

# *Native American Voices: Experiences of Indigenous Students on a Predominately White Campus*

**Amanda LeClair, English Department  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Angela M. Jaime, College of  
Education**

**Graduate Student Mentor: Christine Rogers,  
College of Education**





# Native Education

*“Story” is the basis of American Indian oral tradition. Story is the vehicle for sharing traditional knowledge and passing it from one generation to the next. Its purposes include sharing information, providing lessons in morality, confirming identity, and telling experiences of people. Stories sometimes tell us about the future. Powerful and vivid, each account is an entity of power. When the story is told effectively, it transcends time, as traditional knowledge lives on with each new listener becoming a part of them and a part of the next generation.*

*The American Indian Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Studies & Traditional Knowledge, Donald L. Fixico*



# *Purpose/Objectives*

- *To focus on the experiences of Native American students on a predominately white campus within the classroom environment.*
- *To educate non-Native students and professors about issues Native students have on a predominately white campus within the classroom environment.*
- *To affirm the experiences of Native students at predominately white campuses.*



# *Qualitative Study*

- *Narrative Inquiry*
- *Personal narrative and narrative of the participants*
- *Semi-structured interviews*
- *Interviews transcribed*
- *Coding based on themes*
- *Allows participants space to tell their story*
- *Documenting these stories is important to Native culture*

*"Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory...stories serve as a way to orient oneself and others toward the world and life." (Brayboy 2006)*



# *Participant Description*

- *Interview of alumni and currently enrolled Native students at a mountain west university*
- *Native professor/s*
- *Interviews to begin Fall 2008.*
- *Audio taped Interviews*
- *Member checking will occur during a focus group of the participants after initial interview/s*

# *My Story*

- *Throughout education I was told and felt like had to keep quiet*
- *Became frustrated*
- *Silenced*
- *Attending college*



## *Anticipated Results*

- *Results of participants anticipated to be similar to mine*
- *Analyze results for common themes among participants and myself*
- *Common themes: Self-identity, negative comments during class ("Indian Giver"), facing stereotypes (positive and negative), expectation of being the educator*
- *"You got the sense that some [non-Native students] cared and some were there just for a credit. The ones who cared asked really good questions and would make good points. The ones who didn't care would be disrespectful and just sit there and text. I would get frustrated because they had an opportunity to learn about our culture but instead let it pass them by."*



# Summary/Implications

- *Educate non-Native professors and students to acknowledge and learn from the experiences of Native students in the classroom environment on a predominately white campus*
- *Affirm Native students' experiences*
- *Document stories that have never been presented*
- *Promote positive interactions of Native culture and students in the classroom*



# *Acknowledgements*

- *Dr. Angela M. Jaime*
- *Christine Rogers*
- *McNair Scholars Program*
- *Zackie Salmon*
- *Susan Stoddard*
- *My family and friends*
- *Dr. Caskey Russell*
- *Office of Multicultural Affairs*
- *American Indian Studies*
- *Dr. Judy Antell*
- *Cheryl Jensen*
- *Cynthia Chavez Kelly*

# Questions

