resources to create education that can meet the needs of Indigenous youth. These needs include reconnecting and revitalizing Indigenous languages and epistemologies and ontologies and languages while also providing an equitable education (Beaulieu, 2000; Kana'iaupuni et al., 2017). Various Indigenous communities have also made efforts to incorporate community members' perspectives on what knowledge systems should be included in their youth's education (Beaulieu & Figueria, 2006; Benally, 2019). What is evident from the research is when it comes to education in Indigenous communities, it's integral for community members and parents to be the primary leaders of education because they know what is best for their youth.

Schools and Language Revitalization

A vital area that Indigenous communities have focused on in defining the purpose of education for their youth is the importance of language revitalization. Schools are viewed as crucial entities because of the amount of time youth and their families dedicate to the process of education. Due to the amount of time youth attend school, it is necessary for community members, administrators, and educators to reflect on how education can support Indigenous language revitalization. Schools can be (and in a lot of case already are) sites of language reclamation (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014). Bilingual schools, language classes, and immersion

lessons and curricula are examples of efforts schools, educators, community members, and allies have done in the U.S. for Indigenous language reclamation (McIvor & Anisman, 2018). Certainly the importance of education in Indigenous language reclamation is interesting due to the historical trauma created when Westernized schooling worked hard to eliminate Indigenous cultures and languages.

Specifically for Indigenous language, supporters of Westernized education created policies to prevent students from speaking their languages and enacted corporal punishments on students who resisted these methods. Eventually, some Indigenous communities were able to acquire their own schools For Yup'ik communities in Alaska, "…gained local high schools (see Charles, 2009 as cited in Wyman) and transitional elementary bilingual programs offering a few years of Yup'ik instruction" (Wyman, 2009, p. 336). Despite the local community gaining control of Indigenous youth's education and bilingual programs for younger learners, community members still noticed an increase of Yup'ik youth speaking English (Wyman, 2009). Language shift for Indigenous communities can occur for a variety of reasons and isn't reflective of how youth value language. In fact, Indigenous youth are highly influential and powerful forces in language revitalization (McCarty et al., 2009). Wyman (2009) states even with language shift and the hierarchical structure of knowledge in schools, Indigenous youth and other language learners have "…windows of opportunity for connecting individuals, peer groups, and generations to linguistic resources, local relationships, and community knowledge" (p. 348). A part of language revitalization is acknowledging an Indigenous community's language carries traditional knowledge and exists in contemporary times. For educators, language holders, and other community members, it's essential to think of ways to place and connect Indigenous youth language learning with contemporary Indigenous identities (Wyman, 2009, 2012). In doing this,

Wyman (2009) says educators and other individuals can see how 1) schools can be a part of supporting Indigenous epistemologies; 2) an Indigenous community's perspective of their language; and 3) restore "…heritage-language learning opportunities" (p. 348). The implications of Wyman's (2009) study depict the importance of Indigenous youth's impact on language reclamation and the school's role in these efforts. Her study also speaks to the necessity and importance of having Indigenous teachers who are teachers in their communities (see also Beaulieu & Figueria, 2006; Smith, 2003). It's possible for schools to partner with community members, support Indigenous language revitalization efforts in Indigenous communities, and increase the number of Indigenous educators in Indigenous communities' schools. In the next section, non-Native and Native researchers' works on educational sovereignty and cultural sustaining education efforts on the Wind River Reservation are analyzed.

Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Education: Educational Studies of Wind River

Before delving into Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho education, it is interesting to note a similarity among all the studies mentioned that are discussed in this section of the chapter: they either focus on the Eastern Shoshone or Northern Arapaho community, but not both. One possible reason for this is because these tribes are distinct from one another and are their own sovereign nations. Due to U.S. federal government assimilation tactics, the Eastern Shoshone Tribe was placed on what would become the Wind River Reservation. Ten years after the Eastern Shoshone Tribe's placement, the U.S. federal government forced the Northern Arapaho tribe onto the Wind River Reservation. Despite tensions and both communities populating specific and separate areas on the Wind River Reservation, various Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribal members married and created families. The history and current relations between both tribes creates an interesting dynamic and poses an interesting question:

what constitutes as culturally sustaining pedagogy for two different tribes who populate the same schools?

At a local level, research about culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) is limited in the Wind River Reservation area. CSP (Paris & Alim, 2017) is connected to culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), which is defined as a philosophy about teaching that goes beyond focusing on a students' academic accomplishments (Ladson-Billings, 1995). CRP implores educators to resist the settler colonial myths dominant society is founded on, to acknowledge and challenge their own biases, and to welcome and support students' positionalities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). For the educational research based on the Wind River Reservation, the existing studies provide a snapshot through the decades of how community members and educators alike have interacted with elements of CRP in education.

For educational research, Rist's (1961) dissertation was an initial study in the Wind River area that asked questions about education and Eastern Shoshone culture. In this dissertation, Rist, who is non-Native, focuses on comparing what Eastern Shoshone parents and white educators think are influential factors in Eastern Shoshone students' educational accomplishments at two different schools. The setting of the research is two schools, Fort Washakie School and Crowheart School. Rist (1961) undertakes an analyzation of test scores and parent and teacher interviews to answer the research questions. These questions focus on "influential factors" that are perceived to affect Eastern Shoshone students' academic achievement, including: "(1) parental control, (2) language spoken in the home, (3) home environment, (4) economic complacence, and (5) Shoshone students' response to formal education" (Rist, 1961, p. 129). Interviews conducted with Eastern Shoshone parents reveal they feel succeeding in school was vital for their children's achievement (Rist, 1961, p. 130).

Teachers and a few administrators from the selected schools (a third school, Morton High School, was used for teacher data but not student data because students' test scores were not obtainable) were given a questionnaire about what they felt was inhibiting the success of Eastern Shoshone students. Teachers and administrators indicated that what could affect Eastern Shoshone students' academic success was speaking Shoshone at home, home life, whether students and their families were upholding Shoshone traditions or assimilating to Eurocentric society, parents' perspectives of school, and the families' viewpoint about "non-Indian and social standing" (Rist, 1961, pp. 88-90).

Rist (1961) also concludes from the teacher and administration surveys that a majority of the "influential factors" (such as parental controls, language spoken in the home, etc.) were inhibiting Eastern Shoshone student's school success (p. 130). While teachers felt that students speaking the Shoshone language at home was the most hindering factor, most educators also were aware that the curriculum they taught was not conducive to Eastern Shoshone students' lived experiences and was more reflective of mainstream society's knowledge systems (p. 130).

One of Rist's (1961) conclusions from interviews with Eastern Shoshone community members is that Shoshone parents support the Eurocentric education of their children during this time. An interesting takeaway from the parents' interviews is that most of the Eastern Shoshone parents felt that Eastern Shoshone teachers would be too lenient and ineffective in Eastern Shoshone students' educational success. Today, there are Eastern Shoshone people who are teachers in the schools that Rist's study lists.

Whiteplume (2017) illustrates how this understanding is critical for Northern Arapaho to learn in contemporary times in school through community members' memories of cultural knowledge they grew up with and. Northern Arapaho community members, youth, and schooling

experiences are centered. The main objective of this study is analyzing the connection between the values and morals of Northern Arapaho community members and "the tribal education code" (Whiteplume, 2017, p. 41). The term culture-based education (CBE) is used instead of culturally relevant pedagogy. For CBE, Whiteplume (2017) cites an educational report that is a literature review of the impacts of CBE on Native student's academic performances, which was authored by Demmert and Towner (2003). In this report, the authors say at the time there is a significant lack of research on CBE's influence on Native students' educational experience (Demmert & Towner, 2003, p. 1). Whiteplume (2017) states this absence exists in Wyoming schools too and asserts CBE is needed for Northern Arapaho students to have an education that is conducive to their identities.

Whiteplume (2017) shares community members narratives and the ways they were denied the Arapaho language when they attended school and that they expressed the need for Northern Arapaho youth to experience tribal values and practices in the curriculum. His study distributed surveys to Northern Arapaho tribal members and to non-native people who had relationships with Northern Arapaho people. The dissertation concluded that a movement towards CBE in schools that serve the Northern Arapaho Tribe would be welcomed and advocated by the community.

Whiteplume (2017) provides a CBE proposal that would consist of a decade-long plan that would document sustainable CBE efforts. This is a powerful, general, initial plan of how to incorporate and sustain curriculum specific to Northern Arapaho knowledge systems. It poses the question of how community members, educators, and administrators can collaborate to create this CBE plan together. Whiteplume, a member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe, amplifies Northern Arapaho voices, perspectives, and expectations regarding education throughout his

study. He also discusses personal experiences and anecdotes he shared with Northern Arapaho community members to indicate the importance of incorporating Northern Arapaho epistemology into school curriculum. However, the data that is used to answer his research questions is primarily quantitative.

Another study of education in Wind River is conducted by Robert T. Reilly (1980), who is non-Native, at St. Stephen's Indian School (St. Stephen's), a former mission school located on the Wind River Reservation that had predominately Northern Arapaho students. It is an attempt to examine culturally relevant teaching (Reilly, 1980). The author, Reilly, interviews an educator, a nun by the name of Sister Margaret Shea, who identifies the lack of culturally appropriate texts and learning materials for students. She states, "You build language on life experiences…You put a child's oral language on the printed page. Then the child starts to read by grasping his or her own language in print" (Reilly, 1980, p. 200). Reilly (1980) also asserts that incoming educators to St. Stephen's need to realize that the morals and values of their students may differ from mainstream society (p. 201). This article was of particular interest because Reilly (1980) was highlighting how St. Stephens's administration and educators were making movements towards incorporating culturally relevant materials in the curriculum. Despite these early efforts, there was still an evident contradiction between what administrators and educators were saying they wanted in terms of culturally relevant education and how Catholicism was still heavily prioritized.

Bialostock's (2019) article discusses the events of a study where white teachers, who taught at a school on the Wind River Reservation, were tasked with developing culturally relevant pedagogy for Northern Arapaho students (p. 6). Participants were provided time to analyze predominately Northern Arapaho students' home lives and Bialostock's challenges of

recruiting participants for this study. Bialostock (2019), who is non-Native, reflects on his hearing some research participants' deficit views of their students' families and encouraging them to challenge their biases. Research participants conducted home visits and interviewed Northern Arapaho families about their home knowledge. The study concluded with Bialostock's (2019) participants developing units that did include their students' home values, but still prioritizing the overall standardized curriculum (p. 14). This study shows how engrained school culture is in prioritizing Western knowledge even if a school is located on a reservation. It illuminates how even with a majority Indigenous school body, teacher's actions are influential and can keep Westernized knowledge at the top of the hierarchy even if it's unintentional.

Both Reilly's (1980) and Bialostok's (2019) studies highlight the importance of education based on Indigenous students' lived experiences but showcase this through a white researcher's perspective. While there is a necessity for white teachers in schools to learn how to privilege their students' experiences in the curriculum, their needs should not be the central concern of these movements. More of educational research literature needs to be provided to Indigenous educators and illuminate their experiences because many of them have had to disconnect our positionalities from their studies and their classrooms. Once Indigenous educators can feel supported in including their knowledge systems into their work, then the focus can shift onto how to support white educators in this field.

The lack of support Indigenous educators feel is also connected to the lack of Indigenous teachers in the educational field. White Eagle (2021), who is an enrolled member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe, analyzed the reasons Northern Arapaho youth ended their educational journeys before high school. The setting of the study occurred on the Wind River Reservation and focused on three Northern Arapaho participants who chose to end their education at certain points in their

lives for various reasons but were able to take steps to finish their education. The main causes the three participants discussed for leaving school initially were the impacts of alcoholism, impoverishment, bullying, and lack of parent support for education (White Eagle, 2021, p. 46). Another reason included the absence of "…cultural responsiveness on the part of schools" (White Eagle, 2021, p. 46). The lack of cultural responsiveness has a significant impact on Indigenous youth and is largely due to the small number of Indigenous educators in Indigenous schools, the Westernized focus of teacher education, and a need for educational self-determination.

Enacting Sovereignty

Parallel to other Native communities in the U.S., Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho families were extremely affected by the assimilation methods of the boarding school era. Four Westernized schools existed on the Wind River Reservation – one was supported by the U.S. federal government and the remaining three were led by Catholic and Episcopal religious leaders (Hipp, 2019). Although Episcopal reverend John Roberts's educational endeavors were viewed as less harsh than the other schools in the area, all of the schools had the goal of assimilating students to Western culture (Hipp, 2019). The past trauma inflicted on community members from these schools, deficit perspectives about Native people and education, and the exploitation of white teachers highlighted the need for a school on the reservation that was led by Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho community members. Hipp's (2019) writes,

> Wind River Indian children attended the government or mission boarding schools in 1924. They lived on non-taxable land and so the state did not provide them with a public school. Three to four miles from Ethete were the "Upper" and "Lower" Mill Creek areas (referring to elevation), each with an elementary school funded by the country. The state

> consolidated these schools with St. Michael's Mission School in 1957 to form Mill Creek Public School District 14, a district that is central to this history. (p. 23)

In 1983, these schools within the Mill Creek Public School District # 14 transitioned from BIA schools to public schools and became a unified school district (Hipp, 2019). These schools became known as Wyoming Indian Elementary School, Wyoming Indian Middle School, and Wyoming Indian High School, and Mill Creek Public School District # 14 became known as Fremont County School District # 14 (Hipp, 2019). This was the first school district where Indigenous students could attend school from pre-k to 12th grade on the Wind River Reservation (Hipp, 2019). It was also an initial movement of Wind River community members to envision the objective of learning for Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho youth should be and how this form of education would differ from their parents' and grandparents' experiences.

Western Constructs of Teaching and Teacher Education

In Indigenous education, ways of passing down knowledge extend back to a time before European contact and differ starkly from how education is perceived today (McCarty & Brayboy, 2021). Indigenous education is often dismissed and falsely represented as inferior to Westernized education. What is considered a quality education and teaching is often disconnected from Indigenous perspectives and accurate Indigenous representation and sends a message students must leave their homes in order to be considered successful (Minner, 1995; Sabzalian, 2019). Historically, Westernized schooling for Indigenous youth is engrained in colonization (Brayboy, 2005; Tippeconnic III, 2015). Instead of Native students' knowledge being valued, they were "largely ignored in favor of strategies, aimed at enticing them to conform to mainstream education" (Cajete, 2010, p. 1127). For survivance, Native youth did have to acquiesce at certain points.

Despite the efforts of the boarding school era, Indigenous education still thrives and is present in Indigenous communities (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Today, there are movements to center Indigenous education in classrooms and learning materials (Ismail & Cazden, 2005; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Martinez, 2014; McCarty & Nicholas, 2014; Rhea, 2015) and include youth, parental, and community members' voices in making decisions regarding inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies, language, historical events and how this applies to contemporary, Indigenous identities (Bird et al., 2013; Freng et al., 2014; Garcia, 2019; Moore, 2006; Stanton & Sutton, 2012; Warner, 1999 Wyman, 2012).

This movement of centering Indigenous education in classrooms has brought attention to the fact that there is a need for Indigenous teachers. Issues with teacher education also illuminate the fact that teacher preparation programs predominately focus on Eurocentric morals and values. While teacher education programs make significant efforts to incorporate classes that focus on multiculturalism, social justice pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy/culturally responsive pedagogy, there are individuals that treat these courses as electives instead of legitimate, sustainable ways of educating students. Teacher education has typically focused on Western ways of learning and teaching. The necessity of Indigenous education asserts the need for Indigenous teachers.

Teacher Education in Predominately White Institutions

Historically, it is believed teacher education (specifically the knowledge pre-service teachers obtain in their programs about how to teach) exists primarily in academic spaces and has a European foundation (Labaree, 2008; Rios & Longoria, 2021). Teacher education became an area of more concern during the 1980s (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 274). Authors Smith et al. (1980) developed a report titled "A design for a school of pedagogy" for the U.S. Department of

Education to support the necessity of teacher education. In their report, Smith et al. (1980) stated the process of how to teach was natural and "an ancient behavioral structure" (p. 86). They continue their argument of teaching being instinctive by stating, "…showing and telling turned out to be more successful in inducing learning than mere imitation or situational learning without intervention. These successful modes were retained and through the ages became fixed in culture after culture" (Smith et al., 1980, p. 86). Smith et al.'s concept of education is outdated in that it refers to ancestral teaching and knowledge as "primitive," refers to more contemporary teaching as "sophisticated," and supports the banking methods of education (p. 87). Despite this, Smith et al. do make an interesting point for the time period that teachers need training in order to become effective educators. Additionally, they state that there are particular areas of training that should be focused on in teacher education programs (e.g., observation, diagnosis, plan, management, professional communication, and evaluation) (pp. 91-92; see also Grossman & McDonald, 2008). While it is important for educators to consider these different areas in their teaching, classrooms, and overall school environments, these domains risk being reduced to checklists. If educators only focus on these domains, teaching and learning in their classrooms could become stagnant.

There are also risks of educators dehumanizing themselves and creating a disconnect between themselves, their students, and their students' families. Ball and Forzani (2009) state that a person who is a teacher must have skills and knowledge that is "specialized and professional in form and nature" (p. 500). While Smith et al. focused on the importance of training, they still viewed the process of teaching as organic. Ball and Forzani contradict this belief of teaching by asserting teaching should be rooted in knowledge that is vindicated in

society. One has to ask, what is meant by the terms "specialized" and "professional?" Who gets to decide which knowledge is "professionally justified knowledge?"

Oftentimes, the knowledge privileged in many U.S. teacher education programs is conducive to Westernized beliefs and creating "model citizens" that can contribute to the national and global market (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2010; Tomlinson & Lipsitz, 2013; Zeichner, 2010). What happens to future teachers educating methods and philosophies when the components of these "models" do not match up (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 274)? What if a pre-service teacher works in a predominately non-white community once finishing a teacher preparation program that values Eurocentric beliefs? How do teachers that are from marginalized communities navigate these types of programs if the way they experience and interpret the world is not represented?

It is possible for teacher education programs to create these critical dialogues in their classrooms and collaborate with marginalized communities to implement knowledge and information from their lived experiences into curriculum (Pugach et al., 2011, Stanton & Jaime, 2010; Wiggins et al., 2007). For example, funds of knowledge that exist within a community are practices that are connected to students' identities and are dependent on "…the social and labor history of families" (González et al., 2005, p. 18 & 19). Learning how to teach and passing knowledge on to students is often treated as an equation that can be applied to all programs and situations. There seems to be a general belief around education that if the dynamics of teacher and curriculum are calculated correctly, model students will be manufactured – the process of teaching is thought more of as a computational process instead of focusing on people and their communities (Biesta, 2015, p. 1). This one-size-fits all approach regarding teacher education programs promotes learning that focuses on producing future workers for society (Apple, 2006).

It encourages pre-service teachers to think about learning in a prescribed way that only scripted, nationally certified materials can provide.

Rather than offering scripted, standardized training, teacher education programs can encourage pre-service teachers to reflect on their own positionality and how this connects to their own teaching philosophies. It can prepare future teachers to focus on ways they can encourage their students to reflect on their own lived experiences and how this shapes their learning environments. By teachers building trusting relationships and engaging their students in critical dialogues about identities and lived experiences, classrooms have the potential to become an extended part of a student's home environment instead of a restrictive place that encourages them to suppress their authentic selves (Cohen et al., 2009; Garcia, 2019). Critical dialogues can also nurture relationships between teachers and students because there is a shared vulnerability. When teachers can understand the value of this shared vulnerability and the feelings that exist in this openness, transformative action can begin to occur.

When people can engage in critical dialogue regarding their lived experiences, connections and contrasts can be nurtured which can create learners and teachers that are more empathetic. If teachers are learning from and about their students' lived experiences, they can learn more about the community they work in and how to accommodate their teaching to the various contexts of their students (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 51). This process can help teacher education programs and pre-service teachers to learn that teaching is not a stagnant process and is more multi-dimensional than a one-size-fits-all model. Methods and practices can (and should) change every year with different students that enter classrooms. A significant percentage of these students are going to be BIPOC and have other aspects of their identities (socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.) that affect how they navigate society.

Teachers need to orient themselves around how dynamic their classrooms are and must work to continue to offer better support and create meaningful teaching moments (Gay, 2010). Schools and educational programs privileging Westernized values as the standard that students must obtain is a method that has been utilized to assimilate Indigenous youth for generations. Conversely over decades of struggle for equity within schools, these same institutions that have been restrictive towards marginalized communities have been reclaimed by black, Indigenous, people of color who have become educators, administrators, and policymakers themselves. Non-BIPOC allies have made strides to challenge and disrupt oppressive structures and methods that inhibit BIPOC students.

Efforts to Infuse Diversity and Equity within Teacher Education

Tippeconnic (1991) and Ayers & Ayers (2011) both discuss how U.S. education is reflective of U.S. society. This observation could also apply to teacher education. Teacher education programs' main objective was to prepare an education to be a "subject matter specialist" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 217). Especially in 1983 when the report *A Nation at Risk* was released, schools' performances were scrutinized because of the decline of the U.S.'s

> …competitive economic edge and paralysis of the democracy because our children were not being education to be the kinds of citizens the nation would need to meet the demands of the coming century. (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 218)

As was mentioned, U.S. education is indicative of U.S. society. The *A Nation at Risk* report revealed U.S. society's most feared weaknesses. Ladson-Billings (1999) highlights how the deficit language of the report shifted focus from the U.S. to particular children in the U.S. Children who were not white and middle class were perceived and labeled as "at risk" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 219). The overall purposes of teacher preparation was to maintain certain skills

that would bolster the U.S. economy and make it competitive for the global market and impart these skills on students. The goal of education wasn't about diversity, to sustain, or revitalize language and culture. It was to create future workers who would ensure the U.S.'s economy would be a top competitor.

During this time in teacher education, diversity is viewed as a detour from "standard" knowledge that is privileged in curricula. Anything or anyone perceived as different and not conducive to goal of creating a homogenizing educational experience to ensure a strong U.S. economy were viewed with a deficit lens (Ladson-Billings, 1999). A call for teacher education to prepare educators to teach in a pluralist society where various realities exist and one person's goal for education may not reflect another individual's objective (McGee Banks & Banks, 1997). Further, majority of teacher education programs weren't focused on teaching students from historically underrepresented groups (Ladson-Billings, 2000). While diversity has improved within teacher education over the years, the demographic of pre-service teachers are still predominately white, middle class individuals.

Indigenous Teacher Education

There have been efforts to integrate Indigenous language and culture in schools' curriculum (see Guzeyet al., 2014; Harrison & Papa, 2005; Hill & Sansom, 2010; McCarty & Nicholas, 2014; Wyman et al., 2010), and there is literature about what Indigenous people want educators to include in curriculum (McCarthy & Stanton, 2017; Stanton & Sutton, 2012). These cultural reclamation movements lead to the work that focuses on Indigenous teachers' experiences in predominately Indigenous student classrooms (see Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Carlson, 1997; Garcia & Shirley, 2012; Gere, 2005; Hoffman, 2013). This literature proves even though the number of Indigenous teachers in schools is relatively small, their actions are

impactful and disrupt colonial systems within schools by creating space in their lessons to discuss difficult truths (Garcia et al., 2021; Shirley, 2017).

In terms of teacher education, most Indigenous teachers attend predominately white teacher education programs and are expected to privilege Westernized knowledge systems once they become certified teachers. From 1987 – 2012, the percentage of Indigenous teachers in public schools decreased from approximately 1 % to ½ % (King et al., 2016, p. 6). When Indigenous people attend predominately white institutions to become teachers, they face predominately white classmates, faculty, and Westernized curricula. Despite schools focusing on inclusivity and diversity, Indigenous teachers are still educated in Westernized, colonized ways in teacher education programs. In order to disrupt these colonized systems, Indigenous educators need to analyze their positionalities in accordance with education and settler colonialism (Shirley, 2021).

There has been movement by certain universities and tribal college universities to recruit Indigenous students to education programs and create Indigenous teacher education programs that privilege Indigenous knowledge (see Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Etherington, 2015; Exton, 2011; Freeman, 2008; Madden, 2016; van Gelderen, 2017; Wilson & Kawai'ae'a, 2007) and Indigenous teacher mentorship (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022). These efforts and programs are transforming what it means to be a teacher and how higher education institutions can collaborate with tribal communities. These efforts also send a message that Indigenous communities have always known – their ways of learning and knowledges are necessary and should be centered in classrooms.

Contemporary Movements to Sustain Indigenous Identities in Education

For Indigenous people and their communities, a possible goal of education could be to sustain and revitalize Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and languages. Movements like Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy (ISJP) view Indigenous education and students contemporary and call on Indigenous educators to analyze if they are going to be a part of the standardized curriculum and contribute to the cycle of colonization or disrupt the process by amplifying Indigenous epistemologies and perspectives (Shirley, 2017; Shirley, 2022). In this section, movements similar to ISJP, like critical Indigenous pedagogies (CIP), Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogies, and critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies are discussed and highlight how Indigenous communities are teaching to ensure their knowledge systems and languages thrive and continue to future generations are discussed.

Critical Indigenous Pedagogies (CIP)

Critical pedagogies are ways of teaching that resist and pushback on Westernized education and other oppressive institutions. Paulo Freire, who is considered the founding theorist of critical pedagogy, believed pedagogy "…is about neither training, teaching methods, nor political indoctrination" (Giroux, 2010, p. 716). Giroux (2010) states Freire perceived pedagogy less technical and more as a way to pass on "…knowledge, skills, and social relations that enable students to explore the possibilities of what it means to be critical citizens while expanding and deepening their participation in the promise of a substantive democracy" (Giroux, 2010, p. 716). When educators apply these pedagogies in their classrooms, education becomes more about free-thinking than meeting objectives. Critical pedagogies are an important aspect of social justice education.

Critical Indigenous pedagogies (CIP) is a critical form of teaching that centers a critical Indigenous consciousness that "acknowledge, respect, and embrace the role Indigenous leaders play in providing service to their community and people" (Lee, 2006, p. 1). CIP supports "social transformation and social justice" through the lens of Indigenous communities (Lee, 2006, p. 1). A component that's integral to Indigenous communities' perspectives is place (Brayboy et al., 2014; Garcia, 2020; Lee, 2006; Trinidad, 2012; and Lowan-Trudeau, 2017). Indigenous communities' relationship to place and connections to resources, landmarks, and living beings is crucial to CIP (Garcia, Shirley, Windchief & San Pedro, 2020). These bonds are what sustain relationality between students and curriculum.

Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy

The necessity of Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy is evident in how the educational field still depicts Indigenous people. Often, Indigenous people are viewed as archaic or through a stereotypical lens (e.g., the Riverside, CA educator who taught a highly racist math lesson to her students). An example of an educational movement that moves away from these problematic practices and viewpoints is Montana's *Indian Education for All* (IEFA). This legislation was passed in 1999 and

> …promises to (a) increase cultural sensitivity and reduce bias against Indigenous peoples, (b) enrich education for all students by expanding relevance and accuracy, and (c) revitalize pride and cultural identity for/with members of Indigenous communities. (Stanton et al., 2019, p. 78)

IEFA is distinct because it was an early example of a state's effort to address Indigenous youth's voiced desires to learn about their own history and culture (Stanton et al., 2019). The tenets of IEFA, specifically the focus on cultural sensitivity, complement students' education by including

accurate information and history, and bolster Indigenous identity are different educational goals than what students, their families, teachers, and educators had experienced before. Typically, policies and mandates are stifling for students, especially those who differ or resist protocols of Westernized society. IEFA and other state mandates create tangible ways where non-Native and Indigenous students can learn about Indigenous histories, how this affects Indigenous communities contemporarily, and also create ways Indigenous community members can collaborate on curriculum (Benally, 2019; Calderon & Urrieta, Jr., 2019; MacMath & Hall, 2018). IEFA is an example of a policy created that prioritizes Indigenous students' identities in curriculum.

When students can personally connect to curriculum, a plethora of opportunities can occur. Studies have proven that when students recognize their identities in curriculum and experience pedagogy specific to their way of learning, they excel in classroom settings (see Acton et al., 2017; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Fredericks et al., 2018; Freed & Smith, 2004; Garcia & Shirley, 2012; Harrington & Pavel, 2013; Huffman, 2013; Johnson et al., 2014; Joseph & Windchief, 2015; May & Aikman, 2013; Partridge, 2016; Shirley, 2017; Yazzie-Mintz, 2008) and in overall life situations (see Absolon, 2016; Magnat, 2011) compared to a scripted, standardized form of education. Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy can create transformative educational experiences that can nurture dynamic characteristics of learners' identities.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP)

Typically, Westernized schools have been restrictive and suffocating spaces for Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous students and teachers alike still receive blatant messages from various influences in the educational world that they must yield to colonizing ways of conducting themselves in their professional and personal lives. For curriculum that is grounded

in Indigenous knowledge, culturally sustaining pedagogy is specific and unique to the tribal community (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). CSP is a form of teaching that is not focused on imposing authoring on learners and instead encourages students to find what lessons in curriculum resonates with them.

Indigenous people do not need to separate their cultural positionality from their academic identities to be successful. When students see their lived experiences in lessons, they will connect more to the overall learning objective and be more prosperous in their overall educational journey (Lee, 2022). There is not a singular, correct formula to teaching Indigenous students. In order for students to feel their perspectives are being valued, teachers need to make efforts to learn about their students and create a learning experience that is specific to information they have learned in their home environments and their identities. This concept of teaching to the needs and interests of students' and their communities instead of according to a prescribed, scripted curriculum is present in the ideologies of culturally sustaining teaching and pedagogy. The concept of CSP developed from culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive pedagogy "…shifts, changes, adapts, recycles, and recreates instructional spaces to ensure that consistently marginalized students are repositioned into a place of normativity – that is, that they become subjects in the instructional process, not mere objects" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 76).

While this concept of not forcing learners to compartmentalize their identities greatly differs from following the restrictive norms of society, the term "responsiveness" seems more "in reaction to" dominant society. A "reaction" to dominant society's forms of education is needed, but there needs to be a guarantee that this response has long-term, decolonial outcomes for educators, administrators, students, and educational systems. From the foundation of culturally

relevant pedagogy came CSP, which is intended to not only create space for different ways of learning – it is to provide a way of supporting teachers' motives, to make more inclusive learning environments. It is also to encourage educators to seek methods that are sustainable and long-term.

Paris & Alim (2017) define CSP as a form of education that acknowledges and honors students' home language, cultural backgrounds, and literacy in learning spaces. They also state that CSP "exists wherever education sustains the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling" (Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 1). CSP is a key component to create and sustain dynamic learning in and beyond the classroom. There are various educators and administrators who have worked tirelessly to dismantle oppressive, colonizing learning systems. Yet, these assimilationist and antidemocratic monolingual/monocultural educational policies are persistent.

CSP's purpose is to create transformative and permanent changes for marginalized students and create learning environments where everyone involved is challenged to be more aware of their position and their influence in society (Paris, 2012; Paris and Alim, 2014). For Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous teachers, CSP can ensure that different forms of learning and teaching will create significant change reclaim spaces that are hostile to Indigenous people and revitalize knowledge that is passed down in generations from Indigenous elders about their communities and homelands (Holmes & González, 2017). Since the process of education for Indigenous people has been (and still is) immersed in colonialism, CSP needs critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy "…as an approach to address the sociohistorical and contemporary contexts of Native American schooling" (Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 62). Teachers whose students are Indigenous must be committed to centering their students' ways of knowing

in their classrooms. This commitment looks like educators (re)learning and (re)connecting to knowledge systems that were disturbed by colonization (Lee & McCarty, 2017). Teachers taking the initiative to make their students' schooling personable to them is a powerful, first step in disrupting colonizing educational systems (San Pedro, 2017). When teachers and community members disrupt colonization and define what education is and how it can serve them, Indigenous people can establish nation-building in their communities. Nation-building focuses on developing a strong, sustainable solution/situation/idea through Indigenous epistemologies and on moving communities forward toward fulfilling long-term goals (Cajete, 2015; Cornell & Kalt, 1998). CSP and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy creates an opportunity for nation-building in Indigenous communities and an opportunity to reclaim and define what education means to them (see Goeman, 2008; Windchief et al., 2015).

Many of us have rich aspects of our identities that are not acknowledged because of internalized stereotypes of what Indigeneity should be. There is a need for us to consider the various types of diversity that exist within Indigenous communities (Cottrell, 2010). These preconceived notions create stereotypes that both non-Indigenous and Indigenous people believe. Similar to other marginalized groups, Indigenous peoples' identities are "fluid" and have "variety" that can be easily dismissed as not being Indigenous enough (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 77). It is important and necessary for teachers to create opportunities within their classrooms to engage with their students' identities holistically. Conversely, CSP is not a process that can be scaled down to a checklist that can be accomplished in four to six weeks. It is not just a one-way process that only influences and affects students. Hammond's (2014) article asserts that educators have to consistently check in with themselves, reflect on their prejudices and reactions, and understand how their biases affect how they responds to their students.

For Indigenous teachers, characteristics that are common in CSP (i.e., being mindful of your positionality, reflecting on your actions, etc.) parallel with Indigenous knowledge and values (Agbo, 2004; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Cajete, 2015; David-Chavez et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011). In their definition of CSP, Paris and Alim (2017) refer to the "lifeways" of marginalized students and how the classroom needs to be a space where BIPOC lifeways should be nurtured and sustained (p. 2). How Westernized education functions stifles Indigenous students' and educators' lifeways. It silences the intergenerational trauma Indigenous communities endured by teaching whitewashed history, and in many cases, completely eradicates Indigenous voices.

In CSP, Westernized education can be disrupted by educators maintaining a classroom where students being their authentic selves, which creates space to challenge the metanarratives that create the "foundational" story of the U.S. Smith (2012) states "the critical pedagogy of decolonization" is about breaking this cycle of colonized education and looking to past stories or "alternative histories" which contain "alternative knowledges" (p. 36). This resistance to metanarratives can be accomplished when Indigenous educators ask critical questions about the curriculum they are teaching and whose knowledge is being centered in the classroom. When Indigenous educators and students can engage and immerse themselves in decolonization, they can center their community knowledge and amplify students' and community members' voices.

Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy (CSRP)

Indigenous people are often inaccurately viewed as a monolithic group. Culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP) honors the diversity among Indigenous people, validates basing curriculum in Indigenous knowledge systems, and acknowledges Native communities' sovereignty and that education self-determination is connected to a tribe's

sovereignty (Coulter & Jimenez-Silva, 2017; McCarty & Lee, 2014). The diversity of Indigenous communities and how they define education showcases the strength of Indigenous knowledge and its relationship to a tribal nation's educational movement.

There are a variety of educational movements within Indigenous communities and concerning Indigenous students in the United States. These movements may differ in their main goals, but the general purpose of Indigenous education movements is for Indigenous people to determine and be in control of education in their communities (Garcia, 2021; McCarty & Lee, 2014). For instance, Lee (2022) discusses a "Native-centered charter school" located in Albuquerque, New Mexico called the Native American Community Academy (NACA), its "student-centered education," and how language and cultural traditions are nurtured and sustained through a "pedagogy of relationships" (pp. 85-86). Another example is Indigenous-language immersion (ILI) which pairs Indigenous language and a curriculum that's centered in culture (McCarty et al., 2021). Jester (2017) focuses on CSRP and preservice teachers in Alaska Native communities.

Conclusion

My dissertation is vital to this conversation and will contribute to CSP in relation to Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities. In Chapter 3: Methods, it's discussed how this belief of centering Indigenous knowledge and magnifying Indigenous peoples' voices is also vital in research and theory.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Prologue: Indigenous Research and the Onset of COVID-19

The mountain range had an iridescent glow in the early morning light. Some mornings, the mountains appeared calm and matte-like. This morning the blue and green colors were topped with white snow from an early spring storm. I took a moment to appreciate how the snow-tipped peaks sparkled, causing the blues and greens to radiate like stones in a sunlit river.

I had longed to have these mountains within my eyeline again. While I was attending graduate school in Tucson, Arizona, I had heard about important landmarks to the Tohono O'odham and Pascua Yaqui people. I was always grateful for the mountains in this area because they offered a sense of familiarity. During my Indigenous courses, there were various students and a few Indigenous professors whose tribal affiliations were Tohono O'odham or Pascua Yaqui who shared the importance of their homelands and how their connection to the land shaped their identities. My perspective about Tucson and the Southwest area of Arizona was greatly influenced by these stories my classmates and instructors shared, and I was reminded of my own homelands. The multiple conversations I had with other Indigenous students and professors about their homelands, and the work I was able to create that centered my Indigeneity in my courses, showed me I needed to return home for my dissertation.

Now I was home. Any feelings of excitement for my study were clouded by COVID-19. At the end of February, my research was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board and the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes. I was waiting to receive approval from school districts I had contacted when an initial outbreak of COVID-19 was reported in the area. My family and I were quarantining. Like people around the globe, we consumed the news and doomscrolled on our phones to see what to anticipate next. While in quarantine, I was

preparing to resubmit my Informed Consent documents and amended IRB application for my study so that all research activities would be conducted via Zoom. I felt deflated. How was I going to conduct this study and recruit participants when people were focusing on their safety and worried for their own well-being? I felt selfish for being sad about how I could no longer conduct my study in person. How was I going to complete this milestone in my study with all that was going on?

I had been gone attending school for close to six years. Even though I tried to visit my family at least once a year, there were still changes in the seasons I missed. It was currently March. Despite it being close to spring, we had an intense blizzard that hid the skyline and made it seem like we were inside a snow globe. A mere two weeks after this storm, the sun blazed in a nearly cloudless sky. The wet snow that had fallen during the storm had been soaked back into the ground, which made my family's yard and the surrounding fields an emerald green. I took a moment to look at the mountains one more time before going inside and marveled at how there was little to no evidence of the storm besides the greener grass and the snowpack that topped the mountains. The view of mountains I was taking in was the same view my parents, my grandparents, my great-grandparents, and my ancestors had seen. Even with all the chaos that generations of my family had endured, they continued to live their own lives and pass on traditions and teachings to their descendants. They were the unwavering mountains in their own lives. This was something I thought about as I pondered on what was to come next for me.

Introduction

> A "theory" in its simplest form is an explanation of a phenomenon, and Nishnaabeg stories in this way form the theoretical basis of our intelligence. But theory also works a little differently within Nishnaabeg thought. "Theory" is generated and regenerated

> continually through embodied practice and within each family, community and generation of people. “Theory” isn’t just an intellectual pursuit – it is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence and emotion, it is contextual and relational. It is intimate and personal, with individuals themselves holding the responsibilities for finding and generating meaning within their own lives. (Simpson, 2014, p. 7)

Simpson’s (2014) quote illuminates the concept of theory in a different light then how it’s usually depicted in academic spaces. The main concept that emerges from her quote is how theory explains all occurrences, not just scholarly activities. Simpson’s (2014) and other Indigenous scholars’ explanations and perspectives of theory make it seem familiar to various types of people instead of solely academics. The perspective around theory that Simpson (2014) discusses feels attainable, especially for Indigenous people, because we grow up with certain stories and perspectives that have existed during the times of our ancestors. Simpson’s (2014) and other Indigenous scholars’ beliefs around theory is what made the most sense to me as an emerging Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho scholar and where my viewpoints around my study fit in academia.

The methodology of the study was qualitative, focused on Indigenous knowledges, and created a variety of spaces for participants to reflect and engage in critical dialogue. Participants included Indigenous teachers and Indigenous education professors and within this section, more information about Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies is provided. Data was gathered through pre/post-interviews, focus groups, self-reflection journal entries, sampled curriculum, Facebook messages, and emails. Data was analyzed through line-by-line coding and thematic analysis.

In this chapter, Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies is discussed. Thereafter, the overall methodology of the study which includes Indigenous Qualitative Research Methods is analyzed. The next sections include the study's research questions, the theoretical framework (which is Tribal Critical Race Theory), approval process, participants and location of the research, recruitment of Indigenous teachers, recruitment of Indigenous education scholars, data collection, and data analysis.

Indigenous Research

> Indigenous research has four dimensions: (1) It targets a local phenomenon instead of using extant theory from the West to identify and define a research issue; (2) it is a context-sensitive and creates locally relevant constructs, methods, and theories derived from local experiences and Indigenous knowledge; (3) it can be integrative, that is, combining Western and Indigenous theories; and (4) in its most advanced form, its assumptions about what counts as reality, knowledge and values in research are informed by an Indigenous research paradigm. (Chilisa, 2012, p. 13)

Indigenous research is defined by Indigenous communities and focuses on questions they identify. For me as an Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho researcher, I was drawn to Indigenous research methodologies because of how it centers and amplifies Indigenous communities' wants and needs. It provides a way to help balance my role as a researcher but also as a community member. I wanted a research method that I could connect with as an Indigenous woman and honor the perspectives of tribal communities.

Indigenous Research Methodology

> …What is an Indigenous methodology?…To me an Indigenous methodology means talking about relational accountability. As a researcher you are answering to *all your*

> *relations* when you are doing research. You are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgements of better or worse. Instead you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you. So your methodology has to ask different questions: rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations in this relationship? The axiology or morals need to be an integral part of the methodology so that when I am gaining knowledge, I am not just gaining in some abstract pursuit; I am gaining knowledge in order to fulfill my end of the research relationship. This becomes my methodology, an Indigenous methodology, by looking at relational accountability or being accountable to *all my relations.* (Wilson, 2001, p. 177)

As one can see in Wilson's quote, Indigenous research methodologies are forms of inquiry where a researcher considers their relationality to all beings in the research process. Due to multiple relationships sustained in these methodologies, a researcher's ethical responsibility is to more than just a higher education institution – they're answerable to everyone and everything they have created relationships with during the process (Garcia et al., 2019). The relationality in Indigenous research methodologies can become a link between Indigenous researchers and academic settings (Shirley & Angulo, 2019). A connection between Indigenous researchers, their knowledge systems, and academic settings can be beneficial to expanding the field of Indigenous education and providing a different perspective of the research process, gathering data, and the influence of research.

Indigenous research methodologies are also inherently political because they are in relation to Indigenous sovereignty. These methodologies center sovereignty and self-determination for Indigenous communities by prioritizing Indigenous epistemologies and

ontologies (Chilisa, 2012). These knowledge systems among Indigenous communities are diverse. Therefore, Indigenous sovereignty is unique and not a homogenized concept (Tsinnajinnie et al., 2019). Within practices like Indigenous storytelling, sovereignty is maintained because it is through the sharing of stories that sustain Indigenous knowledge systems (Behrendt, 2019). For my study, interviews with participants, their reflections they wrote about in journal articles, conversations they had with Indigenous education scholars and among each other included stories of their experiences as Indigenous teachers in their home communities. Through this action of sharing stories, sovereignty was evident and maintained because it revealed the significance of finding "…the balance that is right for us" (Behrendt, 2019, p. 183). Stories may be origin stories that have been passed down from our ancestors. They can also pertain to narratives that are pertinent to the goals to Indigenous communities (Archibald & Parent, 2019), which was present in the Indigenous teachers' stories they shared throughout the study. These types of stories help us to connect ancestral knowledge to contemporary Indigenous identities. When spaces are created to share these stories, the process of decolonization can begin. Smith (2012) states decolonization "…does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge" (p. 41). She continues that decolonization is about Indigenous people privileging their issues, ontologies, and viewpoints and "…coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (Smith, 2012, p. 41). In this study, the process of decolonization is expressed when participants discussed their understanding of critical Indigenous educational theories and how they planned on applying their newfound knowledge to curriculum and their teaching.

Another way Indigenous research methodologies is unique is its principles rooted in: relationships, reciprocity, reverence, responsibility, resiliency, and respect. Relationships in Indigenous research methodology certainly pertains to connections between people (Carjuzza & Fenimore-Smith, 2010; Galla et al., 2014; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). It also refers to connections to Indigenous communities through language and lived realities, sacred sites, natural beings, the universe, and Indigenous knowledge systems (Windchief & San Pedro, 2019). These relationships must provide reciprocity to other humans, sacred sites, communities, the universe, and knowledge systems (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Archibald and Parent (2019) suggest "The concept of reverence is very personal and subjective. I [Archibald] learned to practice reverence in my own personal life and in research through prayer, ceremony, and being in nature" (p. 6). Further, Parent shares

> I [Parent] now understand reverence to mean upholding and deeply respecting (at the highest level) all the relationships that I am connected to in a wholistic way including: the land, waterways, Elders, family, mentors, students, friends, and even Txeemism/Coyote." (p. 11)

Archibald and Parent (2019) suggest reverence is about taking time to learn from, nurture, maintain, and respect relationships and committing to these relations for a lifetime. Next, responsibility is about Indigenous researchers and non-Indigenous researchers understanding the accountability they have to people, people's stories, the environment, communities, the universe, and Indigenous belief systems (Archibald & Parent, 2019; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Reciprocity is about giving back to the people, other beings, and sacred sites who have given to you (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), and this giving back can mean "sharing of values or through practices that recognize that both the researcher and the researched are connected to the living

and nonliving (Chilisa, 2012, p. 115). Respect is about holding esteem for other people and yourself and is interconnected with relationships, reverence, and responsibility (Archibald & Parent, 2019; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Finally, resiliency connects to Indigenous knowledge systems and the long-term impacts of reciprocity, reverence, responsibility, reciprocity, and respect that exist within relationships (Galla et al., 2014). Galla et al., 2014 state, "Indigenous peoples by their very existence and presence today demonstrate Indigenous resiliency and persistence" (p. 10). As Indigenous researchers, it is our duty to dedicate our efforts to build and sustain relationships in ways that lead to reciprocity, uphold deep levels of reverence, and reflect the resiliency of Indigenous peoples in responsible ways. For Indigenous research methods, handling participants comments and stories with respect and showing respect through active listening is an important action that shows responsibility and reverence in relationships (Archibald & Parent, 2019) which I prioritized when conducting this study. Indigenous research methodologies makes evident the essential expectations Indigenous researchers and non-Indigenous researchers who collaborate with Indigenous people must consider when completing research in Indigenous communities.

Indigenous research methodologies are community-based, acknowledge, and illuminate the diversity of our people and move Indigenous communities towards their goals (Tsinnajinnie et al., 2019). When a community's viewpoints are amplified, conversations around community goals and sovereignty can potentially occur (Windchief & Cummins, 2022). Indigenous research methodologies must accommodate multiple perspectives for communities like mine where more than one tribe resides. The action of highlighting diverse perspectives was attempted during this dissertation by featuring participants from different backgrounds, teaching experiences, and from both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes.

Ethical Considerations

My identity as an Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho woman who is from the Wind River Reservation created an insider/outsider researcher role when I decided to focus my dissertation in my community. An insider/outsider relationship is a researcher placing themself in connection to the research and the participants and understanding the research process isn't objective (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Kovach, 2009). It is "…the degree to which a researcher is located either within or outside a group being researched, because of her or his common lived experience or status as a member of that group" (Gair, 2012, p. 137). For Indigenous researchers, an insider/outsider relationship comes with responsibility to not only the research process but all those involved.

When the pre-interviews began for the study, I asked the teachers to share a little bit about themselves. Several of them would give me a confused look. One participant asked me, "Like where I grew up?" Another participant asked, "Do you want me to tell you everything – state my name?" After they asked me these clarification questions, the looks the teachers gave me indicated they felt I should already know this information since I have relationships with them outside of the study. These initial interactions were one of the ways I felt the tension of the insider/outsider relationship. We had conversations around how this felt strange because we have existing relationships. I realized that even though they knew and saw me through a particular lens (insider), both the teachers and I were figuring out together how to engage this different lens of Indigenous researcher (insider/outsider).

As I learned more about the insider/outsider relationship for Indigenous researchers, it became more apparent how I was conceptualizing the Indigenous axiology of relationships, reciprocity, reverence, responsibility, resiliency, and respect in connection to how to conduct my

research in my home community. When I decided I wanted to focus my dissertation on Native teachers from my community, I realized majority of the potential participants and I had relationships that existed outside of the study. The Indigenous axiology of the R's made me reflect how to nurture and care for these relationships during the research study. I did my best to learn to embrace the awkward moments when my insider and outsider lens would overlap. I also treated the stories and perspectives they shared with me as more than data and handled them with care, reverence, respect, and responsibility. In terms of resiliency, their stories helped me to better understand Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies and depicted the dreams they had for self-determination over education at Chokecherry Hill School for Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho youth.

Indigenous Qualitative Research Methods

A vital aspect of Indigenous research methodologies is that participants can take something tangible away from the study instead of a researcher extracting information away from participants (Chilisa, 2019). For this dissertation, it was of the utmost importance that participants exited the study with brainstorming lists or beginning drafts of units that they could build on and use for their classrooms. Another purpose for reflecting on the readings and their experiences in the study was to illuminate how participants were centering Eastern Shoshone and/or Northern Arapaho epistemologies in their curriculum and pedagogy.

Indigenous Epistemologies and Ontologies

For Indigenous researchers, tribal epistemologies and ontologies are ways of seeing and navigating the world. Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies are also important in guiding the ethics of a researcher and making them ponder how their research gives back to the communities they work with (Shirley & Angulo, 2019). According to Wilson (2001), epistemology is how a

person reflects on their reality, and ontology is a person's "…way of being, what you believe is real in the world" (p. 175). Even though these knowledge systems are present in Indigenous people's lives, it can be a challenge to envision how Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies can be centered in research. It can be especially difficult when there are gaps in these knowledge systems due to disruptions caused by assimilation tactics from Western society.

Although I have gaps within my knowledge because of the boarding school era and assimilation, there were still beliefs and traditions that survived assimilation tactics passed down in my family and grounded me as an Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho woman. Sharing was one value my grandmother passed on and is a tradition rooted in relationships (Wilson, 2001). Whether that is a connection between humans, natural beings, the environment, or ourselves, relationships are foundational to our ceremonies and our identities.

As I have mentioned throughout this study, Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes are distinct from one another. Many people from both tribes have married and created families and have grown up with both belief systems present in their lives. The presence of both knowledge systems was how I grew up with Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies in my life.

Eastern Shoshone Epistemology. The importance of relations is evident in the relationship of Eastern Shoshone people to the sun (J. Washakie, Eastern Shoshone, personal communication, August 11, 2021). Anthropologists in the area initially believed Eastern Shoshones worshipped the sun. Washakie stated that Eastern Shoshone people's relation was not the sun itself but the belief that Creator shows power through the sun, in particular the sunrise (J. Washakie, Eastern Shoshone, personal communication, August 11, 2021). One of my cousins shared with me her memories of staying with my grandparents and how every morning she

would wake to my grandfather singing to the sun as it rose. My grandfather passed long before I was born, so I never got to meet him. When my cousin shared this memory of him, I could envision my grandfather in my mind, facing the east and singing as the sun rays streamed through the windows of his and my grandma's home. Even though I didn't get to physically meet him, my cousin sharing her memory and learning about our people's connection to the sun made me feel close to someone I've always longed to have a relationship with.

Northern Arapaho Epistemology – "Seeing is Believing". The importance of relationships for the Northern Arapaho people is present in their creation story. It is also evident that relationships and working together across these connections is integral to achieve as a community. At one point, there was water everywhere. Evidence of this time is still present in seashells and fish fossils located in the Wind River Range (N. White, Northern Arapaho, personal communication, July 26, 2021). Creator wanted to make the world, and he asked all animals to help him find a clump of earth in order to create land. All animals dove as far as they could in the water and tried their best to find a clump of earth. This search took place over 7 days and nights. It was Turtle who was able to swim the furthest in the water and retrieve a clump of earth for Creator. From there, everything was created. Eventually, humans came to be, but they weren't all separate. Everyone started as one and as time went on, people went their separate ways and became their own groups (N. White, Northern Arapaho, personal communication, July 26, 2021). The relationships that exist between people, nature, and the environment are foundational to multiple lifeways. If these relationships are not nurtured or become severed, this can create dissonance across various environments.

Methodology

For the study, qualitative methods – specifically an Indigenous qualitative research method – were used to illuminate the process the teachers were going through. An Indigenous qualitative research method was used because it best expressed the personal aspects of the data. Data was fathered from pre/post-interviews, self-reflective journals, focus groups, sampled curriculum, emails, and Facebook direct messages. The data will be kept in a locked box in my residency for 5 years, according to UA IRB protocols.

Data was recorded and stored on my Zoom account, my tape recorder, and my cell phone. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, I changed my pre/post interviews and focus groups to be conducted online via Zoom instead of in person. For self-reflective journal entries, I wanted to provide physical journals to participants, but because of COVID-19, these were moved to word documents. Emails and Facebook direct messages were copied and pasted into word documents. All data was stored on an encrypted drive, stored in a locked box, and backed up on Box@UA. Participants' names were removed from reports and journal entries.

Data was analyzed through thematic coding, which included searching or recurring words and themes. Once those were identified, I grouped the data based on the theme. The first round of line-by-line coding was completed by hand. A second was completed using the QDAS software Dedoose. Once themes emerged, I combined similar words and concept. I then counted how many participants spoke to those words and concepts. This process produced the final main themes for my findings.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were created with the idea of centering and illuminating the two tribal communities from the Wind River Reservation. The questions focused

on sustaining Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in classrooms, how did teachers' perspectives of teaching changed and how does it impact teacher's way of maintaining Indigenous knowledge and values, and how can teachers include Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in curriculum and pedagogy.

What are the ways Indigenous educators can sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho ways of life in the classroom?

The first question was created with the concept of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) as the focus. CSP works to create sustaining teaching and education that centers students' diverse "…linguistic, literature, and cultural pluralism" (Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 1). Within the conversations of CSP, the subject of pluralistic societies is raised (Alim & Paris, 2017). What if we were to analyze this concept of education in pluralistic societies with an Indigenous lens and ask how CSP looks in Indigenous communities where more than one tribe's perspective is present? Even though Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes have lived on the same reservation for generations, they are unique tribes. Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems are vast and differ greatly from one another. It may seem over-ambitious to analyze and ask how two different tribes' belief systems affect education. However, analysis of how Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies is necessary to initiate an honest dialogue among administrators, educators, and community members about how to center Indigenous beliefs systems in classrooms. CSP's conversation around sustainability and pluralistic societies supports the distinctiveness of Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho beliefs while also acknowledging both ways of knowing can exist in the same places.

How will participants' teaching philosophies change from their conversations with Indigenous scholars and their interactions with Indigenous education research? and How does this

experience with Indigenous theories and scholars inform the ways in which Indigenous educators sustain Indigenous knowledge and values?

The second research question has two parts and focuses on the transformational phase that can occur after critical dialogue and self-reflection. Conversation, or dialogue, is an important way of sharing life lessons and information for Indigenous people (Kovach, 2010). Freire's concept of dialogue is where individuals gather to openly discuss their understandings of life and other topics and renew their understandings so they can create change in their work and lives (Leach, 1982). Both parts of this second research question convey the definition of dialogue and the measures that participants take afterwards to instill change personally and professionally.

Waisbord (2020) states dialogue must occur before change can happen within communities. The importance of dialogue is why the second question and sub-question were drafted. Participants took time to dialogue both outwardly and inwardly. They read research and journaled about their reflections on the readings and on personal knowledge and communicated with Indigenous education scholars with questions regarding the published work, adding to the renewal of their understanding about education. Research activities along with focus groups were implemented so participants could personally reflect on their teaching philosophies and celebrate what they were accomplishing as educators and what they can build on moving forward. The dialogue that occurred for them in the focus groups was impactful and helped participants to focus on how they could make their efforts build towards long-term changes after the study was complete.

How can Indigenous educators incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy?

For the third research question, the focus was on how participants centered Eastern Shoshone and/or Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in their classrooms. The purpose of the third research question was to highlight teachers' perspectives about Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes' epistemologies and how they envisioned centering these beliefs in their curriculum and pedagogy.

The next section focuses on the theoretical framework of the study, Tribal Critical Race Theory.

Theoretical Framework

Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit)

TribalCrit is an important theory to Indigenous people, their communities, and non-Indigenous allies. The foundation of this ideology is Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is an ideology and a movement that originated in the 1970s with work by Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams (Bell, 1995, p. 898). CRT is "…committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law" (Bell, 1995, p. 898). It privileges the narratives of people of color and first-person accounts. Eventually, the main argument of CRT (racism being entrenched in U.S. institutions and systems) would expand to education and other fields. For Indigenous people and their communities, TribalCrit is a way for history to be retold. It is a foundational theoretical framework for various research projects that focus on issues that are pertinent to Indigenous people and their communities. It amplifies Indigenous people's perspectives and asserts that oral stories from tribal communities are as valid as Eurocentric forms of theory. For Indigenous

people, the oral stories of our communities serve as tribal communities' bases. Further, these oral stories and the narratives that exist in our families serve as road maps. Both oral stories and our family's personal narratives are central to our communities and can span across generations. They ground our communities and explain our connections to our loved ones and to our environments. These stories are what motivate and guide Indigenous research and are central to the TribalCrit framework.

TribalCrit theory argues colonization is ever-present in contemporary Western systems and society. Therefore, institutions, policies, and procedures are still utilized by these systems to eradicate Indigenous people and their cultures. Specifically, colonization is perpetuated in schools through pedagogies, teaching philosophies, and curricula. TribalCrit is a transformative framework that disrupts colonization and its structures and systems (Writer, 2008). It consists of nine tenets, which are:

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, pp. 429-430)

These nine tenets have been used to critically analyze Eurocentric institutions, the tools that support these institutions, and have proven how Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing are necessary and impactful in contemporary times. For example, Bird's (2017) dissertation engages TribalCrit to examine the persistence of Indigenous graduate students attending graduate programs that were in predominately white higher education institutions in Montana (p. ii). In the dissertation, TribalCrit is used to demonstrate how Indigenous epistemologies and Eurocentric knowledge can work together – Indigenous students do not have to disregard their cultural beliefs in order to be successful (Bird, 2017, p. 61). Bird's (2017) findings reveal the Indigenous graduate student participants' main reason for persistence in graduate school was their connection to their home communities (p. 200). If the students were able to connect what they learned in their program to their cultural knowledge and their communities, they were more determined to complete their program. The study illustrates that when Indigenous students make connections between their ways of knowing and their instructor's pedagogy and learning materials, education begins to resist the overall goal of assimilation. An Indigenous student attending college characteristically has had the message that the only way to find opportunities and achievement is to disconnect literally and figuratively from home. Bird (2017) shows how

the participants in her study were able to challenge this narrative and find pathways to home when they united their tribal and classroom knowledge.

Desai and Abeita (2017) utilize TribalCrit to amplify the agency of student activist Joy, a Diné college student who drew from her tribal epistemology and experiences to disrupt microaggressions she experienced at her university. In this study, tenets one through five from TribalCrit were used to discuss Joy's positionality as a contemporary, Indigenous woman. The five tenets used in this study were 1) the dynamic areas Native people's identities exist within, specifically the "legal/political and racialized natures"; 2) Indigenous knowledge systems; 3) the vitality of Indigenous ways of knowing; 4) acknowledging the significance of Indigenous knowledge systems as legitimate data and theory; and 5) the necessity "…of action or activism – a way of connecting theory and practice in deep and explicit ways" (Desai & Abeita, 2017, p. 277). Similar to Bird's (2017) dissertation, this article used these five tenets to depict how Joy's tribal knowledge centered multiple spaces which included her personal life, higher education courses, and social action (Desai & Abeita, 2017, p. 277). It centered the importance of Diné tribal epistemologies to Joy, and how she persisted when faced with underlying colonialism and oppression from her educational institution.

Shirley (2017) applies TribalCrit in framing how Diné youth made meaning of their identities. TribalCrit is specifically used to apply a critical lens to "…colonial tactics of assimilation and in learning aspects of Diné epistemology" (p. 169). This article espouses Indigenizing educational settings by way of truth-telling (p. 2) and centers the participants' reactions to these moments of truth and how they moved forward towards "transformative and constructive ways of thinking and acting" (p. 173). TribalCrit's tenets were utilized to analyze

how Diné youth participants understood and expressed their identities while they unpacked colonizing methods used in learning materials.

In Garcia and Shirley's (2012) article, TribalCrit is used with Red Pedagogy (Grande, 2004) to set up focus groups. Garcia's focus groups consisted of Hopi/Tewa educators, and Shirley's focus groups were comprised of Diné youth. In these focus groups, meaningful, authentic conversations and decolonization of classrooms, lessons, teaching, and pedagogies occurred. For each of Garcia's and Shirley's studies, TribalCrit was used to "…engage our research participants through the decolonization process" (p. 82). Garcia's participants were K-12 Hopi/Tewa educators who analyzed Westernized educational knowledge, critical theories such as TribalCrit, and considered ways Indigenous knowledge could be centered in curriculum and pedagogy. Shirley's study focused on how Diné youth express their positionalities.

For me, TribalCrit is an opportunity to engage with stories and lived experiences we carry and reflect on what they mean to our positionalities as contemporary Indigenous people. How do these narratives shape us and hold us accountable to our relatives? How do we begin to nurture this knowledge when it may have been disrupted in our family because of the Western education system? In order for me to ensure I was centering Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies in this study, I had to reflect on my positionality and understand that these questions aren't going to be answered within a short time frame.

Approval Process

I submitted an IRB to the University of Arizona for university approval. There is a joint business council called the Wind River Inter-Tribal Council that consists of business council members from both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Business Councils. For both tribes' approval, I sent a letter to the Wind River Inter-Tribal Council that explained my project.

Participants and Location of Research

Indigenous Teacher Participants

Name	Tribal Affiliation	Years of Teaching Experience	Grade Level
Emma	Enrolled Eastern Shoshone	3 years	Elementary
Charlotte	Enrolled Eastern Shoshone with Northern Arapaho descendancy	38 years	Elementary
Clara	Enrolled Eastern Shoshone	20 years	Elementary & Secondary
Maya	Enrolled Plains Tribe with Eastern Shoshone descendancy	6 years	Elementary
Ava	Enrolled Northern Arapaho with Eastern Shoshone descendancy	11 years	Elementary
Naomi	Enrolled Eastern Shoshone with Northern Arapaho descendancy and other tribal lineages	4 years	Elementary
Vivian	Enrolled Northern Arapaho	3 years	Elementary & Secondary

Table 1 Indigenous teacher participants' descriptors

The study had 7 participants who were teachers. They were all co-workers from one school, Chokecherry Hill School, which is a public, state-run school that is located on the Wind River Reservation in a town named Gahni, Wyoming. There were five elementary teachers, and two teachers who worked between elementary and secondary grade levels.

Recruitment of Indigenous Teachers

To begin recruiting Indigenous teachers, I contacted superintendents from two school districts located on the Wind River Reservation and sent email that contained information about the study. This email contained a letter sharing the overall purpose of my dissertation and a flyer with a background photo of the Wind River Mountain Range and text that contained the details of the first informational meeting for interested teachers. From there, one superintendent

responded to my request to conduct my study in their school district. They stated that if my study did not impose on teachers' work schedules, I could recruit participants and conduct research in their school district. Afterwards, the superintendent dispersed my research request email to the Indigenous educators in their school.

Once COVID-19 was present in the area, I reformatted my recruitment procedure. Initially, I had planned for the informational meeting to be in person, but I restructured it to be online. Also, instead of meeting as one large group, I met with people one-on-one virtually. After the superintendent had circulated my letter and flyer, I touched base with each recipient on the email and asked if they were interested in participating in the study. If they replied yes, I asked if they could meet over Zoom for the informational meeting. For the informational meeting, I met with eight people one-on-one via Zoom and presented a PowerPoint that showed the purpose of the study, timeline of the study, research activities, participation, risks and benefits of the study, compensation for participation of the study, and confidentiality. Upon completion of the PowerPoint, I asked the person if they had any questions for me about the study or the presentation. Once questions were addressed, I checked in through email with the individual to see if they were interested in the study. If they said yes, I sent them an informed consent form and gave them a week to read it. After one week, I emailed individuals to see if they were still interested in participating in the study. If they said yes, I asked if they needed help filling out their informed consent forms. Once their informed consent forms were filled out, participants had a choice between physically mailing them or emailing copies to me.

Indigenous Education Scholars

Three participants were Indigenous education scholars, professors within the Indigenous education field. Two of the professors were Indigenous; one professor's tribal affiliation was

Diné and the other professor's tribal affiliation was Hopi/Tewa. The third professor was non-Indigenous. All three professors had extensive work experience within the field of education in Indigenous communities and were top scholars in their areas of study.

Recruitment Indigenous Education Scholars

Prior to my dissertation, I had a relationship with the Indigenous education scholars and had been in talks about their possible participation. I emailed these professors and included a brief description of my study. I attached the informed consent form to this email. If the Indigenous education scholars wanted to be a part of the study, their responsibility was to attend and present during one of the focus groups. All three professors confirmed they wanted to be included in the study and submitted their consent forms via email.

Data Collection

Semi-structured Interviews

The pre/post interviews were semi-structured, which is when inquiries "…emerge in the course of fieldwork and may add to or replace preestablished ones" (Glesne, 2016, p. 96). It provided spaces for participants to share anecdotes they felt connected to the general study. It was necessary to have these moments where participants could dedicate a certain amount of time to fully submerge themselves in research that focused on Indigenous education and culturally sustaining pedagogy.

The pre-interview had ten guiding questions. The pre-interview occurred before the first focus group. For the pre-interviews, the questions asked participants to introduce themselves, share information regarding their positionalities and provide information about why they became teachers.

The post-interview will have a total of five guiding questions and revisited questions from the pre-interview to highlight how participants' perspectives changed and/or were validated regarding Indigenous education and their overall experiences of the research project. There was one pre-interview and one post-interview for a total of two interviews.

Focus Group Sessions

The main purpose of the focus groups were for participants to engage in critical dialogue regarding the field of Indigenous education. Research articles were provided to participants to read in preparation for the focus groups. In each focus group, one research article was authored by the Indigenous education scholar speaker. Participants were welcomed to recommend additional readings.

The focus groups had main objectives which were the TribalCrit tenets. The tenets were intended to be helpful for participants to interact with during the study to see what they felt resonated most with them. During the second focus group, the teachers read and journaled about their reactions to TribalCrit. Each focus group also had a theme and a tenet for TribalCrit as a learning goal. The focus group themes with overall learning goals included:

- Focus Group 1 Theme: Indigenous Education and Hope
    - Learning Goal for Focus Group 1: TribalCrit Tenet 6 "Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goals of assimilation" (Brayboy, 2005, pp. 429-430).

The Indigenous education scholar for the first focus group was Dr. Jeremy Garcia. The objective of the first focus group was to analyze and reflect on the history of schooling for Indigenous students in the United States and the fact that a majority of government and educational policies still exist with the purpose of assimilation. The readings for the first focus group included:

    - Sandy Grande's (2004) "Chapter 4: American Indian Geographies of Identity and Power" from *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*;
    - Tiffany Lee and Teresa McCarty's (2017) "Chapter 4: Upholding Indigenous Education Sovereignty Through Critical Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy" from Django Paris's and H. S. Alim's (2017) book *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*, and;
    - There was a choice of two articles for the third reading. The teachers could choose to read either Jeremy Garcia's (2020) chapter "Critical Indigenous Pedagogies of Resistance: The Call for Critical Indigenous Educators" from *The SAGE Handbook of Critical Pedagogies* or Jeremy Garcia's (2019) "Chapter 4: Critical and Culturally Sustaining Indigenous Family and Community Engagement in Education" from *The Wiley Handbook of Family, School, and Community Relationships in Education.*
- Focus Group 2 Theme: The Journey of an Indigenous Educator
    - Learning Goal for Focus Group 2: TribalCrit Tenet 7 "Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous people, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups" and TribalCrit Tenet 8 "Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being" (Brayboy, 2005, pp. 429-430).

The second focus group's Indigenous education scholar was Dr. Valerie Shirley. One of the purposes of focus group 2 was to initiate a conversation around the importance of acknowledging

and respecting diversity that exists within Indigenous communities. Another goal was to emphasize stories and how they are foundational to Indigenous people's understanding of life. Readings for Focus Group 2 included:

    - Bryan Brayboy's (2005) "Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education." Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) was the theoretical framework for this dissertation. It felt necessary to have teachers read and discuss this article in their journals because TribalCrit calls out how education in the U.S. is rooted in colonization and how Indigenous people must navigate society "…as both racial and legal/political groups and individuals" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 425);
    - Greg Cajete's (2015) "Chapter 1: Indigenous Identity and the Making of an Indigenous Teacher" from his book *Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire*; and
    - Valerie Shirley's (2017) article "Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy: Teaching into the Risks and Cultivating the Heart."

- Focus Group 3 Theme: The Importance of Language within Indigenous Education
    - Learning Goal for Focus Group 3: TribalCrit Tenet 5 "The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens" (Brayboy, 2005, pp. 429-430).

The third focus group's Indigenous education scholar was Dr. Leisy Wyman. The goal was to initiate a dialogue that focused on the importance of language revitalization in Indigenous education and help teachers think of ways they could begin and sustain language work in their classrooms. Another goal of the focus group was to see how goals of education change when analyzed through an Indigenous perspective.

- Focus Group 4 Theme: Dreaming Phase
    - Learning Goal for Focus Group 4: TribalCrit Tenet 4 “Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification” (Brayboy, 2005**,** pp. 429-430).

The fourth focus group didn’t have a featured Indigenous education scholar or readings. The overall goal of this focus group was to provide time for the teachers to converse with each other about what they felt their main takeaways from the study were and what they envisioned for their community. Also, during this focus group, the teachers were given time to either brainstorm a unit they planned on teaching or talk about a lesson they had taught that culturally sustained Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho belief systems.

Journals

Self-reflection journals consisted of questions I developed and also inquiries from Micah Pollock’s (2017) book *Schooltalk*. Pollock’s (2017) questions were included as part of the journaling prompt and asked what educators could implement from the reading in their teaching tomorrow, one year, and ten years in the future. These questions were meant to engage teachers to think about main concepts from the literature they were reading, how these ideas connected to their experiences and tribal epistemologies, and how they imagined implementing ideas into their work. Another reason for asking the teachers Pollock’s (2017) questions was to encourage long-term planning of culturally sustaining pedagogy and how to continually center Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in their curriculum.

Sampled Curriculum

I asked permission of the Indigenous educators for sampled curriculum that they feel fits within the context of Indigenous education. One of the participants sent a PowerPoint of a lesson

they created that featured Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho origin stories for a lesson to students.

Email Exchanges, Conversations, and Text Messages

Conversations that occurred after pre-post interviews, focus groups, text messages, and e-mails could be used for data.

Data Analysis

This dissertation focused on the importance of Indigenous educators' stories. The data gathered from pre-interviews, focus groups, post- interviews, sampled curriculum, and from conversations, text messages, and e-mails were analyzed with grounded theory (Saldaña, 2021). Grounded theory is, "…a theory 'grounded' or rooted in the original data themselves" (Saldaña, 2021, p. 72). Descriptive coding was used for the first and cycle of coding. Focused coding was used for the third cycle. The Qualitative data analysis software (QDAS), Dedoose, was also used.

Coding Process

For the first cycle of coding, I conducted descriptive coding by hand. For the second cycle of descriptive coding, I used Dedoose. Once I had all of my codes, I did a third cycle using focused coding.

Member Checks

Important quotes (both oral and written) were member-checked by participants in order to ensure that the correct meaning was being inferred and that participants were comfortable with the quote being used in the dissertation.

Conclusion

The methods and theory discussed in this chapter are made possible by past knowledge keepers who kept Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies alive and by previous Indigenous scholars who have created foundations for transformative work within our communities. In Chapter 4, the findings of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

I had heard stories about people from my community who were forced to attend boarding school. These stories consisted of the youth and their experiences while being away from their homes and families. A specific narrative that has always stayed with me was how the older children voluntarily nurtured the younger children, took on a caretaker role, and comforted these children while they were all away from home. Sometimes these older children were from the same Indigenous communities as the younger children. Other times they were from different communities but would still take care of the younger children. These examples of relationality among different age groups and the older students protecting the younger children still resonate with me.

As I went through the data for the study, I was reminded of these stories of Indigenous youth taking care of one another during their time attending boarding schools. Unlike the Indigenous youth in the stories, the participants of this study are Indigenous teachers. The relationality they have with their Indigenous students is reminiscent of these narratives in terms of caring for Native youth in their classrooms. The concept of relationality is an underlying theme threaded across all aspects of the research. As the teachers consumed the literature, engaged with one another, and dialogued with the Indigenous education scholars, the importance of relationships was expressed multiple times. For example, as one participant, Clara, stated,

> This [becoming an Indigenous teacher] is an interesting perspective on the origins of becoming a teacher as a profession. My thoughts are that our first teachers are the families through which we are born. Each lesson is interwoven with a story thus teaching us life lessons through the model of existence. For example, our first steps are taken in the moccasins that a family member has made for us. This first step is one in many that

> we take that connects us to the land that our ancestors have walked on long before us. If we are lucky, we are able to be given examples of learning with all things that we are surrounded with. I say if we are lucky because in this new day that we are living in, some of our children have lost their way through no fault of their own and yearn to reconnect with these lessons. I related to Cajete (2015) in which the transmission of identity and being was curated through his grandmother. I too gained my knowledge through this process as I'm sure many of us have. The other connection with this article that I made was being told that all older people are my aunts and uncles, and their children are my cousins. This is a custom that shared and continue to share with my students.

Clara shares how relationality between a learner and an educator isn't limited to a classroom teacher and a student. There are various types of teachers who exist throughout a person's life. Clara shows how her own connections to various people in her life who taught her about identity and Indigenous knowledge systems have directly impacted how she treats her students.

I begin this chapter with positioning the questions in relation to centering my findings followed by an introduction of the participants. Thereafter, the theme of relationality is presented along with the subthemes: 1) Indigenous teachers' relationality to community and school; 2) Indigenous teachers' relationships with students and their families; and 3) relationality between teachers' and student's identities and curriculum**.** Then, the chapter moves to focusing on the teachers engaging with critical Indigenous theories and scholars where the findings reflect their personal reflections on the critical Indigenous theories. Next, the chapter treats the teachers' experiences with critical Indigenous theories in relation to Indigenous knowledge and their reflections after meeting the Indigenous education scholars. The findings then focus on the teachers contextualizing the process of engaging with critical Indigenous theories with the steps

to incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy. The final theme is how critical dialogues impacted curriculum possibilities for the teachers.

Research Questions

In review of this data, I continued to keep the research questions at the forefront of the analysis. The theme of relationality answers Question 1. The teachers engaging with critical Indigenous theories and scholars where the findings reflect their personal reflections on the critical Indigenous theories answers Question 2. The teachers' experiences with critical Indigenous theories in relation to Indigenous knowledge and teachers' post reflections after meeting the Indigenous education scholars answers Question 2a. The teachers contextualizing the process of engaging with critical Indigenous theories with the steps to incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy and how critical dialogues impacted curriculum possibilities for the teachers answers Question 3.

The research study's questions were:

1. What are the ways Indigenous educators can sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho ways of life in the classroom?
2. How will participants' teaching philosophies change from their conversations with Indigenous scholars and their interactions with Indigenous education research?
    a. How does this experience with Indigenous theories and scholars inform the ways in which Indigenous educators sustain Indigenous knowledge and values?
3. How can Indigenous educators incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy?

In the following section, I offer an expanded introduction to the participants. Each has a unique identity that contributed to the findings.

Participants

There were seven Indigenous teachers who participated in this study. All of them were teachers at Chokecherry Hill School.

Indigenous Teachers

Emma is a teacher for an upper elementary grade and has taught for three years. She is enrolled as Eastern Shoshone and a former student of Chokecherry Hill School. During the pre-interview, Emma made a point to state she is a mother. She is someone I have known since she was a baby. I remember when she was just a little girl running around and playing with the other children in my family. It was evident from Emma identifying herself as a mother at the start of the interview and her illustrating the deep connections she has to her profession through her relatives that relationships were integral to her journey of becoming an educator.

Charlotte is a person I have known all my life. She is enrolled as Eastern Shoshone and is a Northern Arapaho descendant through her mother. Charlotte has been an elementary teacher for 38 years. Her influence and longevity in the community is proven by the number of past students who greet and visit with her in public spaces. Similar to Emma, Charlotte is a teacher at her alma mater; she attended first grade through eighth grade at Chokecherry Hill School because during her youth, there was not a high school she could attend on the Wind River Reservation.

Clara is a coordinator at Chokecherry Hill School and is an enrolled member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe. She is a person I have known in my life through her connections to my family. Clara's child and I were schoolmates, so I have known her as a parent, an educator, and a

speaker of the Eastern Shoshone language. She is enrolled as Eastern Shoshone and has worked in education for 20 years. Similar to Emma and Charlotte, Clara is an alumna of the Chokecherry Hill School. Clara believes learning is a lifelong trajectory and doesn't stop at a particular age or life stage.

Maya is an elementary teacher who is in her sixth year of teaching. She is an enrolled member of a Plains Tribe that is located on another reservation, but she has descendancy to the Eastern Shoshone Tribe. Similar to Emma, Charlotte, and Clara, she is an educator at her alma mater, Chokecherry Hill School. Despite the study being the first place Maya and I met, I have heard about the work she has done while working at the school and how she is an influential and impactful teacher. Maya's inspiration for becoming a teacher is due to an Indigenous educator who motivated them while she was a student. Maya states even though there aren't many Indigenous educators, "I think a lot of us feel that when one Indigenous person succeeds, we all succeed."

Ava has worked at the school for eleven years. She is enrolled as a member of the Northern Arapaho tribe and has Eastern Shoshone descendancy. I have known Ava since she began her teaching career at Chokecherry Hill School. She is a dedicated educator who is always willing to lend a helping hand. In her participation in the study, Ava hoped see what other Indigenous people were doing for education in their communities and if an aspect of that could work for Chokecherry Hill School. She states, "I think that's a huge part of education is having other people to talk to. Because if you don't then there isn't going to be any change."

Naomi is someone who has been involved in my life for as long as I can remember. She is an enrolled member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe. Naomi also has Northern Arapaho descendancy as well as a lineage to other tribes. She is a teacher in an upper elementary grade

level, and she is an alumna of Chokecherry Hill School. Being a former student of Chokecherry Hill School significantly impacted her professional goals. Naomi has worked at Chokecherry Hill School for four years, but she has been a teacher for over 20 years.

Vivian is an educator from the secondary grade at Chokecherry Hill School. She is an enrolled citizen of the Northern Arapaho tribe. I have known Vivian my whole life and seen her accomplish various goals, including returning home after college to become a teacher in her community. I asked Vivian what or who motivated her to become a teacher. She stated her grandparents, other educators from her life, and being in athletics were her biggest inspirations.

Now, the Indigenous education scholars are introduced in the following section.

Indigenous Education Scholars

Dr. Jeremy Garcia is an associate professor at the University of Arizona's College of Education in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Sociocultural Studies. Dr. Garcia is an enrolled member of the Hopi Tribe and is of the Hospoawungwa (Roadrunner) Clan. He also has lineage to the Tewa Tribe. He is a co-founding director of the Indigenous Teacher Education Program (ITEP) at the University of Arizona. Dr. Garcia's research interests include decolonization, critical Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy, Indigenous teacher education, and critical and culturally sustaining family and community engagement, and Indigenous qualitative research methodology.

Dr. Garcia's talk for Focus Group 1 was titled "Decolonial Praxis in Indigenous Education" and focused on the conceptualizing what it means to embody a decolonial praxis. His work centered on Hopi/Tewa educators experience with critical Indigenous theories and its impact on their curriculum and pedagogical choices. Garcia (2019) addressed the question of "How are teachers and administrators embedded in the process of sustaining/(re)constructing

Hopi/Tewa education that is decolonial—critical, infuses Hopi/Tewa knowledge and values, and centers Hopi Tribal sovereignty?" (p. 333). He suggests that "there is an important expectation to conceptualize what it means to activate a decolonial consciousness that is grounded within Indigenous values, knowledge, and leads to notions of agency and social change that centers Indigenous issues and expectations" (p. 131). He shared with Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho teachers that he felt a pathway to engaging in decolonial praxis is through one's identity and encouraged teachers to self-reflect on their identity in relation to how it connects to their teaching. Dr. Garcia also suggested that it's necessary for teachers to think about what it means to be Indigenous, what are their guiding questions as Indigenous educators, and what aspects of their Indigeneity impact their decision-making regarding curriculum and pedagogy.

I have known Dr. Garcia since he started his position as a professor at the University of Arizona. The first time I saw his work was in a presentation in an initial class in my doctoral program, and it was the first time I had seen Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies presented and visualized in the way he presented the knowledge system of his community. Dr. Garcia's work and teachings impacted how I viewed Indigenous teacher education, and he also has been a mentor regarding research.

Dr. Valerie Shirley is an associate professor at the University of Arizona's College of Education in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Sociocultural Studies. Dr. Shirley is an enrolled member of the Diné Nation and is of the Ma'iideeshgizhinii, Tsinaajinni, Todich'iinii and Honaghaanii clans. She is co-founding director of the Indigenous Teacher Education Program (ITEP) at the University of Arizona. Dr. Shirley's research interests are Indigenous teacher education, critical Indigenous pedagogy, Indigenous social justice pedagogy, critical Indigenous qualitative research methodology, and youth advocacy in education.

Dr. Shirley's talk for Focus Group 2 was titled "Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy: Moving Theory to Practice" and focused on her framework Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy (ISJP)which centralizes on how Indigenous teachers can be purposeful in implementing theories in their personal and professional lives (Shirley, 2017; 2022). Shirley (2022) states, "The framework of ISJP evolved from a research study I conducted with Indigenous Diné (Navajo) youth in which I drew on social justice principles of transformation, decolonization, healing, and mobilization to examine identity with Diné youth" (p. 5). In ISJP, Shirley (2022) states Native teachers have to decide if "…they will continue to reinforce the standard schooling processes centered on Western structures and ideologies or whether they will embody intellectual sovereignty through their curriculum and pedagogy to reinforce Indigenous lifeways (p. 6)." Dr. Shirley's presentation to Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho teachers, spoke to the self-reflection and self-analysis Indigenous teachers must engage in to make conscious the ways their curriculum and pedagogy may be supporting colonialism and how to decolonize according to Indigenous knowledge systems.

Similar to how I met Dr. Garcia, I met Dr. Shirley when she became faculty in the department. I saw her work in a co-presented talk for a class, and her visuals and presentation of her community's Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies moved me to reflect on my own Indigenous knowledge systems. Dr. Shirley was a key instructor regarding Indigenous qualitative research methodologies and mentored me regarding teaching.

Dr. Leisy Wyman is a professor at the University of Arizona's College of Education in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Sociocultural Studies. Dr. Wyman is a non-Native, white scholar who has worked in solidarity with Alaskan Yup'ik communities. Early on in Dr. Wyman's career, she attended a teaching program that focused on preparing educators to teach in

ways that honor sovereignty, foster respectful relationships with students and community members, center community members' wants and needs, and find possibilities for centering Alaska Native knowledge systems in curriculum and teaching in rural village schools. In this program, Dr. Wyman was mentored by an Inupiaq educator and scholar named Paul Ongtooguk, who has inspired educators, and worked for decades as a leader in Alaska Native education and advocacy (Ongtooguk, 2004). While being a teacher in the Yup'ik community, Dr. Wyman made a commitment to learn the Yup'ik language in order to develop relationships she was establishing in the community.

As a high school teacher, Dr. Wyman collaborated with Yup'ik educators and scholars on a community-based documentation project of local elders' knowledge (Fredson et al, 1998). She has also studied Yup'ik youth culture and linguistic survivance, (Wyman, 2012; Wyman et al, 2013), and collaborated on Indigenous language planning and high stakes testing research in a Yup'ik-serving school district (Wyman, 2010). In focus group 3, Dr. Wyman shared how she had learned from Paul Ongtooguk to challenge ideologies and racist practices in schooling, center Indigenous community members' wants and needs in educational praxis and recognize sovereignty and the central importance of Indigenous leadership in educational change. She also discussed how, in her commitment to Indigenous language revitalization, she has learned to be humble towards the historical and lived experience of Indigenous peoples reclaiming ancestral languages that have been oppressed. She admitted there a myriad of complicated emotions around reclaiming a language that she'll never understand.

As a professor at the University of Arizona, Dr. Wyman has also worked with Indigenous students, educators, and scholars in the areas of youth culture and development, multilingualism, Indigenous education, language revitalization, language policies and anti-colonial research

methods. I met Dr. Wyman in the first year of my doctoral program. She advised me on what courses to take my first year and mentored me regarding teaching about youth in diverse communities. At the time of this research, Dr. Wyman was co-authoring a chapter on Indigenous school leadership, Yup'ik language, youth development, and climate change adaptation with Grant Kashatok, a longtime colleague and veteran Yup'ik principal (Kashatok and Wyman, 2022).

We now move to the finding of relationality.

Relationality

> Relationships are the cornerstone of Indigenous community life. They are how Indigenous People come to understand the nature of their community, their identity, and their role for contributing to their community (Cajete, 2015). (Lee, 2022, p. 84)

In this section, the relationships and connections the teachers identify and discuss depict how they understand their community. In these examples, relationality exists between people, living beings, land, and natural resources. For my study, relationality for the teachers was between one another, their community, and their students. This theme also involved envisioning how the teachers could create relationality between their students' lived experiences and curriculum.

It was commonly found across the educators that they highly valued their relationality with their students and their families. This theme of relationality includes the following subthemes: 1) Indigenous teachers' relationality to community and school; 2) Indigenous teachers' relationships with their students and their families; and 3) relationality between student's identities and their curriculum.

Indigenous Teachers' Relationality to Community and School

All of the teachers were connected to the community Chokecherry Hill School through their identities as Indigenous women. The majority of the teachers attended Chokecherry Hill School when they were students. Whether or not the teachers were alumna of Chokecherry Hill School, they all expressed in various ways they were tied to the community and how their role as an educator was reciprocal.

For Emma, relationality to Chokecherry Hill School and the community was exhibited in her choice to become a teacher. Emma shared she attended college with the intent of becoming a teacher at Chokecherry Hill School.

> Emma: I'm working at Chokecherry Hill School, which is on the Shoshone side of the reservation. But we actually have a lot of kids who are both Shoshone and Arapaho or you know, other tribes from other places. It's more of a mix rather than just Shoshone. But yeah, I've lived in this community up until I went to college at Rocky Mountain West University. And I lived there for four years. And then I came back and with the specific goal of teaching at this school.

In Charlotte's pre-interview, the attachment to her community and to the school she works for was highlighted when she shared an anecdote from her undergraduate college years.

> Charlotte: When I went to Rocky Mountain West University, my initial major was in accounting in the business department. I was in that department for two full years. During the summer, before going back to my junior year, I was home and I had a visit with my dad. My father has always been very interested in education. He served on the school board here at Chokecherry Hill School for at least 10 plus years. I was visiting with him and he talked to me about the importance of teaching and how when he was growing up

> he had some teachers that – how would you say – were not very nice to the kids here. He felt it was really important that we had teachers that cared and were nice to kids. I could say that would be an inspiration for me because my father's words made me feel if we're going to have teachers in our school we should have teachers that are from our community.

Vivian's relationality was expressed by her identifying she was from the community Chokecherry Hill School was located on and had relatives who were either teachers or administrators at the school. She stated how in her family, education was considered important, and she wanted to have an impact on the future of the tribes for the kids and felt like education was the path to fulfill that goal.

Vivian's relationality to the community and school was interesting because she discussed a sense of tension that is present between both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities that she had experienced. During her pre-interview, Vivian discussed the importance of having access to cultural knowledge as well as exposure to other knowledge and perspectives that exist outside of the reservation. She referred to her own experience of attending college out of state and how home remained her constant.

> Vivian: That's what I appreciate. I can still come back, and I can bring my knowledge back, and I can bring my experiences and share them with my kids. But we need to support both sides more. As a Northern Arapaho teacher, teaching at a predominately Shoshone school I sometimes feel like an outcast because my experiences are not accepted as well…our kids see it…they see the divide. They see it, and it's teaching them it's ok to be separate. And it's not. We're one community, we're one world, one globe,

> we all need to come together and support each other, and we can't be knocking each other down. It's frustrating, but it has also gives me an opportunity to teach.

Indigenous Teachers' Relationships with Students and Their Families

Relationality was also illustrated through the Indigenous teachers' relationships with their students and families. What is unique about the Indigenous teachers' connections with their students is they either know their students' families or are related to them. For some of the teachers who have worked at Chokecherry Hill School for decades, they know multiple generations of a family. No matter how the Indigenous teachers are connected to their students, they shared they always communicated these relationships with their students.

During the pre-interview, Maya discussed her teaching philosophy, the importance of building relationships with her students, and pulling on her own lived experiences of being a part of an Indigenous family to connect with students.

> Maya: I try to treat my students like they're family because myself coming from a pretty big Native family, I have a lot of nieces and nephews that are their age. I feel with Native American students, especially trust and communication and we should all be able to know that we trust each other.

Maya also said another important aspect of connecting with her students is knowing their family connections.

> Maya: I can tell one of my students, "Oh, I went to school with your mom" or "Oh I know your cousin" or "I know who your uncles are" or "I know your grandma," and it just kind of builds that connection like, "Oh, she's from here. She knows me."

Ava shared she lived outside of the community, which she felt put her at a disadvantage of having more in-depth relationships with students' parents. However, the importance of being

connected to students and their families and sharing how she and her students are related was apparent in the following quote.

> Ava: The community that I currently work in, we're all related somehow, someway. So a lot of my students I tell them, you know oh, I'm related to you [and the students say] Oh, so you're my auntie, I was like, well, Indian way I'm your auntie but you know, normal way I'm like your third, fourth cousin so we're kind of far away, but we're still related.

Vivian discusses her relationality to students and how the connection makes it easier for her to reach out to families to support students in her classroom.

> Vivian: It definitely helps me to reach out to the families because I know the parents or I grew up with the parents or they're my cousins. And so it's been good to have that connection because it makes it easier. I know what their family expects of them. And I tell them that, I remind them that, you know, I know your mom wouldn't allow you to behave like this. So I expect you to treat me with the same respect. I refer to myself as their family as well.

Naomi being a former student at Chokecherry Hill School created a significant impact on her professional goals. She also shared seeing multiple family members as teachers in classrooms and her mother working at the school contributed to her inspiration for becoming an educator. Naomi's lived experiences of being surrounded by educators in her personal life and also being a teacher serving her community provides a unique perspective in relation to the profession.

> Naomi: I've only been teaching in this all-Indian school district for, it will be the end of my fourth year. So one thing that I've noticed is that you're related to the kids. So that's different. But it's almost like you're a mediator for the school. Because a lot of the parents come to you with issues that they have with non-Indian admin or other teachers

> which is kind of a difficult situation to be in. And I've noticed that I've had to speak up at meetings, where there's not, I'm the only Indian in the room. I'm on a committee or something and I'm the only Native and I'm, I've had to speak up and say, Hey, you know…we don't do it that way. Or maybe you should ask someone, something or, I don't know, just kind of I think I bring a different perspective to it. And for the kids, I think, even though, you know, I joke and I tease and we have fun with them, I think they do look up to the Indian teachers. Because you have a different relationship with them. It's a little more casual.

Relationality Between Teachers' and Student's Identities and Curriculum

Throughout this study, participants expressed wanting to connect Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems to curriculum but not knowing how or where to start. One question from a participant about student identity and the classroom developed and was asked during the first focus group.

During the question portion of Focus Group 1, Maya asked Indigenous education scholar Dr. Jeremy Garcia:

> Maya: Because I work with young children, and they haven't made that connection to their own identity, is it my job as a teacher to help make that connection? Or is it the family's?

Dr. Garcia answered Maya's question by saying he thinks it is both a student's teacher and family who creates opportunities for students to connect to their identities.

> Dr. Garcia: We have to be mindful of how we're conceptualizing an identity. Look at this picture here [refers to his PowerPoint presentation]. So if you look at this picture here, there's youth [5 – 7-year-olds] who are running. And running is a big part of our identity

in Hopi as maybe it is in your community. For instance, the idea of hair becomes part of the identity. As you see, these young children are representing three different traditional hairstyles of the Hopi and Diné. So, when we begin to recognize the various forms in which identity is being displayed within youth I think that's important. And then having families co-construct what identity means is important as well. It might be participating in various ceremonies. It might be you know even having conversations around various issues. So there's various ways when you start thinking about identity and I think one of the goals that I've always done with teachers is mapping out what are the values and what is Indigenous knowledge and once you start kind of mapping those out, then you start to see clearly how identity is more nuanced than what we think. But I think the hard work is doing that part. And families can, parents can or should absolutely be a part of that.

For Clara, her perception of relationality between identity and curriculum was evident in one of her journal entries. She shares her thoughts about Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy (ISJP) in her journal entry about a lesson she taught in the Shoshone language.

Clara: One of the lessons I taught in my Shoshone Language class was called “Eeshuh Nuh” – This is Me. The overall concept was to have students develop a slide show that was a reflection of themselves through visual experience. Using the five senses, students would develop the slide show with accommodating images/pictures. The statements were: I am from the family of……. 2). I am from the smell of….. 3) I am from the taste of….. 4) I am from the sight of…. 5) I am from the touch of……The learning objective is that students will acquire knowledge about themselves by responding to the statements and creating a slideshow about who they are. The final product (for 8th graders) was the presentation that integrated Shoshone language. The takeaway is that in order for students

to have respect for others, they must first have respect for themselves. Respect for oneself is a fundamental value of humans and is one of the core beliefs of the Shoshone people. Overall, we started developing cultural regeneration through incorporating a core belief system but need to take it a step further and create a solid curriculum and pedagogy that requires our teachers to be self-reflective in their instructional practices and how they are preparing our students to lead their tribes and preserve our lands and ways of life.

Naomi's perception around connecting curriculum to Indigenous students' identities and to Indigenous language and her relationality to these knowledge systems was an area of inquiry that arose for her. At the question portion of Focus Group 3, Naomi asked Indigenous education scholar Dr. Wyman about language shift in her community and how to begin the work of incorporating language into the curriculum.

Naomi: My question was I feel like our community, our language shift occurred long ago. And so how do we start to implement language revitalization in a school where most of the teachers are non-Indian or like myself, I don't speak the language. Where do we even begin?

Dr. Wyman: I know there are so many communities in that situation. And there are some examples out there of communities that have built immersion programs that often happens one year at a time. It often happens with one teacher saying, "We're going to start it in kindergarten, and we're going to do it as much as we can in kindergarten, and then if we can get one more teacher we'll move it up. So it's kindergarten, first grade, and then we'll try to get one more teacher and get up to third grade." There's a domino effect building that's happened in those immersion programs. Lots of times it's grade level and classroom at a time, step by step. But, you know if you're not at the place where you

could start with a whole classroom, I've seen people take different approaches. Lots of times, young people start with learning how to introduce themselves in their language. Introductions can have different important pieces to them. There are deep meaning words in languages. Even if you're not using the language in full sentences, another thing some people do is try to think what are concepts in this language that don't really translate well, but they're important because they have lots of meanings for relationships?

Engaging with Critical Indigenous Theories and Scholars

Critical Indigenous Theories and Personal Reflections

Overall, the participants were influenced in various ways by the critical Indigenous education theories and conversations with the Indigenous education scholars. A reaction that emerged for a majority of the teachers was a validation of emotions they had when reading the articles and attending the focus groups. For some of the participants, there was a question of how to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and language revitalization into curriculum when they are still learners of language and these ways of knowing.

One question that occurred for the teachers when they participated in the study was where to begin to incorporate cultural sustaining pedagogy and Indigenous education into their instruction. An action the teachers took when reading critical Indigenous educational theory and conversing with the Indigenous education scholars was asking themselves how to expand their lessons to include culturally sustaining pedagogy and Indigenous education that was centered on Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies.

In preparation for the three focus groups, the teachers dedicated time to reading literature that connected to the focus groups' themes. Three out of the four focus groups had one Indigenous education scholar who was a featured speaker. Readings for the focus groups also

included pieces authored by the featured Indigenous education scholar. The teachers captured their reactions to the readings in written journal entries and developed questions to ask Indigenous education scholars. This section features various reactions the teachers had to the readings and the questions they developed for the focus groups.

In her journal entry for Focus Group 3, Emma shares her reflection on Simpson's (2014) article "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation" and what her thoughts were regarding one-size-fits-all approaches to education. She is responding to Simpson's (2014) statement:

> Just as it is unthinkable within a Nishnaabeg worldview for a leader to impose their will on their people, it is unthinkable to impose an agenda onto another living thing –in essence, the *context is the curriculum* [emphasis in original] and land, aki, is the context (Cajete, 1994). (p. 10)
>
> Emma: I agree with this excerpt. Non-Indigenous administrators and educators employ a different belief and value system when it comes to education. All of the curricula that is chosen for educators to utilize in the classroom, uphold the hegemonic norm and are meant to indoctrinate our students into the dominant societal ways of thinking and living. These administrators and educators believe that because certain mainstream curricula work for non-Indigenous, poverty-stricken schools, they must work for ours as well. They fail to account for the cultural, historical, and identity differences, and instead assume that because something worked for one poor school, it must work for all.

Clara also shared a critical analysis regarding identity stemming from the readings. Clara's journal entry for Focus Group 1 discussed her reaction to Grande's (2004) "Chapter 4:

American Indian Geographies of Identity and Power." The theme of Focus Group 1 was "Indigenous Education and Hope."

> Clara: After reading the article by Grande (2004), I am reminded of the presence of identity politics in my own community and life experiences. Having first-hand knowledge of this play on identification has raised issues on several levels. In my opinion, there is no ownership on the right to claim the blood of our ancestors if you come from the line of indigenous peoples. Of course, having traditional knowledge and speaking your native language is a huge contributing trait of indigenous peoples. But there are also people who I know personally that have lived off the reservation for years and never return but are considered Newe' [Eastern Shoshone word for people] because of their lineage. They don't practice our cultural ways and ceremony but are enrolled as Shoshone. Who am I to question that they [people] are if they continue to claim their Shoshone identity? Then there are the people who are descendants of Indigenous people, but they come from a long line with little to no identifying traits of any tribal affiliation. There are those who feel the connection to their tribal identity through various forms. However there are those who stand to gain financially from identifying as native. The question of who has the right to determine one's own tribal identity remains. Grande presents the issues clearly as the sources of oppression (colonialism and global capitalism). The legal mechanisms forced upon indigenous peoples continue to erode the fabric of our identity and slowly chip away at our sovereign nations. As educators, we need to work toward engaging youth in researching and honoring their ancestral histories.

In Naomi's journal reflection for Focus Group 1, she expanded on her reflection of the readings and her experiences during this session.

Naomi: I think that this would be important readings for anyone who works with Native kids. It may give them a view of the different perspectives that many Natives have. The knowledge gained from the readings and speaking with Dr. Garcia would help create a better school and classroom culture by giving teachers some insight. I believe this information will help us as Native people begin to reform our schools.

Some of the most important points from Grande's (2004) article included the questioning of who or what is an American Indian? Another was the introduction of concepts that reject Westernized views of Native people. I also think that the history of policies affecting Native Americans in our country, such as the Dawes Act, which was designed to detribalize indigenous people is important. I think that this reading would help non-Indians who work with Indigenous children to understand some of the issues we have today. The Garcia (2019) article introduced some new ideas for me. I really enjoyed the zoom meeting and his presentation. The ideas about where to begin designing a culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy inspire me to begin this process in my own classroom. I plan to create a lesson like the one we saw in Dr. Garcia's presentation, disrupting the concept that our history as Native people is confined to reservation boundaries. I feel that reading these articles and participating in the focus group will have a positive effect on my teaching, and I feel very fortunate to be able to do so.

For the journal entry for Focus Group 3 regarding Wyman et al.'s (2010) article, Maya reflected on how her classroom could be a space for language planning.

Maya: Due to the age of my students I feel that kindergarten could a great platform for language planning. I know that it's easier to learn a language at a younger age as opposed to an older one. I feel that my classroom could be used as a language platform in the

ways that I have some understanding of the language itself. I could switch out common phrases and things in our language. In order to fully use my classroom as a language platform, we would need a fluent speaker present.

Experience with Critical Indigenous Theories and Scholars: Interactions with Indigenous Knowledge and Values

This section showcases how the teachers' viewpoints around curriculum and pedagogy changed in various ways once they read critical Indigenous educational literature and conversed with Indigenous education scholars. The reactions illuminated how the teachers were contending with history, decolonial praxis, and what instilling critical Indigenous theories means in Chokecherry Hill School.

Teachers' Post Reflections After Meeting Indigenous Education Scholars

At Focus Group 2, Indigenous education scholar Dr. Shirley, who is an enrolled member of the Diné Nation and a professor at the University of Arizona, presented on "Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy: Moving Theory to Practice." Dr. Shirley shared her research on her concept of Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy and Diné youth, her experience as a former elementary educator, and her work with Indigenous pre-service teachers as co-director of the Indigenous Teachers Education Program (ITEP) at the University of Arizona. Vivian asked Dr. Shirley how teachers can help students to overcome their feelings of anger and move past the trauma in order to heal.

> Vivian: I kind of focused on the conversations that happen regarding our historical trauma that our ancestors have experienced. You talk about how you have to teach the students how to overcome that and emotions that they feel because of the trauma that our ancestors have experienced. How do we teach our students about our past? And help

them to understand they will have anger, they will have negative feelings. It's a deep question, I guess. How do we teach them how to overcome their feelings of anger, and, you know, move past the trauma in order to heal?

Dr. Shirley: That's a really good question…Anger, frustration, all of those emotions are natural. And we should let them experience those. We should let them feel that and to be able to express it. It's just part of the process. And I continue to this day to go through that, as I'm learning new stories. I know in the media right now we're hearing about. For example, Mount Rushmore and the Treaty of Fort Laramie – you're just angry about that history. You're seeing it perpetuated today, and that's what angers me. But at the same time, I think we have to know ourselves. We have to go through that personal experience for ourselves and make sense of it for ourselves, and to think about the ways that we begin to move out of that state to being to be more productive with what we do in our daily lives. To know, ourselves, we have to go through personal experiences and make sense of it for ourselves, and to think about the ways we begin to move out of that state to be more productive with what we do in our daily lives. And what I did with the youth [referring to her study with Diné youth] was that in every focus group discussion, I constantly went back to positive thoughts about our people, the resilience of our people. We had discussions about boarding schools and the Long Walk period, and at the end, I had them reflect on all of ways our people are strong and are still in existence today. When I first started this I grounded the community of students in k'é because…they knew each other and they were related. But we were in a different space where we were intellectually engaging with history, in expressing our thoughts and our feelings which wasn't like, wasn't practiced very often for them. And so I had to ground that entire space in k'é, which is our own traditional way of practicing respect with each other, taking care of each other. You know, it goes back to what we do during

ceremonies, we help each other because it's for the benefit of the person but it's also for the health and benefit of the entire community. So I created that community among the students first and I had an entire conversation with them about that. The other part that is essential to the process is the recovery of our Indigenous knowledge systems because in our knowledge systems, there are stories that activate healing. And as I mentioned in the article, those stories, going back to what Jo-ann Archibald mentioned, there is energy that's transmitted from those stories, and they promote a healing energy. And so I think, you know, if teachers are to engage students in developing a critical consciousness about history, they should also be intentional in bringing in those traditional concepts or stories into the classroom as well as to engage students in healing.

In light of conceptualizing decolonial praxis, at the end of Dr. Garcia's presentation for Focus Group 1, I asked all participants to share their thoughts. Dr. Garcia is a citizen of the Hopi Tribe with lineage to the Tewa community and is a professor at the University of Arizona. His presentation was titled "Decolonial Praxis in Indigenous Education" and discussed his work and scholarship within the field of Indigenous education. Specifically, Dr. Garcia presented on his own identity as an Indigenous man who is a former elementary education teacher, the work he has done around critical Indigenous pedagogy development with teachers from his community in Hopi, his role as co-director of the Indigenous Teacher Education Program (ITEP) at the University of Arizona, and the work he does with Indigenous pre-service teachers.

A key takeaway from Garcia's presentation was examples of decolonial praxis that teachers from the Hopi community had created and taught in their classroom. Garcia (2021) defines decolonial praxis as teachers taking part in "…sustaining Indigenous knowledge, values, and language…" and a way "…to understand, interrogate, and confront systems of oppression and dehumanizing experiences that impact our right to exist as Indigenous peoples" (Garcia,

2021, pp. 145-145). This concept reveals how it's necessary for Indigenous teachers to look within cultural knowledge they hold to guide their teaching. Decolonial praxis also provides validation for Indigenous teachers that they have a right to resist systems, such as Western education, that jeopardize their and Indigenous youth's identities.

Following is an uninterrupted conversation between all participants about their reflections of the readings and overall Focus Group 1.

> Naomi: We need to look through our curriculum at our school. And I think the main thing that stuck out to me though was thinking about past staff meetings. And when we did the reading [Referring to all Chokecherry Hill School staff reading Deloria, Jr.'s and Wildcat's (2001) book *Power and Place: Indian Education for America*] for Clara, just some of the pushback that we got was very discouraging from the non-Indian teachers. And then I'm wondering, are we going to have that same kind of pushback from administration, if we try to do these kinds of things? He said to put the standards second, but I would really struggle with that. Maybe I'm colonized or something because it's so pounded into our brains that we have to meet the standards. And the students have to show some kind of progress, and the data has to show that they're doing this and this and this and that. It's like where do we even start? I don't even know.

> Ava: I think that this is really important work, and it's way overdue. When I came to Chokecherry Hill School 11 years ago, I was excited because I was like, "I'm going to learn another language. I'm going to learn Shoshone." Well, that wasn't the realization. And eleven years and we don't have too many kids that are exactly fluent. So I think he's right. You know, there are a lot of good non-Native teachers, but we do need more Native

teachers. And it starts with us in a way with the language because we're with them seven hours a day. They only get Shoshone language for 30 minutes, maybe two times a week. That's not even near enough time for them to become fluent. We've all taken classes in college and high school with language and there just needs to be more time. So it's important.

Vivian: I think the big takeaway for me from these readings is looking at the experiences of the people within our community and trying to create an environment that is accepting of our experiences in all aspects of our lives. And teaching our students how to be open minded. And, um, you know, our culture is a major part of our life. And it influences everything, every decision we do. Everything we every decision we make and everything we do. And we need to, you know, I guess, educate all staff members that, you know, we're worldly people, and we're close with nature, and we need to bring that into our teachings and, you know, look at our standards, and see how we can do that, how we can connect them and how, you know what we're already trying to do. Um, I just think, you know, it's a long way ahead of us. And right now with the impact that COVID has had on our data and all of our testing and all of that, like I think this is a good time to begin bringing that into our, into our school. I think it's a good place to start. You know, we can't we have data that's been interrupted already, so we need to pick up now and go.

Charlotte: In the first reading what stood out for me was the quote from this study that Donna Dehyle had done about with Navajo students. It said students who were more secure in their identity as Indian were more likely to resist assimilation while

simultaneously maintaining their culture. They have become more successful in school. I thought that was pretty interesting. It makes me really curious as to utilizing more cultural material within our classroom, bringing in like he was suggesting elders on the water section that we do, and trying to incorporate more of the community into the school. He said that you incorporate your standards within the cultural stuff. And I know that would be hard. But I think working together, especially if there's close to 10 of us here and doing those types of things and using culture more, I think would benefit our students. I know, it's hard and from teaching for over 30 years, I think, we've had our ups and downs. I've seen those high test scores, I've seen mediocre test scores, and I'm seeing scores that haven't been very good. And I'm ready for change. And I think using more of the cultural pedagogy that he's talking about, I'm seeing it as a draw for me. I don't know whatever anyone else feels like. But I think it's time that we really look at what we're doing and really evaluate and maybe change it.

Maya: So one thing I took from the reading is we offer a unique perspective as Indigenous educators. We have insight, and I think one big thing that we struggle with at the school is the student's sense of identity. Because they have so many influences from outside perspective, whether that's social media – I know a lot of the kids are on Tik Tok. So, they're not necessarily seeing like, themselves represented there. They're seeing like other cultures, other ethnicities, so they try to emulate that, because we don't have that.

Clara: So the one takeaway was the section on acting white. And Ogbu identified several factors that demonstrate what it means to act white. And to expand on this, students use

this as a tool, in my experience, at least in the classroom, to avoid school success, because they don't want to be perceived as being white because they're doing well in class or they're on time. You know, they're doing what they need to be doing. And so a lot of the times, our students aren't successful because they don't want to identify with that. I think there was a quote in the book to assertions of what constitutes being Indian to avoid the same colonialist domination that creates Indian versus non-Indian. And then tribe versus tribe. Because right now we have, you know, that lateral violence where we have brown against brown Shoshone versus Arapaho, Crow versus Shoshone or whatever. So I think with this group it's going to be really helpful to be able to shoot ideas off each other. These readings are going to be really, really helpful in understanding culturally responsive pedagogy. And then I think with all of this and with the strategic planning group that we started, before the COVID hit, it's kind of the same group here. I think we'll be able to really move forward in creating a safe space for not only our students but our community and restore their sense of identity and ownership.

Emma: Going back to what Naomi and pretty much everybody before me said, this is something that I would really, really like to see implemented in our school because again, I was going to bring up the same quote Charlotte did about how kids who had a secure understanding of who they are – their identity, their culture, their language – they're more likely to succeed or want to succeed in an academic setting because they know that's not going to impede on who they are. They kind of are living in two worlds and they realize that whereas like Clara pointed out, we have kids who are like, "No, I don't want to, because that means that I'm acting white and I don't want to do that." And so I feel like if

we were able to implement this type of pedagogy across our whole school, it would be really impactful for our students who want to succeed and go past school here. And that's one of the reasons why I asked Dr. Garcia, if he had any specific readings or professional development ideas because – like Naomi pointed out the book we read this past year – it ruffled a lot of feathers, which is kind of discouraging in a school on a reservation. Our population is predominantly Native and so I'd hoped that there are some readings out there that won't ruffle people's feathers and will show them the importance of it and why our school in particular should do it.

At Focus Group 4, Emma, Charlotte, and Naomi spoke about how all of the readings and Indigenous education scholars' talks impacted them. One of the Indigenous education scholars' talks and set of readings ignited a memory for Naomi.

Naomi: I just liked the whole idea [truth-telling] that was mentioned in the article by Dr. Shirley, which was about teaching into that trauma, especially for the older grades, but even for the younger kids. You can kind of address it, because it's there. And the teachers don't, I think, especially non-Indian teachers don't want to think about it. We were at an Indigenous education conference session that we had to attend for a PD earlier this year, and it was trauma informed schools or something like that. But during this presentation, the white teachers in the room that I was in, were talking to each other. And then we had to take a survey during the presentation. And I remember seeing that someone on there was just being negative, like every answer that they give was a negative answer, like, do you think that this trauma informed training will help you your teaching? And they voted like not at all. I don't know if you guys remember that. But um, you know, it just it almost

made me feel like crying because I just think, why do we have people like that working out here? Who is it? And why are they here? Still?

Charlotte: Yeah, and another thing is they get the attitude of, “Oh, I know that happened. It happened and it was wrong. Let's go on.” You know, it's just like it's in the past, those kind of attitudes some white people have that kind of attitude. You get that? I've heard that before.

Naomi: I'm on this committee, and I'm the only Indian teacher on this committee. And they're coming up with like, a vision and mission statement for our school. And one of the choices was every student every day, and then someone wanted to say, teaching and learning the Native way. And so everyone looks at me to see if I think it's okay. And the principal said, “So what do you think of that?” I said, “No,” I said, “because we're not doing that.” And the whole room was silent. But I said, we're not teaching and learning in the Native way. I said, “This is a Westernized school.” And I know a lot of the teachers probably were rolling their eyes that are on, on that committee, because they're getting tired of me saying stuff, but I'm just going say it. It's been happening at meetings. At this meeting the other day I got done talking, one of the teachers at my table said, “Well, good luck with that” because I said I was going to start doing more culturally relevant stuff. I don't know if you guys were in that meeting were you? Emma and Charlotte?

Charlotte: I remember when you gave the presentation, but I didn't hear I didn't hear that comment the teacher made.

Emma: I'm just the same as Naomi with the truth telling and teaching, teaching to the risks. I think that's really important. And I'm also on the committee for my grade. And I feel the same way. I'm always like, “Hold on, let's think about this through this lens.” And I definitely know what you mean when you say you feel like people are rolling their eyes at you. We’ve tried doing it this way for so long. It's just like trying to fit a square into a circle hole, it's not going to work. It doesn't matter what curriculum you buy. It's just not going to work. So why don't we try something new and tailor it to our kids? What others need the most about it, they're always like, “Well, this works for other poverty-stricken schools.” And it's just not a cure all. It drives me nuts but it's like, the answers we have from those schools like, just because we’re a poor community too doesn't mean that what works for them is going to work for us. We have so many differences. They just don't account for it. And, Naomi, the meeting where you brought up how the research they're presenting to us didn't reflect any Native schools or community. I thought that was so awesome. I talked to our principal right after that. He said, “Well, yeah, there's just not a lot of research.” And I said, “Well, hold on, let me share with you some resources.” So I haven't heard back from him. But that's just an ignorant statement to say that there's no research or there's not a lot of research to support this because there is.

Naomi: I was thinking that too. They're like this was over 10 million people and like, I don't care about 10 million people. I care about what's happening right here. But I felt like I offended them.

Contextualizing the Process: Engaging with Critical Indigenous Theories

In the previous section, I centered on the intersection of the critical Indigenous theories for the teachers after they had read the critical Indigenous educational literature and dialogued with the Indigenous education scholars. In what follows, we gather insight into how the critical Indigenous theories and time with the scholars impacted their perspectives on curriculum and pedagogy.

Steps to Incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Knowledge Systems in Curriculum and Pedagogy

Throughout the study, the teachers conveyed various ways the study impacted them. There were teachers who reflected and shared about previous lessons they had taught. After reading the literature and conversing with the Indigenous education scholars, these teachers felt they could revise the previous lessons and center them more within the local context of the community after reading the literature and conversing with the Indigenous education scholars. There were educators too who thought about language shift which is impacted not only by colonialism but rapid climate change. Another example of the impact of the study was a Facebook Message from a participant on how to call-in a colleague about a problematic lesson. The final example is of a lesson a teacher had created around the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho origin stories and a particular response from a parent this lesson elicited. All of the following examples reveal how educators' perceptions of curriculum and pedagogy were affected by the study.

For the teachers, interacting with critical educational literature and Indigenous education scholars helped them brainstorm ideas for ways to incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems. There were some teachers who thought of past lessons they taught

and how they could expand and build onto those lessons after reflecting on the critical educational literature and communicating with the Indigenous education scholars.

In the first focus group with Dr. Garcia, Charlotte discussed a unit she taught about water.

Charlotte: I was talking a little bit about setting it [the lesson about water] up about what you were saying about water. And I was just saying that water is important for our people here and our reservation. In third grade we do a water unit. And when we did it, we incorporated into the lesson about what was happening in South Dakota and DAPL, and then we tied it into water here – why it's important for us. But I mean, I thought we could just expand on it. What are your ideas as far as at a third-grade level to use an issue like water? And is there anything else we could do?

Dr. Garcia: I'd be interested to know what you all have done in terms of centering it within the space there. I think bringing in some maybe elders or community members and even youth right to engage in the conversation with you all to think about what is water? What does it mean to us here locally? What are the sources? I think there's ways you can do that to certainly weaving it in. I'm glad that you brought in Standing Rock!

Charlotte: Yes, and it's amazing the amount of knowledge the children had about it [Standing Rock and the NoDAPL movement] at a third-grade level. They all knew about it and had good viewpoints and ideas about it.

Dr. Garcia: Yeah, you know there’s also a myth that youth don’t recognize that there are these issues happening. Families are having the conversations around the dinner table or

with family members. They're listening. They're hearing the ways in which discussions around these particular issues are being addressed. But I think one of the goals would be as you see with Samantha here [image of Hopi with water cycle and children's drawing of Hopi clouds]. Samantha had them do a mapping of their identity in second grade around water. And some students were from the water clan so they brought in an elder who had the knowledge being that she was from that clan. They had them sketching out things and drawing. Part of this is always interesting, because we're also looking at reinforcing the identity of students to help them learn and sustain the relationships between water and their community.

Charlotte: Yeah, and we did use the water cycle tool. I'm thinking we needed to go a step further and use some of the ideas that you had as far as of how the schools tied it to their people. And I can see how we can put mapping into it.

Dr. Garcia: Right. Yeah. You'll be surprised that there may be, locally there for you, all the resources such as the Department of Water and human resources. They became vital for Samantha who you're seeing here in the screen to help her class see a contemporary lens of how water is being discussed [from a Western lens]. The idea of preserving it and those are balanced in her curriculum. She had them come in to help them see it from a quote unquote scientific lens at their age level, but then she had the balance of their identity in the mix too.

In Focus Group 3, Clara talked with Dr. Wyman about land-language connections and global climate change.

Clara: One of the things that struck me was as we're talking about the challenges of climate change, and the other thing is how our language morphs to accommodate the changing landscape. And in the spring I don't recall that we had that spring storm and usually for us in our area, the Shoshones, when we do have that storm in spring then it marks the onset of a spring because it's the end of winter because we have that change in the weather and the heavy snow that breaks the branches. We call it the buki dequan bay, because it breaks the branches and then we know that springtime is coming. So with climate change now it's so odd to me to go outside and see all the broken branches in the middle of September. And it's a little bit eerie to think that you know we had that that snowstorm. So it's really interesting just the connection of the language and how you have to adapt to the changing of the times.

Dr. Wyman: Yeah, that's such a powerful example. I'm new to reading about Indigenous scholars thinking on environmental justice. A climate change working group, which is a number of Indigenous scholars, including folks from here in the Southwest and folks up in the Arctic are writing about how what you said that language also holds knowledge of times that Indigenous people have adapted year to year. Climate always changes somewhat, but then also how they've [Indigenous people] adapted in the face of extreme weather events. Environmental justice scholars talk about how even things like place names, provide information not only about the ecology, but also Indigenous peoples' power of adaptation and how there are these histories of adaptation, not just in the face of colonialism, but also extreme weather change. We talked about some of the connections between Indigenous language, land, and knowledge systems, and even ideas about youth

development, and some of the deep meanings that can even come in single words in Indigenous languages, and provide insight into Indigenous people's relations to land, histories in place, and stories of adaptation over time, including in the face of dramatic climate change events.

Next, at one point in the study, one of the teachers reached out to me to ask about how to engage a colleague about a problematic lesson. The lesson in particular focused on owls. For the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, owls are perceived as a bad omen. Over Facebook Messenger, Ava contacted me to provide details of the situation.

Ava: I need some advice. I have another new colleague who isn't very culturally sensitive. She did the nature side and assigned a lesson on a book about owls. I know one parent spoke to her, another one didn't like the lesson but did it anyway. I talked to her and she asked another teacher's opinion [about the lesson] and she didn't seem to think it was a big deal so she did it anyway. I didn't know about her lesson since we departmentalize. I already talked to her, and it seemed she thought she shouldn't do it but did it anyway.

Amanda: Hi Ava! How do you feel about talking to the colleague again? You could tell her about the parents who contacted you and mention there were parents who were offended by the use of owls and how there's a deep belief around owls being a bad omen in the Shoshone community. And how the parents feeling uncomfortable and offended that owls were focused on is very concerning to you because you don't want them to feel uncomfortable and not heard. And if she says anything more about one other community

member not thinking it's a big deal, I would say “Just because one community member doesn't think it's a big deal doesn't mean to go ahead and do it.”

Ava: I do feel I need to talk to her again I was kind of offended how she down played my concern that another book could have been used and that only one person complained like if only one person complained that is ok. Thanks that lets me know that I am not being too sensitive. We are going to talk about it and see how to move forward. I felt offended also that she didn’t talk to me her team member.

Amanda: You are not being sensitive at all! So many times we are made to feel that way and like we have to shrink ourselves when we are just trying to advocate for ourselves, our kiddos, and our communities. Yes I agree she should have talked with you! Communication is key in these situations!

After Ava’s and my conversation, I reached out to her a few days later to see the result of the conversation with her colleague.

Amanda: Hi Ava! How did your talk with your colleague go?

Ava: It went really well! She understood and never wanted to offend our families. So I was glad I talked to her about everything.

During the study, Naomi created a lesson that incorporated both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho origin stories. Naomi also shared about pushback she had regarding teaching both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes. The following slides are samples of the

curriculum Naomi shared. It is evident that she incorporated language in both of the origin stories and created imagery that would connect with her students.

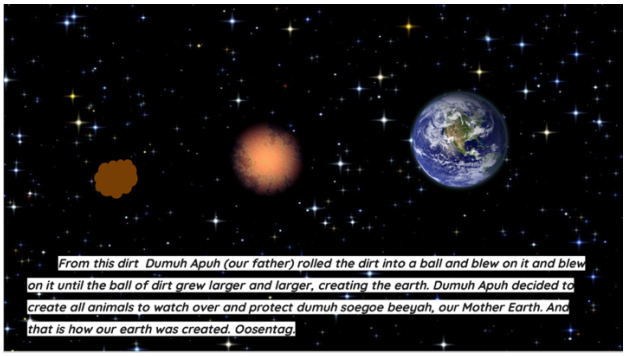


Figure 1 Eastern Shoshone Origin Story

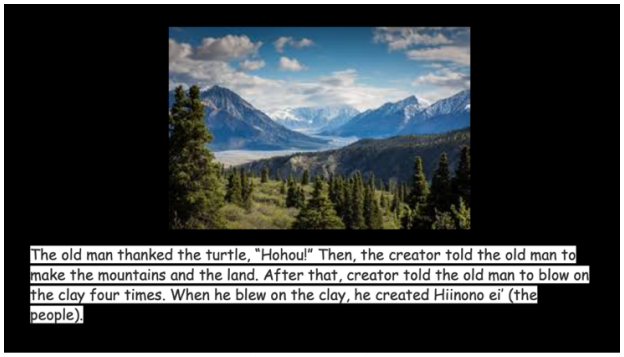


Figure 2 Northern Arapaho Origin Story

> Naomi: And remember what Dr. Garcia was saying about there was going to be push back [referring to infusing cultural, critical, and justice-centered curriculum]? And there was. I had Shoshone parents call the school, and they were upset that I was teaching the Arapaho creation story. And I explained to them that we were trying to show that our stories are good. They can be used to teach the elements of literature, and they can be used in order for us to meet our teaching standards, and that it's not just Arapaho and Shoshone. We're doing all kinds of tribes.

During Focus Group 1, Dr. Garcia discussed potential resistance to infusing cultural, critical, and justice-centered curriculum. Naomi refers to pushback when she shared that a parent contacted Chokecherry Hill School and was upset they were teaching the Northern Arapaho creation story

to their children. The pushback is indicative of the tension that exists between Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities when she shared a parent contacted Chokecherry Hill School and was upset they were teaching the Northern Arapaho creation story to their children. Naomi's experience speaks to the division that still exists between both communities.

Critical Dialogues Impact Curriculum Possibilities

Overall in the study, all of the teachers spoke about future lessons they could create with the knowledge they had gained from the study. There were other actions identified too that were outside the scope of developing lessons. The participants discussed creating a Native teacher's committee where they could meet to continue the discussions from this study, introduce ideas around curriculum and pedagogy, and support one another. Participants also stated they would like to see professional developments at Chokecherry Hill School that focused on theories like TribalCrit and that non-Native teachers needed to participate in these sessions. Clara spoke to developing a summer language institution that Chokecherry Hill School students could participate in. Maya wanted to create a unit around identity where her students could learn about their family and ancestors and bring in their family members for presentations. Ava discussed one possible lesson where her students could use beadwork to learn about math and another where students could create their own dance regalia for powwows. Charlotte wanted to develop a family-centered lesson based on identity where students and their families could work together, a lesson around celebrations she remembered from when she was younger and the importance of these ceremonies, and a unit on various origin stories. Emma discussed how she wanted to create a claims, evidence, and analysis essay lesson that was conducive to her students' identities. Naomi wanted to create a lesson that would involve Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho traditional stories around different sacred sites and take students on a field trip to visit these

areas. Vivian talked about how she wanted to be a resource for other teachers at Chokecherry Hill School who wanted to learn more about Indigenous education.

Conclusion

For the findings of the study, teachers discussed various types of relations that exist between them, their community, their students and families, and the need for relationality between their students' lived experiences and curriculum. The teachers shared initial reactions to critical Indigenous education literature in their journal entries and asked questions they had developed while completing the readings. They showed the impact these dialogues and pieces of literature had on their curriculum and pedagogies through sampled curriculum, inquiries about how to call-in colleagues, and envisioning curriculum possibilities. In Chapter 5, the discussion, implications, and conclusion of the overall study are presented.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSION

The journey for this work began as soon as I decided to attend the University of Arizona for my doctoral program. It wasn't until I read critical Indigenous pedagogies and dialogued with Indigenous education scholars in my courses that I began to reflect on my community and how teachers should have access to the readings and discourse I was engaging in at my doctoral program. I realized if it were to be truly representative of my community, it needed to include both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho perspectives. What arose from the research activities were beginning conversations around how to center Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies in curriculum and pedagogy.

The dissertation was conducted to understand how Indigenous teachers' perceptions of curriculum and pedagogy changed after reading Indigenous critical education theory and dialoguing with Indigenous and non-Indigenous education scholars. This chapter centers on the participants' experience with the overall project and how the research activities impacted them. Given the circumstances with COVID upon entering this study, I am beyond grateful for the Indigenous educators' willingness to engage in this project and for the Indigenous education scholars to create discussions and be featured in the focus groups.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, the research questions are re-stated. Then, the discussion around the findings and how they answer the research questions is presented. The focus then shifts to the implications and possible future research. Indigenous qualitative research methods, Indigenous knowledge, and the Indigenous teachers' personal and professional lived experiences were used to answer the research questions. Data was obtained from pre/post-

interviews, focus groups, self-reflection journal entries, sampled curriculum, and Facebook messages.

The research questions were:

1. What are the ways Indigenous educators can sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho ways of life in the classroom?
2. How will participants' teaching philosophies change from their conversations with Indigenous scholars and their interactions with Indigenous education research?
    a. How does this experience with Indigenous theories and scholars inform the ways in which Indigenous educators sustain Indigenous knowledge and values?
3. How can Indigenous educators incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy?

Next, we address the discussion of the dissertation's findings.

Discussion

It's been stated before that the study's purpose was to understand how Indigenous teachers' perspectives were impacted by critical Indigenous education theories and dialogues with Indigenous education scholars. It is also meant to serve as an avenue to reclaim and reconnect with Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies, ontologies, and languages. Similar to other tribal communities, Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies are ways of knowing that existed prior to Westernized society. Despite policies that reinforce settler colonialism that push a Westernized agenda, Indigenous ways of knowing are important to include and center in education (Ismail & Cazden, 2005;

Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Martinez, 2014; McCarty & Nicholas, 2014; Rhea, 2015). Through the discussion of this dissertation, we see how Indigenous teachers are envisioning how to prioritize Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in their curriculum and pedagogy.

Findings for the study consisted of four major themes. Each of the themes had sub-themes.

The first major theme is relationality. The subthemes are as follows:

- Indigenous teachers' relationality to community and school;
- Indigenous teachers' relationships with students and their families; and
- Relationality between teachers' and students' identities and curriculum

The next major theme is how the Indigenous teachers engaged with critical Indigenous theories and scholars. The subtheme is as follows:

- Critical Indigenous theories and personal reflections

The third major theme is the Indigenous teachers' experiences with critical Indigenous theories and scholars: interactions with Indigenous knowledge and values. The subtheme is as follows:

- Teachers' post reflection after meeting Indigenous education scholars

The fourth major theme is contextualizing the process: engaging with critical Indigenous theories. The subtheme is as follows:

- Steps to incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems in curriculum and pedagogy

We will begin with the analysis of the first theme, Relationality, and its subthemes.

Relationality

Through all the research activities, the teachers identified and discussed multiple threads of relationality that existed in their personal and professional lives. I am reminded of Cajete's (1994) conceptualization of relationality in context with the Pueblo farmer's connection to corn and how the "…relationship extended not only into the technology of growing corn, but also into communal, artistic, and philosophical expressions" (p. 103). Further, Wilson (2008) explains how relationality in epistemologies and ontologies exists between people, land/sacred sites, and viewpoints. Both scholars highlight how these different forms of relationality are where ancestral and current knowledge come together and stabilize us in a contemporary world. As discussed in the methods chapter, Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies parallel in terms of relationships. However, this is not to essentialize and claim that all Indigenous peoples arrive at notions of relationality the same way. For instance, how these relationships differ is evident in the Eastern Shoshone's reverence in Creator's relationality to the sun and the Northern Arapaho's creation story. These connections between community members, land, sacred sites, and natural occurrences shape Indigenous people's perspectives and how they interact with the world.

In this study, we see how Indigenous teachers conceptualize relationality personally and professionally. All participants spoke to their connections to community and school, students and their families, and relationality of their identities and their students' identities to curriculum. The first subtheme, Indigenous teachers' relationality to community and school, is analyzed.

Indigenous Teachers' Relationality to Community and School

Emma's historical knowledge of the Wind River Reservation and her description of the location of Chokecherry Hill School and the student population is indicative of place-based

knowledge. The place-based knowledge Emma knew could be connected to pedagogy and create a classroom experience that is immersed in local historical knowledge of the Wind River Reservation. Educators who use a place-based knowledge can create opportunities in culturally sustaining/revitalizing and critical pedagogies to collaborate with community members, particularly elders, to teach learners "…through the culture as students learn about the immediate places they inhabit and their connection to the larger world within which they will make a life for themselves" (Barnhardt, 2008, p. 133). A teacher being aware of the history of a place can lead to opportunities that can connect to culturally sustainable ways to teach about Indigenous students' homelands (Bang et al., 2012; Lees et al., 2021; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Sabzalian, 2019). Emma's quote also speaks to Tenet 7 of Brayboy's (2005) TribalCrit that suggests Tribal epistemologies are the foundation to comprehend Indigenous peoples lives and highlight the diversity among communities. This tenet focuses primarily on tribal beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for future goals of an Indigenous community, but it could also apply to the perspectives of Indigenous community members. Emma's knowledge about Wind River Reservation, Chokecherry Hill School, and Gahni, Wyoming connects to her vision as an educator who is from the community.

Emma states she went to college with the goal of becoming a teacher at Chokecherry Hill School. It is an important example of how an Indigenous teacher's relationality to places in their community has an impact on acts of reciprocity (Garcia et al., 2020). Later in the same interview, Emma stated how she had not seen many Native people from her own community as teachers. Her mentioning this and stating her goal in attending college was to become a teacher at Chokecherry Hill School shows how her relationality to her community impacted her actions. This is another way her quote connects to Tenet 7 of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) because her

returning home from college directly impacts manifestations for the community's future. Smith (2003) states when education issues for Indigenous people arise, Indigenous "…educators and teachers must be trained to be 'change agents,' to develop transformation of the undesirable circumstances" (p. 12). Emma recognized the lack of Indigenous teachers from her community at Chokecherry Hill School and returned home to dedicate a teaching career to the school she attended. These actions indicate how Indigenous teachers' relationality to community and school can be maintained and how these actions affect students and their families.

Another example of Indigenous teachers' relationality to their community and school is Charlotte's anecdote about her father. Her father had attended a local day school, which was similar to out-of-state boarding schools. Instead of being forced to attend school away from home, day schools required Indigenous students to attend school in their communities. A similarity between boarding schools and day schools was the agenda of homogenizing Indigenous youth to white settler culture and forcing them to abandon Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies (Child, 2018; Gilbert, 2018; Lomawaima, 2018; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Lomawaima & Ostler, 2018). Charlotte sharing this story about her father illustrates Tenet 1 ("Colonization is endemic to society") and Tenet 6 (Westernized schooling is linked to the goal of assimilation) (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Her father's experience at the day school clearly impacted him in traumatic ways if he felt Chokecherry Hill School needed Indigenous teachers who would be kind to the youth. Charlotte's narrative highlights the importance of Indigenous teachers' presences in the classroom for Indigenous youth for Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems and for generations who endured the impacts of the boarding school era.

For Vivian, her relationality was two-fold. First, she discussed her relationality to the community and Chokecherry Hill School. Vivian talked about attending college out of state and the importance of being exposed to other forms of knowledge and perspectives through travel but also knowing she could return home and share these experiences with her students. The way Vivian framed her quote implies this could be a philosophy she lives by, which is representative of TribalCrit Tenet 7: "Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrated the different and adaptability among individuals and groups" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Even though Vivian attended college out of state, she still had the vision of her community at the forefront of her mind and wanted to return home to share her experiences and teachings she learned with others. A lot of times, Indigenous people either feel or are made to feel that once they leave, they can't return home (Minner, 1995). In Vivian expressing her own experience of leaving Gahni, Wyoming, returning home, and sharing her knowledge with students she shows an avenue of relationality that intersects with reciprocity in ways that include both her lived experiences away from home and the centering of Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies.

The second part of Vivian's quote discussed a tense relationality that exists between both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes that she has experienced as a teacher at Chokecherry Hill School.

> Vivian: As a Northern Arapaho teacher, teaching at a predominately Shoshone school I sometimes feel like an outcast because my experiences are not accepted as well. Our kids see it. They see the divide.

When the Wind River Reservation was established in 1868, the Eastern Shoshone were initially placed there. In 1878, the Northern Arapaho were also placed on the Wind River Reservation

with the promise from the U.S. Federal government that the Northern Arapaho would be placed on a different reservation. The forced living arrangement between both tribes created tension between communities (Hipp, 2019). Vivian's quote connects directly to TribalCrit's Tenet 6 and how policies were enacted by the federal government to assimilate Indigenous people (Brayboy, 2005). Reservations in general were created to constrict Native people's movements and stifle their identities. The government placing two opposing tribes together on the same land was strategic in reaching goals of assimilation and annihilation. However, people from both tribes did create families together and is evident in the amount of families on Wind River who have lineage to both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities. It is necessary for educators must reflect on how to best to reinforce both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho students' identities and what it means to be Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho in contemporary times (Coulter & Jimenez-Silva, 2017; Lee & McCarty, 2017). Vivian and a majority of the other teachers stated how Chokecherry Hill School had a student population who have connections to not only Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho communities but to other tribes as well. The majority of teachers in this study identified and acknowledged their connections to other tribes as well. Despite the dynamics that exist within contemporary Indigenous identities (Cottrell, 2010; Tippeconnic III, 1991), Vivian's quote highlights the tense relationality that is specific to the community and how this history impacts the relationship teachers have to the schools they teach in and the community.

Indigenous Teachers' Relationships with Students and Their Families

For Maya, her students feeling connected and being able to communicate with her is a way she can create a trusting environment in her classroom. Trust is an important value to have in classrooms that are revitalizing and centering Indigenous epistemologies. If students and

teachers have trusting relationships, there is more room for vulnerability and possibilities for learning moments based around a student's identity (Cohen et al., 2009; Garcia, 2019). This perception of families Maya discusses is connected to Tenet 5 of TribalCrit which is culture, knowledge, and power are perceived differently through an Indigenous viewpoint (Brayboy, 2005). Maya sharing with her students she knows their family members brings an important aspect (relationships) of Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems and a potential way to sustain tribal epistemologies in classrooms.

Maya also said another important aspect of connecting with her students is knowing her students' family connections, which is still connected to TribalCrit Tenet 5 (Brayboy, 2005). She said, "I can tell one of my students, 'Oh, I went to school with your mom' or 'Oh I know your cousin' or 'I know who your uncles are' or 'I know your grandma,' and it just kind of builds that connection like…oh, she's from here…she knows me." Maya sharing with her students she knows their family members brings an important aspect (relationships) (Lee, 2022) of Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems and a potential way to sustain tribal epistemologies in classrooms.

In Ava's quote about the relationships she has with students and their families, she discussed a specific conversation she had with a student around identifying how they're related.

> Ava: The community that I currently work in, we're all related somehow, someway. Soa lot of my students I tell them, you know oh, I'm related to you [and the students say] Oh, so you're my auntie, I was like, well, Indian way I'm your auntie but you know, normal way I'm like your third, fourth cousin so we're kind of far away, but we're still related.

There is an ongoing juxtaposition of understanding relations from an Indigenous perspective to Western influences on familial relations (Adams, 1995; Emery, 2017; Lomawaima, 1994;

Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Trafzer et al., 2006; Trafzer et al., 2012), which is evident from the use of the term "normal." This connects to TribalCrit Tenet 1 and how colonization has impacted views of Indigenous relationality (Brayboy, 2005). Despite Western society's influence on familial relations, Ava still acknowledges and adheres to Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho relationship practices. All participants admitted to recognizing being related to their students and following Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho perspectives of relationships. Ava highlighting her student's reaction to her sharing they're related illuminates the potential change in teacher/learner connection. The teacher and student bond can deepen beyond a power structure where the teacher is viewed as the authority figure over the student. For classrooms with Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho students, making these relationships known and talking about them openly maintains tribal knowledge systems because students and teachers can establish a foundational connection that goes beyond the classroom.

Vivian's foundational connections she has with her students is reflected in her point that it "helps me to reach out to the families because I know the parents or I grew up with the parents or they're my cousins. And so it's been good to have that connection because it makes it easier. I know what their family expects of them." Vivian and the other Indigenous teachers making these relations known to their students illuminates how important and valuable these connections are to families (Bird et al., 2013; Freng et al., 2006; Garcia, 2014; Stanton & Sutton, 2012; Warner, 1999; Wyman, 2012), the community (Garcia, 2019), and a student's performance in school (Ismail & Cazden, 2005; Martinez, 2014; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; McCarty & Nicholas, 2014; Rhea, 2015) and are indicative of TribalCrit Tenet 9, that suggests, "Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 430). Teachers making it known to their students the connections they have

to their families helps to expand the educator/learner relationship from a top/down dynamic to one that can base itself on Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho perspectives of family.

Similar to the other teachers of the study, Naomi acknowledges the difference in relationships Indigenous teachers have with Indigenous students compared to the non-Native teachers (Beaulieu & Figueria, 2006; Wyman, 2009). Naomi admits the connection she has with students is different and more "casual" than her non-Native counterparts due to familial relations, which connects to TribalCrit Tenet 5 and how "…culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Naomi also addresses the fact that due to the unique relationality she has to her students and their families, she has had to assist as a "mediator" between students, their families, and her non-Native co-workers. She has also pointed out that she is often the only Indigenous person on certain committees in the school.

These relationships between the Indigenous teachers, their students, and their families are vital to Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho lifeways because it is a connecting thread to the past, present, and future. It creates space to discuss how Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho people were socialized to recognize family relationships and establishes a connection for how students can see representation of their identity in the classroom (Acton et al., 2017; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Fredericks et al., 2018; Freed & Smith, 2004; Harrington & Pavel, 2013; Huffman, 2013; Johnson et al., 2014; Joseph & Windchief, 2015; May & Aikman, 2013; Partridge, 2016; Shirley, 2017; Yazzie-Mintz, 2008) . Another significant way Indigenous teachers' relationships with their students can strengthen Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho ways of knowing is making parents and family members feel more comfortable with their student's teacher and the school environment. The sense of security between teacher,

student, and their families can expand if learning materials center knowledge that connects to students' lived experiences.

Relationality Between Teachers' and Student's Identities and Curriculum

For generations in the U.S., schools that had Indigenous students forced them to assimilate to Westernized lifestyles that were devoid of their tribal epistemologies and ontologies. Typically, schools and individuals associated with these institutions dictated to Indigenous students and families what were "correct" morals and values to follow to be considered a "good" citizen which connects to TribalCrit Tenet 6: "Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous people are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Messages and policies that were created about citizenship were meant to homogenize Indigenous students and their families to Western society (Adams, 1995; Emery, 2017; Lomawaima, 1994; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Trafzer et al., 2006; Trafzer et al., 2012). Dr. Garcia's example from his PowerPoint of Indigenous youth from his community on Hopi running illuminates how teachers can move away from "standard" education by looking at ways youth and other community members express their identities. As is mentioned earlier in the subtheme "Indigenous teachers' relationships with students and their families," the teachers were aware of the influence they have on their students. Western education has severed who should be doing what (Absolon, 2016; Brayboy, 2014). The impact the teachers have on their students and the connections to their students' families is a feasible pathway towards centering Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribal knowledges. Maya's question about who's responsible for making connections to students' identities demonstrates there are still uncertainties about who's responsible for teaching students about Native knowledge and value systems.

Clara's perception of relationality between identity and curriculum was evident in one of her journal entries. For Focus Group 2, the overall theme was "Journey of an Indigenous Educator." The readings included one article by Indigenous education scholar Dr. Shirley, which resonated with Clara. Clara's journal entry focused specifically on Shirley's (2017) concept of Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy (ISJP). ISJP is "a framework for *rethinking* [emphasis in original] the process of schooling for Indigenous students. Its primary focus is on reframing curriculum and pedagogy that aims to preserve and privilege Indigenous epistemologies while promoting nation-building in Indigenous communities" (Shirley, 2017, p. 165). For Clara, this lesson she describes in her journal entry was conducive to ISJP because it incorporated not only language but Eastern Shoshone epistemology. Clara stated in her journal entry that the main objective of the Eeshuh Nuh Lesson was for students to have respect for other people, they need to have respect for themselves. She shared how the concept of respect is viewed as a foundational value of Eastern Shoshone people and how this lesson was a part of the beginning of a cultural regeneration of Eastern Shoshone epistemology into curriculum. Clara's description of her lesson is indicative of TribalCrit Tenet 7 which is when tribal epistemologies and ontologies and "…visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrated the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups" and TribalCrit Tenet 8 which centralizes on "…stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being" (Brayboy, 2005, pp. 429-430). Her reflection in her journal entry is evident of the importance and necessity of Indigenous epistemologies being prioritized in curriculum and the importance of students connecting to what they're learning.

During Focus Group 3, “The Importance of Language within Indigenous Education,” Dr. Wyman, who is a non-Native professor at the University of Arizona and has done work with a Yup’ik community in Alaska as well as collaboration with various other Indigenous communities, presented as the Indigenous education scholar speaker. Her presentation was titled “Focusing on Language Goals in Challenging Times: A Yup’ik Example” and discussed a community-collaborated project she and Yup’ik community members had conducted regarding the necessity of bilingual education for Yup’ik youth. At the question portion of Focus Group 3, Naomi asked Dr. Wyman about language shift in her community and how to begin the work of incorporating language into the curriculum.

> Naomi: My question was I feel like our community, our language shift occurred long ago. And so how do we start to implement language revitalization in a school where most of the teachers are non-Indian or like myself, I don't speak the language. Where do we even begin?

Naomi’s question illuminates a level of self-reflection and inquiry many Indigenous people have when working towards Indigenous language revitalization, specifically in school spaces, which connects to TribalCrit Tenet 5 (Brayboy, 2005). TribalCrit Tenet 5 speaks to analyzing culture, knowledge, and power through an Indigenous perspective (Brayboy, 2005). This Indigenous perspective can mean Indigenous knowledge systems, but for the analysis of Naomi’s question, an Indigenous perspective refers to her viewpoint as an Indigenous person who has experienced language shift. For many Indigenous educators, the importance of reviving languages and prioritizing Indigenous knowledge is understood and supported. Due to the disruption of Indigenous language speaking caused by colonization tactics, even Indigenous language revitalizations biggest supporters can feel overwhelmed in how to begin to prioritize using

Indigenous languages in classrooms when they are still learners themselves. However, there are moments of opportunity for Indigenous educators who are reconnecting with Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and languages (Wyman, 2009). Naomi's question to Dr. Wyman showed how even when efforts are made to connect Indigenous students' identities and language to curriculum, sometimes relationality isn't felt right away. Instead, what can occur for Indigenous teachers is a questioning of how to reconnect to knowledge or ways of thinking that have been disrupted and teach this information to students when the teacher themselves are learners also. What Dr. Wyman's answer to Naomi highlighted was how there are possible ways to revitalize Indigenous languages even though Indigenous communities and people vary in their fluency with Indigenous languages, there are still deep, impactful steps Indigenous teachers can establish relationality between Indigenous students' identities and curriculum.

Engaging with Indigenous Theories and Scholars

In this section, I analyze the Indigenous teachers' perspectives and responses to Indigenous theories prior to attending the focus groups and meeting the Indigenous education scholars are analyzed.

Indigenous Theories and Personal Reflections

The significance in the relationality between student identity and curriculum was a common theme that various teachers expressed in their reactions to the critical educational literature and is reflected in Emma's journal entry for focus group 3. Emma discusses a quote from Simpson's (2014) article. Leading up to this quote, Simpson (2014) frames her overall article with Nishnaabeg epistemology, which is based in "…family, community, and relations" (p. 7). The foundation of Nishnaabeg epistemology and the ways knowledge was shared between knowledge keepers and learners is dissimilar to that of Western education (Simpson, 2014). In

Simpson's (2014) quote, she references Cajete's (1994) work to frame her perspectives around Nishnaabeg epistemology in education.

> Just as it is unthinkable within a Nishnaabeg worldview for a leader to impose their will on their people, it is unthinkable to impose an agenda onto another living thing – in essence, the *context is the curriculum* [emphasis in original] and land, aki, is the context (Cajete, 1994). (Simpson, 2014, p. 10)

What is most apparent from Simpson's (2014) article and the quote referenced above, is the stipulations that are imposed by settler colonialism and how they affect Indigenous epistemologies and forms of education that are specific to Indigenous communities. In terms of Simpson's (2014) quote, Emma wrote it is accurate and demonstrates the reason why various students feel disconnected from curriculum and become disengaged in school (White Eagle, 2021). She reflected on how education needs to be tailored to a learners' needs instead of forcing students to fit into a standardized model of education. Emma's reaction to the readings shows how teachers understand the importance of a student's relationality to curriculum. Her reflection is indicative of TribalCrit Tenet 7 and how her understanding as an Indigenous teacher and her connection to her community and students impacts what she envisions for future, culturally sustainable pedagogy (Brayboy, 2005). The significance in the relationality between student identity and curriculum was a common theme that various teachers expressed in their reactions to the critical educational literature. Emma's reflection around Simpson's (2014) article is where her answers address the importance of a student's positionality being connected to curriculum.

Clara reflects on Grande's (2004) perspective on identity politics in her journal entry for Focus Group 1. Grande's (2004) article is a foundational reading of the Indigenous education field and asserts that settler colonialism has an impact on how Indigenous identity is defined and

portrayed. The way settler colonialism affects how Indigenous identity is defined distracts from deeper knowledge and issues that are pertinent in Native communities. Clara expresses she witnessed and experienced identity politics within her own community which connects to TribalCrit Tenet 6 and how government policies have worked to assimilate Indigenous people through policies like blood quantum which directly affect Indigenous peoples' identities in the US (Brayboy, 2005). For Clara, she feels Indigenous identity can't be owned and anyone has the right to claim Indigenous ancestry if a person comes from a line of Indigenous people. Clara acknowledges people knowing Indigenous knowledge and speaking Indigenous languages is important, but she also knows Indigenous people who may not live on the reservation for years or don't return but are considered Newe' (Shoshone for people) because they are able to draw a connection to Indigenous ancestors. Clara highlights the diversity of Indigenous identity by stating she knows Indigenous people who are enrolled tribal citizens, people who are descendants of tribes, or people who reveal their Indigenous identity for financial gain. Clara's overall question is who has the authority to dictate Indigenous identity? Clara also discusses sources of oppression presented in Grande's (2004) article.

> Clara: Grande (2004) presents the issues clearly as the sources of oppression (colonialism and global capitalism). The legal mechanisms forced upon indigenous peoples continue to erode the fabric of our identity and slowly chip away at our sovereign nations. As educators, we need to work toward engaging youth in researching and honoring their ancestral histories.

Clara's reflection depicts how she connects to Grande's (2004) statement about colonialism and global capitalism being sources of oppression and how they keep systems that support identity politics in Indigenous communities intact (Schmidt, 2011; Sium et al., 2012; Verbos et al., 2010;

Weaver, 2015). For education, Clara states educators must encourage students to analyze and revere histories of their ancestors. Teachers emboldening students to connect to their lineage in their classrooms can create opportunities to push back and resist damaging concepts like identity politics.

> Naomi's Focus Group 1 journal entry included reflections on Garcia's (2019) article.
>
> Naomi: I think focus group 1's readings would be important for anyone who works with Native kids. It may give them a view of the different perspectives that many Natives have. The knowledge gained from the readings and speaking with Dr. Garcia would help create a better school and classroom culture by giving teachers some insight. I believe this information will help us as Native people begin to reform our schools.

In her journal entry, Naomi's reaction to Garcia's (2019) article connects to TribalCrit Tenet 7 which focuses on "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" (p. 429). Naomi's journal reflection connects to TribalCrit Tenet 7 in that she feels the reading is important for anyone who works with Native students to read because it highlights a variety of perspectives that Native people and the diversity that exists within Indigenous communities. Naomi also mentioned the action of reforming "our schools" which were inspired by the Focus Group 1 readings (Garcia, 2019; Grande, 2004; Lee & McCarty, 2017) and Dr. Garcia's presentation. Naomi's point around initiating reforming of schools (Coulter & Jimenez-Silva, 2017; Garcia, 2021; McCarty & Lee, 2014) could potentially lead to further discussion around how to establish educational sovereignty and what that looks like for Chokecherry Hill school and for its students.

Maya's reaction to the critical Indigenous theories was evident in her journal entry for Focus Group 3 and how she was conceptualizing herself as a language planner. Language planners utilize "…advocacy, pedagogies, and programs to address children's changing bilingual development needs" (Wyman, 2010, p. 701). Maya discussed Wyman et al.'s (2010) article and how she felt "kindergarten could be a great platform for language planning. I know that it's easier to learn a language at a younger age as opposed to an older one. I feel that my classroom could be used as a language platform in the ways that I have some understanding of the language itself." Her reflection of how her classroom could be a space for language learning is associated with TribalCrit Tenet 5: "The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Her identifying her classroom as a potential space for language learning depicts how she sees herself as a potential language planner (Kashatok & Wyman, 2022) and analyzed her classroom with a critical Indigenous perspective.

Experience with Indigenous Theories and Scholars and Interactions with Indigenous Knowledge and Values

In this section, the Indigenous teachers' perspectives and responses to Indigenous theories after attending the focus groups and meeting the Indigenous education scholars are analyzed.

Teachers' Post Reflections After Meeting Indigenous Education Scholars

In chapter 4, Vivian asked Dr. Shirley how to support students through strong emotions when they learn of the impacts from colonialism and how this has affected their communities. Dr. Shirley referred to her work she presented on and shared how she would tell positive thoughts with the Indigenous youth from her study after discussing hard truths. She stated she

would remind the Indigenous youth of "the positive thoughts about our people, the resilience of our people…reflect on all of the strong ways of our people that are still in existence today." Dr. Shirley's answer to Vivian's question shows how all emotions should be present and accepted in teaching and learning processes. Dr. Shirley's and Vivian's discussion connects both to TribalCrit Tenet 8 (Brayboy, 2005) because of the importance the use of stories to help Indigenous youth heal from historical trauma. It is also indicative of Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy because in Dr. Shirley's examples of sharing community stories with Indigenous youth, one can see how Indigenous knowledge systems are used to move Indigenous youth towards action.

Especially for Indigenous educators, students, and families are affected by intergenerational trauma that is caused by educational systems. In order to initiate a healing process from this trauma for Indigenous students and Indigenous communities and to move towards a course of action from these strong emotions, Dr. Shirley (2017) states in Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy that teachers must engage in Indigenous knowledge systems to "…cultivate the heart toward healing and empowerment" (p. 167). When Indigenous students are able to cultivate the heart by connecting to their tribe's knowledge systems to process hard truths and strong emotions caused by colonialism, they are able to envision their relationality and impact in their classrooms as well as their Indigenous community (Shirley, 2017).

The conversation between Vivian and Dr. Shirley highlights how Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy and students cultivating the heart can help youth and adults to move past historical trauma, they must work through emotions. Indigenous teachers and students can learn from each other about how to be honest and transparent about their feelings when learning about hard truths and work together on healing. From this transparency and collective healing, a sense

of empowerment and critical consciousness can begin to emerge for teachers and students and action in terms of changed curriculum and pedagogy can occur. For instance, during the Focus Group 2 question portion, Naomi shared with Dr. Shirley how her presentation and the concept of Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy was helping her conceptualize future lessons that could center Indigenous youth as changemakers in their community.

> Naomi: I just want to thank you for sharing your work because it's pretty awesome and really inspiring to me. And it makes me think of different ways that I can start doing this in my classroom. For example, there's a road called Squaw Creek Road [in the border town next to Gahni, WY], and it's bugged me for years. So I've been brainstorming how fourth graders could write letters to the border town city council and change the name.
>
> Dr. Shirley: That's awesome! Fourth graders could be those changemakers within your community as well.

This conversation connects to TribalCrit Tenet 7 (Brayboy, 2005) because she is using an Indigenous lens to envision actions that will have impact on Indigenous futures. Naomi's conversation with Dr. Shirley showcases how Indigenous teachers can disrupt colonial systems in school by creating lessons that pair hard truths (Shirley, 2017) with actions students can engage in. Within Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy, we see how Naomi's future lesson positions her as an Indigenous teacher who can nurture "…a political, spiritual, and critical consciousness in Indigenous youth" (Shirley, 2022, p. 6). Her future lesson shows how Indigenous youth can create a pathway to healing for themselves and their community members. Naomi's lesson and plan to teach Indigenous youth to challenge problematic place names depicts

how Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy can ignite teachers to reimagine curriculum for Indigenous youth that encourages them to take action against colonial concepts and systems.

There were various ways the teachers' perspectives around teaching were influenced by critical Indigenous educational theory and conversing with Indigenous education scholars. From the beginning of the study, a majority of the teachers expressed how the curriculum they were teaching was disconnected from their students' identities and lived experiences. The teachers' participation in the research activities brought attention to how to create new or build onto lessons to incorporate community knowledge and center students' identities. Basing lessons in context that was familiar to students and the action of truth telling was impactful on the Indigenous teachers and revealed the ways they were envisioning what this process would look like in their classrooms. One way the teachers could focus their lessons more in communal knowledge and navigate truth telling in their teaching was by building and nurturing relationships with the students' families.

In the uninterrupted discussion shared in Chapter 4 between all the participants, various interesting perspectives arose specific to TribalCrit Tenet 6 – how federal and educational policies have worked towards assimilation and the teachers were forming their opinions around this (Brayboy, 2005). From Naomi's and Maya's share out after the focus group, it was evident there was a sense of pressure around diverting from state standards. Naomi stated she felt uncomfortable with not addressing standards first because this ideology of teaching to the state standards had been engrained in her. Conversely, all participants did feel it would be beneficial to have critical Indigenous pedagogy implemented at Chokecherry Hill School. This can be seen in Emma's comment and her referring to the other participants' comments to bolster her opinion that this form of pedagogy should be used in the school they taught at because it would benefit

the students to connect with their education and to see for themselves that there are forms of learning that can support their identities as Indigenous youth. The dialogue among the participants is indicative of Smith's (2012) point that decolonization is not about choosing a complete dismissal of Western knowledge. It's about perceiving these concepts through Indigenous knowledge systems and reflecting how they can benefit Indigenous communities (p. 89). The featured conversation highlights how the Indigenous teachers were working to understand how to prioritize Indigenous knowledge systems over Western ways of knowing.

The interactions with critical Indigenous theories and the scholars provided opportunities for the educators to engage in critical dialogues and analyze how such work is either taken up in schools, as well as resisted by teachers within Chokecherry Hill School. It was evident there were unresolved feelings from a past incident between Native and non-Native staff. This topic was brought up later on in the debrief of Focus Group 1 among all participants. The topic was broached by Emma when she referred to an incident she and other educators had endured at Chokecherry Hill School. All teachers were to read Deloria Jr.'s and Wildcat's (2001) book *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, which is a prominent book that focused on the power imbalance between the U.S. educational system and Native communities. Both Native and non-Native teachers were then put together in small groups to discuss the chapters. Emma and other participants shared at various parts of the study how volatile some non-Native staff's reactions had been to the book in these groups concerning topics such as the history of boarding schools in Indigenous communities. Emma and other participants speaking to this incident speaks to TribalCrit Tenets 1 and 5. Beliefs that support white settler colonialism were present in non-Native teachers' reactions to the book, and Emma and other participants shared their reflections through their own lenses about the non-Native teachers' responses. It's evident from

Emma's quote that she felt a culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy was necessary for the students at Chokecherry Hill School, but also how she holds concern about educators and administrators who may not support contemporary critical education movements. The dialogue among the participants raises a critical question of how do Indigenous teachers progress to this way of teaching when faced with racism?

Naomi's, Charlotte's, and Emma's discussion about the impact of the Indigenous education scholars' talks, and critical Indigenous education theories impacted them overall provide a possible answer to how Indigenous teachers can remain steadfast in teaching to critical Indigenous pedagogies when faced with racism (Beaulieu, 2000; Kana'iaupuni, Ledward & Malone, 2017; Tippeconnic III, 1999) This is in correlation with TribalCrit Tenet 4 and Native communities' "desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Through their dialogue and how they validate one another's feelings and experiences, it is evident the power Indigenous teachers possess when they are provided time and space to speak uncensored.

Contextualizing the Process: Engaging with Critical Indigenous Theories

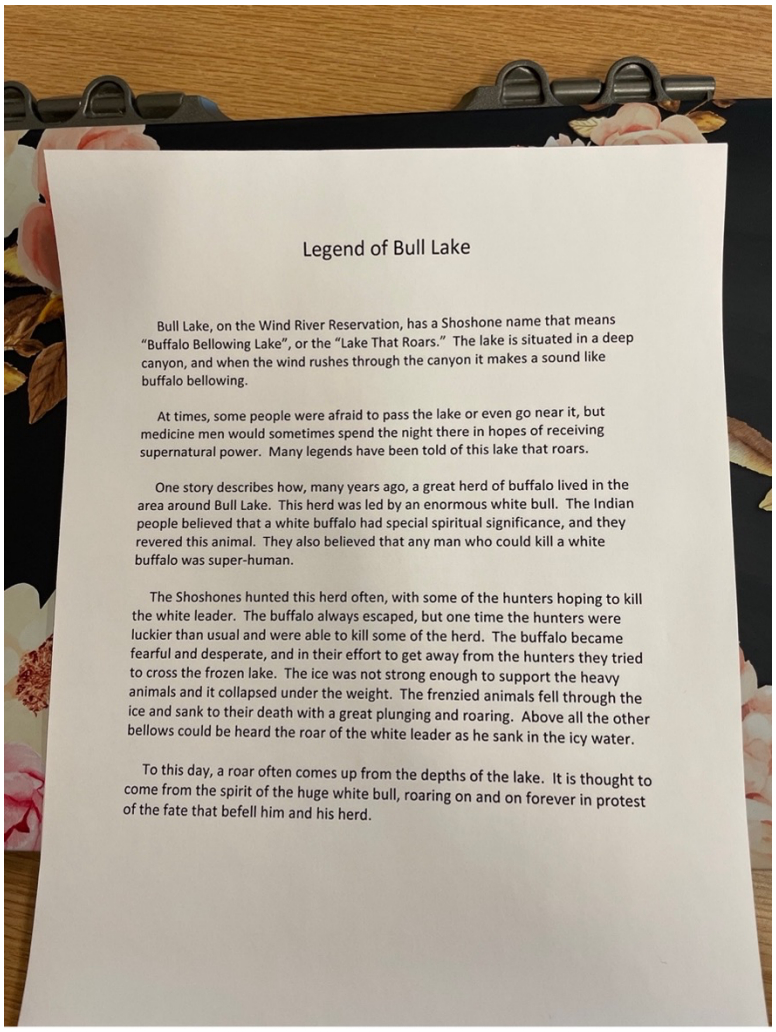
In this section, we see how after participants made efforts to incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems after reading critical Indigenous education theories and interacting with the Indigenous education scholars. Some participants began brainstorming new lessons. Others identified past lessons they had taught and thoughts of ways they could build onto those to include more of the language and both Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies.

Steps to Incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Knowledge Systems in Curriculum and Pedagogy

For the teachers, interacting with critical educational literature and Indigenous education scholars helped them brainstorm ideas for ways to incorporate Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems. There were some teachers who thought of past lessons they taught and how they could expand and build onto those lessons after reflecting on the critical educational literature and communicating with the Indigenous education scholars.

In the first focus group with Dr. Garcia, Charlotte discussed a unit she taught about water. She explained how she connected what she taught to the NoDAPL movement (which was an environmental justice movement against the Keystone XL Pipeline that occurred in the homelands of the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota). She ended the unit by explaining the parallels between the importance of water to the Standing Rock Sioux community and the significance of water to the communities on the Wind River Reservation. Charlotte's explanation of combining current events around natural resources to community perspective depicts how her lesson was relating history, Indigenous knowledge systems, and current events to her students' identities as contemporary Indigenous youth (Bird et al., 2013; Freng et al., 2014; Garcia, 2019; Moore, 2006; Stanton & Sutton, 2012; Warner, 1999 Wyman, 2012).

Later, I asked Charlotte about her past unit about the water cycle. She shared she used the children's book *We Are Water Protectors* (2020) written by Carole Lindstrom (Anishinabe/Metis/Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe) and illustrated by Michaela Goade (Tlingit & Haida Tribes of Alaska). Charlotte also shared that during this same lesson, she also discussed with her students an Eastern Shoshone story about Bull Lake, which is an important lake to the entire Wind River Reservation.



Legend of Bull Lake

Bull Lake, on the Wind River Reservation, has a Shoshone name that means "Buffalo Bellowing Lake", or the "Lake That Roars." The lake is situated in a deep canyon, and when the wind rushes through the canyon it makes a sound like buffalo bellowing.

At times, some people were afraid to pass the lake or even go near it, but medicine men would sometimes spend the night there in hopes of receiving supernatural power. Many legends have been told of this lake that roars.

One story describes how, many years ago, a great herd of buffalo lived in the area around Bull Lake. This herd was led by an enormous white bull. The Indian people believed that a white buffalo had special spiritual significance, and they revered this animal. They also believed that any man who could kill a white buffalo was super-human.

The Shoshones hunted this herd often, with some of the hunters hoping to kill the white leader. The buffalo always escaped, but one time the hunters were luckier than usual and were able to kill some of the herd. The buffalo became fearful and desperate, and in their effort to get away from the hunters they tried to cross the frozen lake. The ice was not strong enough to support the heavy animals and it collapsed under the weight. The frenzied animals fell through the ice and sank to their death with a great plunging and roaring. Above all the other bellows could be heard the roar of the white leader as he sank in the icy water.

To this day, a roar often comes up from the depths of the lake. It is thought to come from the spirit of the huge white bull, roaring on and on forever in protest of the fate that befell him and his herd.

Figure 3 Bull Lake Origin Story

Charlotte shared how she had focused on Eastern Shoshone language - specifically, using the Shoshone word *ba'a* for water - and stories for this particular unit. By Charlotte teaching her students the importance of water to the Wind River Reservation by implementing Eastern Shoshone stories and language, she created a space in her classroom where "intergenerational language transmission" (Chew, 2022, p. 108) occurred between herself and students. Her explanation of the use of the Eastern Shoshone language in this lesson also shows how schools are spaces for language revitalization (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014). Charlotte said for a future lesson, she wanted to include the Northern Arapaho perspective around water and their language

too which would extend her reach of encouraging language reconnection through meaningful and contextual lessons.

Charlotte said she wanted her students to take away an understanding that the water on the Wind River Reservation was precious. She had told her students that the water source for the Wind River Reservation was the Wind River Mountain Range. Charlotte stated she taught her students how water from these mountains was used by the entire states of Wyoming and Montana. She shared with her students during her lesson that because the water was precious, the Wind River Mountains were also precious and needed to be cared for and ensure no harm comes to them by the community, which indicates to Indigenous youth the impact of their actions and the importance of taking care of their community.

After Charlotte had shared the details of her water lesson with Dr. Garcia, she asked him how to expand more on this lesson. He recommended bringing in elders, community members, and youth to discuss with her class what water is and means to the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho people. Dr. Garcia referred to an example in his PowerPoint of a teacher from his community on the Hopi Reservation who created a unit for her students that focused on the water cycle and the importance of water to that particular community in Hopi. He shared in his example how the educator from his home community centered the learning space to magnify the relationship Hopi communities have with water and how these bonds exist in contemporary Indigenous identities. The example Dr. Garcia shared with Charlotte exemplifies Brayboy's (2005) TribalCrit Tenet 8 and how "...stories are not separate from theory…" (p. 430) and the importance of using community stories. It highlighted how context matters when planning lessons that have the goal of sustaining Indigenous epistemologies. Context also matters when teachers think about how to teach into the risks and base their lessons in truth-telling.

Further, Clara's discussion with Dr. Wyman depicted how turns in Indigenous language can hold deep observations of land and how Indigenous peoples' histories of those terms raise critical awareness of global climate change. This connects to TribalCrit Tenet 7 (Brayboy, 2005). TribalCrit 7 focuses on "tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, and traditions, and visions for the future…" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). These various beliefs around climate change and occurrences within nature are descriptive of certain times of the year and how these can show up in Indigenous language terms that have been used for generations. Dr. Wyman expressed the powerful example Clara had described land-language connections. Clara's narrative reveals how not only do language teachers and Indigenous teachers have to combat settler colonialism but also major occurrences like climate change and critical awareness about how they teach about those specific terms.

Clara's and Dr. Wyman's conversation reveals how language does change to reflect contemporary times and also are indicative of ways Indigenous communities have had to accommodate changing times caused by various forms of colonialism. Kashatok and Wyman (2022) discuss the Yup'ik ontology that "…if people become complacent in their teachings, and related actions, then the weather is going to become bad" (p. 145). Kashatok's and Wyman's (2022) discussion of Yup'ik ontology combined with Clara's observation of the Shoshone language's description of local natural events that were used to indicate seasonal changes showcases how Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies can connect and explain to Indigenous youth current impacts of colonialism like climate change.

Ava's Facebook Message to me was an indicator of how she was impacted by the conversations with Indigenous education scholars and the critical Indigenous education theories. For the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, owls are perceived as a bad omen. For me, Ava's Facebook

Message was indicative of the impacts of the study's research activities and connected to TribalCrit Tenet 5 (Brayboy, 2005). In Ava using her perspective to call on Indigenous knowledge and identify problematic aspects of her colleague's lesson, she viewed curriculum with a different lens that was community centered (Lee & McCarty, 2017). Similar to what Naomi, Charlotte, and Emma did for each other in the last focus group, Ava reached out for validation of her feelings and to ensure she wasn't overreacting the actions and attitude of her colleague. Her wanting to call-in her colleague to revisit and discuss why the lesson was culturally insensitive is evident of how Ava was being impacted by the readings and the conversations with Indigenous education scholars.

Naomi showed her impact from the critical Indigenous education readings and dialogues with Indigenous education scholars through the lesson based in Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho origin stories. Naomi's creation of these lessons and basing them in the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho origin stories shows how she was conceptualizing a balance of Western and Indigenous knowledge systems, which speaks to the concept of educational sovereignty (Garcia & Shirley, 2012). Her lessons are also indicative of TribalCrit Tenet 8 and how origin stories are foundational to Indigenous communities (Brayboy, 2005). Naomi taught this lesson while students were remotely learning, so she created two separate PowerPoints she could show on Zoom. These PowerPoints consisted of images that were conducive to the stories and text that included Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho languages underneath the images. For this lesson, Naomi had reached out to her family and community members to establish the narratives around the origin stories and has an opportunity to build on to this lesson by expanding the usage of the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho languages from one word to sentences (Cooke, 2022).

When Naomi taught the lesson, she said her students were extremely attentive. Specifically for the Northern Arapaho origin story, she shared how her Northern Arapaho students would speak up to correct her pronunciation of the language. Naomi also noticed during the Northern Arapaho origin story lesson the parents of her Northern Arapaho students would peek on the screen and ask their children, "What class is this for?" Even in a virtual setting, these reactions are evident of the importance of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy. The description of this push back Naomi experienced when teaching Arapaho origin story along with the Eastern Shoshone origin story is indicative of the historical tension between these two tribes. Naomi brining attention to how other tribes besides Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho considered the Wind River Reservation home and may have origin stories connected to the area pushes back against harmful beliefs around Indigenous identity that negatively affect our communities and disrupt our goals towards sovereignty.

Critical Dialogues Impact Curriculum Possibilities

Once the teachers had completed the readings and dialogued with Indigenous education scholars, they identified the types of lessons they wanted to teach and expressed wanting professional developments focused on critical Indigenous educational theory. This is indicative of how "Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Through their discussions of the types of lessons they envisioned, the teachers' aspiration for educational sovereignty was evident. Each teacher had a future plan in mind of how they were going to carry the knowledge they learned in the study forward. Clara developed a summer language institution that Chokecherry Hill School students could participate in. Maya wanted to create a unit around identity where her students could learn about their family and ancestors and bring in their family

members for presentations. Ava discussed one possible lesson where her students could use beadwork to learn about math and another lesson where students could create their own dance regalia for powwows. Charlotte wanted to develop a family-centered lesson based on identity where students and their families could work together, a lesson around community celebrations she remembered from when she was a child and the importance of these ceremonies (e.g. Chokecherry Dance), and a unit on various Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho stories. Emma discussed how she wanted to create a claims, evidence, and analysis essay lesson that was pertinent to her students' identities and Indigenous issues. Naomi wanted to create a lesson that would involve Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho traditional stories around different sacred sites and take students on a field trip to visit these areas. Vivian wanted to be a resource for other teachers at Chokecherry Hill School who wanted to learn more about Indigenous education.

Implications

The study has not only impacted the teachers and curriculum and pedagogical implications. It has also transitioned to new possibilities for other aspects of Indigenous education, such as engaging critical Indigenous consciousness, which is when Indigenous youth "…acknowledge, respect, and embrace the role Indigenous leaders play in providing service to their community and people" (Lee, 2006, p. 1).

One implication was the need for more collaboration between language and classroom teachers at Chokecherry Hill School. A possibility to increase the connection between language teachers and classroom teachers could be for both to analyze how classrooms could be spaces for language revitalization for Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho language and how they could best support each other in this effort (Wyman et al., 2010). A collaboration between

language and classroom teachers can also create spaces for resistance to white settler colonialism beliefs in education (Hermes, 2015) and potential spaces for healing in classrooms and building community among educators and learning which are both important for language revitalization (Duwayhoyeoma, Curtis, & Nicholas, 2022).

Another implication was the teachers needed space to have dialogues in order to sustain their efforts, research to support Native teachers confronting schools that refuse to see the benefit of critical Indigenous pedagogy (Garcia et al., 2020; Grande, 2004; Lee, 2006; Smith, 2012; Shirley, 2017; Shirley, 2022), culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Coulter & Jimenez-Silva, 2017; Goeman, 2008; Holmes & González, 2017; Jester, 2017; Lee, 2022; Lee & McCarty, 2017; Paris, 2012; Paris and Alim, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017; McCarty & Lee, 2014; McCarty et al., 2021; Windchief et al., 2015*)*, and decolonial praxis (Garcia, 2021). These contemporary educational movements helped the teachers to critically analyze Westernized teaching methods and envision how to center Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies in their curriculum and pedagogy.

Many of the participants of the study stated it would be beneficial to have professional developments for all staff at Chokecherry Hill School that focused on critical Indigenous education theories and specifically mentioned Tribal Critical Race Theory as a potential topic. It seemed this was a way the Indigenous teachers felt these types of professional developments could help non-Native, white staff understand Indigenous teachers' perspectives better and why contemporary education movements are needed to create culturally sustaining educators and work against colonization in schools (Jaime & Rios, 2006; Stanton & Jaime, 2010).

From the study, it was also evident the need to develop Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho curriculum and pedagogy (Pugach, et al., 2011, Stanton & Jaime, 2010; Wiggins et al.,

2007). Basing curriculum and pedagogy in Chokecherry Hill School's students' lived experiences was something majority of the participants felt was necessary in order to create an educational experience where the students could be their authentic selves instead.

The necessity of Indigenous principals, administrators, and efforts to implement a grow your own teacher program to sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho cultural identity were also implications of the study. Indigenous communities have knowledge holders who can contribute to the amplification of the importance of centering Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in classrooms or can place Indigenous leaders who have connections to these knowledge keepers in administrative positions like principalships or superintendent positions (Kashatok & Wyman, 2022). When Indigenous community members are chosen for educational leadership positions, they come in with knowledge and established relationships that ensure they can prioritize Indigenous knowledge systems in education and better support Indigenous teachers who dedicate their careers to decolonizing education. Through Indigenous administrators, grow your own teacher programs can be prioritized, which can ensure Indigenous knowledge systems will be centered in curriculum and pedagogy and can increase the number of Indigenous teachers in their communities' classrooms. A grow your own teacher program could bolster efforts to sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies which can ensure Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho youth can have an educational experience that celebrates who they are and doesn't focus on compartmentalizing their identities (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2022).

The potential of changing policies that privilege Westernized knowledge systems and creating policies that support educational sovereignty was present in the study. This implication spoke to the importance and necessity of educational sovereignty (Garcia & Shirley, 2012). The

impact of policies that support educational sovereignty is discussed further in the next section, Future Research.

Future Research

Future research for this study could involve conducting similar research activities in other schools located throughout the Wind River Reservation. Specifically, this future research could focus on how Indigenous teachers' perspectives around critical Indigenous educational literature and dialogues with Indigenous education scholars parallel and contrasts with the Indigenous teachers from Chokecherry Hill School. It would also be interesting to pair up teachers from different school districts by grade level and have them discuss the readings, share out their reflections, and create curriculum together. Another possibility is to replicate this study for elders, parents and youth from Gahni and the entire Wind River Reservation to see what their reactions are to critical Indigenous educational literature and the Indigenous educational scholars talks.

Policy

Another possible future research idea for this work could involve policies at Chokecherry Hill School that could be changed or created to better support educational sovereignty. Demmert (2011) discusses how culturally-based education (CBE), which is a foundational ideology of culturally sustaining pedagogy, differs among all Native communities. It's also identified that ways to assess must be created to emphasize the needs of the students' community, and those practices "…are linguistically as well as culturally appropriate that meet the academic priorities and needs of the community" (Demmert, 2011, p. 1). Demmert (2011) is correct that CBE, and any form of critical education, is going to differ from each Native community because a homogenous Native experience doesn't exist. Another important takeaway from Demmert's

(2011) article is the concept of assessments for the cultural and linguistic knowledge for this type of education. Often critics have expressed concern about education that centers Indigenous epistemologies and languages not having standards, which is untrue. As is shown in Demmert's (2011) work, this form of education can have assessment practices. What is integral for these evaluations is that they center Native community knowledge and are suitable for their language and culture. It's vital for these assessments to be community driven so they don't become a part of the settler-colonial agenda. For this dissertation, it is important for teachers to see examples of how it is possible for themselves and other community members to set the precedent for these evaluations and ways of teaching.

Lee & McCarty (2017) take this conversation further with culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy and focus on how "language education policy and practice" can resist colonizing tactics and work towards sustaining and revitalizing Native ways of knowing (p. 62). Their article focuses on how language revitalization and other forms of Indigenous knowledge occur outside of traditional classrooms and "…that Indigenous language reflect distinctive knowledges that children have a right to and need for full participation in their communities" (Lee & McCarty, 2017, p. 64). This belief goes beyond expectations and assessments and highlights how Native language revitalization efforts and the information that exists in these languages is integral to a child's sense of self. This knowledge not only effects a child in the present but has an impact on their future too. In this dissertation, teachers expressed the necessity of centering Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho languages and knowledge systems in their teaching but they were unsure of where and how to start.

Conclusion

> Naomi: I guess this whole process has just proven how crucial it is to implement a curriculum pedagogy that is tailored and aligned to our children's culture identities not only for [language] revitalization efforts but also for their students achieving in their traditional academics. It has just opened my eyes to how important it is and how crucial it is that we find a way to try and do this at our school.

The participants envisioned possible ways Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies and ontologies could be centered in curriculum and pedagogy due to their interactions with critical Indigenous pedagogies and Indigenous education scholars. At first, the influence of Westernized educational systems was evident through their expression of being uncomfortable with the idea of diverging from the state standards. Despite these feelings, there was an overall agreement that Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho knowledge systems needed to be centered in the curriculum especially since Chokecherry Hill School has an Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho student body. Once the teachers were provided time and space to reflect on critical Indigenous education theories and discussions with Indigenous education scholars, they were able to dream and manifest ideas around curriculum that could sustain Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho epistemologies.

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