

Cultural Identity and Third Space: An Exploration of their Connection in a Title I School

by

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## ABSTRACT

Implementing an assimilative agenda within the traditional U.S. education system has prevented the authentic inclusion, validation, and development of American Indian students. The enduring ramifications, including the loss of cultural identity, underscored the critical need to decolonize, or challenge, the historic assimilative agenda of the school space. The purpose of this action research study was to examine the connection between the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, cultural identity, and the creation of a Third Space to serve as a decolonizing framework for this Indigenous program conducted within a school space.

The epistemological perspective guiding this study was that of constructionism. The theoretical frameworks were post-colonial theory, Indigenous methodology, and, most prominently, Third Space theory. A thorough review of Third Space theory resulted in deduction of four criteria deemed to be necessary for creating a Third Space. These four theoretically-deduced criteria were (a) creating new knowledge, (b) reclaiming and reinscribing hegemonic notions of identity and school, (c) creating new or hybrid identities, and (d) developing more inclusive perspectives. The criteria were employed to create the Culture Club innovation *and* to determine whether a Third Space was effectively created within Culture Club.

This qualitative action research study focused on the Culture Club innovation, an after-school, cultural exploration, extracurricular program for sixth-grade American Indian students, at a Title I school in a large southwest metropolitan area. The participants were five, sixth-grade American Indian students. The role of the researcher was to facilitate a Third Space within Culture Club, as well as collect and analyze data.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews; recorded Culture Club sessions; and research journal entries. Once the data were transcribed, eclectic coding methodology, consisting of open, descriptive, and in vivo coding, was employed and interpretive analysis procedures followed.

Findings showed modest changes in participants' cultural identities but confirmed the creation of a Third Space within Culture Club. Findings have important implications for both practice and future research. Recommendations for improving and sustaining the decolonizing framework of Culture Club to create safe spaces for American Indian students and their explorations of their Indigeneity are also proposed.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the Indigenous students in the heart of the Navajo Nation, who have taught and inspired me in more ways than they will ever know.

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I am enormously thankful for both my family's support of my ardent work as an educator, as well as all that my students have taught me about life, love, happiness, and perseverance.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND CONTEXT OF THE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

*It is essential to open the field and entertain the possibilities of new approaches in a creative quest for viable and complete educational processes.*

~ Gregory Cajete (1994, p. 21)

*The last two weeks of the school year were bustling with energy. The sixth-grade students excitedly discussed their memories and plans for summer break as they settled into their seats. Their discussions charged the classroom with a palpable electricity of blended nostalgia and possibility. After a moment of observing the fluidity with which the students chatted and moved through the emotional thickness of the classroom, I provided them with their last assignment of the school year: Culture Day Projects.*

*To prepare for the projects, the class engaged in a rich discussion pertaining to the meaning of culture and its multiple facets. As the students enthusiastically shouted out their responses, I quickly jotted them on the whiteboard without any attention to organization. I was marveled by the comprehensive list of approximately 20 items, all of which demonstrated great depths-of-knowledge and insight. I then delivered the parameters of the project: 10 Google Slides exploring at least five elements of culture from the list compiled on the whiteboard with relevant pictures for each cultural component and a slide for references. The students were required to present their slides and be prepared to answer any questions on the cultures they researched. For extra credit, the students were invited to share traditional clothing, food, music, dance, and*

*other items with the class. As soon as I answered their clarifying questions, the students worked in pairs and selected the cultures for their research.*

*Throughout the week, students voluntarily asked to work on their projects during their recess and specials classes. The conversations overheard in lunch, passing periods, and recess revolved around what the students had learned, found interesting, and had sparked greater curiosity. At the conclusion of class each day, there were audible sighs and repeated comments of “No!” as the students exited their Culture Day Projects to transition to the next class.*

*The day in which the students presented their Culture Day Projects was filled with colorful raiment, delicious homemade food, dynamic music, skilled traditional dances, and rich conversation. The students’ thoughtful presentations of their Culture Day Projects demonstrated their enthusiastic engagement, diligence, and interest in learning more about cultures, especially those in which they shared affinities. Ultimately, the Culture Day Projects not only facilitated learning for my students, but also for me, by way of insights gleaned from observation and discussion.*

My observations of the students’ general engagement in the Culture Day Projects, and multiple conversations with two particularly passionate American Indian students, contributed to several realizations. The first realization was that the Culture Day Projects demonstrated the students’ ardent interests in learning more about their own cultural identities. This realization was gleaned from the majority of the students electing to conduct research and present on cultures for which they shared affinities.

The second realization was that of the absence of consistent and authentic integration of the students’ cultural identities within the classroom space. This insight

emerged from contrasting the fervency with which the students engaged in the Culture Day Projects, especially when researching components of their own cultural identities, with the day-to-day work conducted in the classroom.

Additionally, conversations with the two American Indian students reinforced this newly acquired understanding. The students shared they did not feel culturally included within the school or classroom space and, as a result, felt this underrepresentation perpetuated inaccurate conceptualizations of American Indian cultures. The students' poignant experiences and insightful observations struck me because, although the American Indian population comprised the fourth largest student group in the school, there was only one bulletin board designated to showcase Indigenous cultures.

The final realization, grounded in the previous insight, was identifying the critical need to authentically include, privilege, and cultivate these students' cultural identities within the classroom space. Thus, through the Culture Day Projects, the celebration of the cultural diversity represented in the sixth-grade reframed the historical and socialized purpose of the classroom into a space that included cultural multiplicities. In other words, the engagement in the Culture Day Project redefined the space of my classroom into one in which diversity of cultures, languages, and thoughts were embraced. I later learned that this powerful reclaiming and 'reinscribing' of the classroom space facilitated the creation of a Third Space that Bhabha (1994) defined as a metaphorical space in which two or more disparate social or cultural paradigms interact to form new or hybrid ways of thinking or being.

My conversations with the two American Indian students underscored the importance in exploring Indigenous cultures within the context of the classroom space.

Their candid comments about their experiences of not being culturally validated in school, spoke to a larger, more complex issue within Western education. Specifically, as Gregory Cajete (2008) posited, educators must be better prepared to address the unique needs presented by Indigenous youth and schools and classroom spaces must be more culturally interactive and validating of Indigeneity. This critical call to action was grounded in the persistent inadequacy of the education system to authentically engage, embrace, and cultivate the cultural identities of Indigenous youth within school and classroom spaces.

### **Overview and Purpose of Study**

This teacher action research project was conducted to respond to these needs. In fall 2016, I undertook an action research study in which I explored the connections between an innovation designed to foster cultural identity using Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). The innovation was entitled Culture Club, which was an after-school extracurricular program for sixth-grade American Indian students who attended the school in which I taught.

**Purpose.** The purpose of my action research study was to explore the connection between the collaborative cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, cultural identity, and the creation of a Third Space. Third Space served as a decolonizing framework for this Indigenous program conducted within a classroom space.

**Rationale.** As noted above, the study was conducted to examine the efficacy of the Culture Club. The rationale for this innovation was rooted in three key ideas, which have been elaborated, here. First, as the U.S. population has grown increasingly more diverse and pluralistic, the need to be responsive to students' diverse perspectives has

become increasingly clear (Cohn & Caumont, 2016). Second, Indigenous languages and cultures have been consistently and methodically extinguished (Crawford, 1995). Third, because the traditional physical and socialized space of the classroom was deeply entrenched in colonization and assimilation (Bhabha, 1994; Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carillo, & Collazo, 2004; Soja, 1996), the need to decolonize, or willfully liberate, the classroom space into a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) was both imperative and timely. Thus, the creation of a Third Space was critical to decolonizing the classroom by providing a safe physical and social space in which Indigenous identities and ways of knowing were privileged and embraced. Decolonizing the classroom through a Third Space was the aim of the innovation of Culture Club.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study.

1. In what ways did the cultural exploration facilitated by Culture Club shift the awareness and attitudes of the sixth-grade American Indian students' cultural identities?
2. In what ways did the shared experience of cultural exploration in Culture Club facilitate the creation of a Third Space?

### **Context—Contemporary Challenges**

Exceptionally low high school persistence and graduation rates of American Indian youth have been indicative of systemic educational failure (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010). Although the national graduation rate for all students was 79%, only 69.6% of eligible American Indian youth graduated from high school within the United States in 2012 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). In Arizona, the state context in



which this study was conducted, the average graduation rate was 75.7% for all students, but only 62.7% of American Indian youth graduated in 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). The exceedingly high rate with which American Indian students drop-out of the education system has been a challenge that has persisted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (Freeman & Fox, 2005; Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). To effectively understand this educational crisis, a review of the historical context in which it was deeply entrenched was undertaken.

### **Historical Context**

The historic purpose of public education in the United States has been to inculcate students with a common political, social, and cultural framework to prevent societal conflict (Spring, 2014). This concerted propagation of a monoculture, or dominant culture, in schools was deeply embedded in the belief that monocultural societies experienced less social upheaval than those comprised of diverse political, social, and cultural perspectives (Spring, 2014). Therefore, the cultural multiplicities of American Indian tribes inherently challenged the uncompromising monoculture.

Assimilation has been the process by which colonized populations have been forced to replace their Indigenous perspectives, ways of knowing, and lifestyles with those of the colonizer (Smith, 2012). To coerce American Indians to cede their dynamic cultural identities and ways of knowing to Western ownership (Smith, 2012), and adopt the dominant Western cultural paradigms, multiple forms of assimilation were employed (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Spring, 2014; Teske & Nelson, 1974). Because the public education system already endeavored to instill and perpetuate a singular consciousness, the integration of the assimilative agenda into the school space was seamless (Spring,

2012; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). It also proved to be the most effective assimilative implement in specifically targeting American Indian youth (Denzin et al. 2008; Haag, 2007; Trafzer, Keller, & Sisquoc, 2006).

Captain Richard Henry Pratt was a strong proponent of assimilative work that could be carried out in boarding schools to tackle the “Indian problem” (Deloria, 1994; Haag, 2007; Jacobs, 2006). Unsurprisingly, Pratt’s military career and reputation was grounded in his staunch assimilative practices imposed on captive American Indians held in prison camps (Haag, 2007; Jacobs, 2006; Trafzer et al. 2006). Pratt established the Carlisle School, a boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for which he also created the curriculum and structure. Moreover, he successfully lobbied the U.S. government to fund the school. In 1891, when Congress granted Pratt funding for the Carlisle School, the U.S. government adopted and built additional boarding schools espousing Pratt’s extreme assimilative philosophy of “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (Pratt, 1892, p. 46.). Thus, the boarding school model endeavored to culturally, linguistically, and physically transform American Indian youth to reflect Western, or Euro-American ideals (Haag, 2007; Trafzer et al. 2006).

Pratt conceptualized American Indian youth as being the easiest population to assimilate because he believed their identities could be more readily molded (Haag, 2007). Further, Pratt understood language and cultural knowledge were orally transmitted within American Indian families and communities. Thus, he reasoned if American Indian youth were forcibly removed from the cultural influences of their families and communities, and transported to boarding schools, they could be more easily influenced

to assimilate new perspectives (Haag, 2007; Meriam et al. 1928; Trafzer et al. 2006; Utter, 2001).

In the boarding schools, American Indian youths' identities were immediately and symbolically subjugated. Upon arrival, their traditional clothing was replaced with government issued uniforms, and the boys' long hair, a source of pride in American Indian cultures, was cut and modeled after the Western perception of a civilized man. The youth were also provided with English names and were forced to convert to Christianity. If, however, the youth resisted these assimilative processes, and engaged in Indigenous cultural or linguistic practices, they were physically and psychologically punished (Haag, 2007; Klug, 2012). A critical consequence of the boarding school era and the severance of the youth from their Indigenous languages, cultures, families, and communities (Klug, 2012; Meriam et. al.1928) was the socio-cultural disruption of never learning or speaking their Indigenous languages. Further, because American Indian youth were physically removed from those who transmitted language and cultural traditions, upon reaching adulthood, the youth were unable to transmit Indigenous languages or traditions to their own children (Haag, 2007). Littlemoon (2009) has described this process and its ramifications as "multigenerational trauma," which articulated the enduring ramifications of the travesties experienced by Indigenous peoples, and alienation of subsequent generations.

Further, although the assimilative agenda of boarding schools was devised to integrate the American Indian youth into the mainstream Western society, ultimately, the youth were socially and educationally ill-equipped to navigate the complexities comprised by socioeconomic stratification (Deloria, 1994). The inadequacy of the

boarding schools resulted from, as Smith (2009) observed, “[T]he education that was provided was not designed to allow Native people to really assimilate into the dominant society, [but rather]...to be assimilated into the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder” (p. 6). Thus, American Indians were further culturally, linguistically, and economically disenfranchised as they forcibly attended school (Meriam et al., 1928). Researchers have underscored many negative consequences of the boarding schools, including gangs (Freng, Davis, McCord, & Roussell, 2012; Hailer, 2008; Major, Egley, Howell, Mendenhall, & Armstrong, 2004; Vigil, 1988), low graduation rates (Indian Country Diaries, 2006; Klug, 2012; Meriam et al. 1928; University of California, 2010) and high and chronic unemployment rates (Hailer, 2008; Klug, 2012; Meriam et. al. 1928.; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Even so, many American Indian youth resisted, reframed, or shifted the symbolic power of boarding schools into a place of shrouded empowerment (Child, 2014; Lomawaima, 1994; Tuck, 2009; Whalen, 2013). Thus, the story about Indian boarding schools has been shown to be quite complex (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002).

The proliferation of gangs on reservations has increased. Gangs in American Indian communities were initially reported in the early 1990s; however, by 2000, 23% of law enforcement agencies serving American Indian communities reported active youth gangs (Major et al., 2004). There were more than 4,500 gang members comprising approximately 375 gangs on or near tribal lands, with larger communities proportionately reporting more gangs and gang membership than small communities (Freng, et al. 2012). The adoption of gang culture has been rooted in the fact that “many American Indian children do not have a real sense of identity tied to their tribe, community and family”

(Hailer, 2008, p. 90). Joining gangs often has been an attempt to form a new identity stemming from the loss of language, culture, and identity. Thus, the absence of cultural significance and identity, juxtaposed with poverty, increasing exposure to urban environments, exclusion from mainstream society, and “multiple marginality” has contributed to increased gang violence on reservations (Freng et al. 2012; Vigil, 1988).

Another consequence of systemic, enduring colonization has been the low high school graduation rate (Klug, 2012; Meriam et al. 1928). The 2010 graduation rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives at 46.6% was lower than all other racial/ethnic groups reported (University of California, 2010). Due to the low high school graduation rates, of all college degrees awarded nationally, only 11.3% were attained by American Indians (National Center for Statistics, 2008). Additionally, the chronically high unemployment rate may result from low levels of educational attainment (Hailer, 2008; Klug, 2012; Meriam et al. 1928). In 2011, American Indians demonstrated a 14.6% unemployment rate (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

There has been a considerable amount of scholarly work exposing and constructing the damage narrative of Indigenous peoples as a “strategy for correcting oppression” (Tuck, 2009, p. 414). Nevertheless, if this narrative was unbalanced, it would have done nothing to move beyond the enduring ramifications of colonization and, instead, would have inhibited progress by allowing for the continuation of pathologizing analyses. Thus, although presenting the context of racism and colonization was imperative for social justice purposes, it was critical to push beyond the pathologizing damage narrative (Child, 2014; Tuck, 2009). This effort required the highlighting of the active agency and resiliency of many of the American Indian youth. Despite the

inhumane conditions and subjugation of Native students at the boarding schools, they purposefully resisted to maintain their Indigeneity and even used the boarding schools to escape other obstacles, such as difficult home lives and the Great Depression (Child, 2014; Lomawaima, 1994; Trafzer et al. 2006; Tuck, 2009; Whalen, 2013). Dropping out of the school system has even been perceived as a mode of resistance against the historically oppressive education system (Friedel, 1999; Grantham-Campbell, 1998).

To partially redress the general situation, Indigenous peoples and allies drafted and fought for passage of the 1990/1992 the Native American Languages Act in 1990. The Act required the US to “promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages” (Native American Languages Act, 1990, 25 U.S.C. § 204). As a result, more than 50 Indigenous language immersion programs have emerged (Littlebear, 2002). Although tribal groups have initiated language immersion schools on their reservations, they have encountered several challenges that impeded the cultural and linguistic development of American Indian students, including the adoption of state and national curricula and testing for all grades and language development levels (Dick, Estell & McCarty, 1990; Klug, 2012).

Given that curricula have been the foundation for educational concepts, experiences, and subsequent success, the absence or limited access to effective curricula has strongly affected the enduring success of students (Jones & Ongtooguk, 2002). The extent to which minority students’ languages and cultures have been incorporated into school curricula has been shown to be either additive or subtractive (Lambert, 1975). Aligned with the historic assimilative agenda of schools, the subtractive educational programs endeavored to replace the home language and culture with English language

and culture (Cummins, 1997). However, additive educational programs have taught English language and culture in addition to the home language and culture (Cummins, 1997).

In the case of American Indian youth who continue to experience the resonating consequences of the boarding school era, curricula that have been additive were pivotal to their success (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; St. Germaine, 2000). The educational experiences many minority students encountered also instilled them with “an insecurity and ambivalence about the value of their own cultural identity as a result of their interactions with the dominant group” (Cummins, 1997, p. 4). Further, Cummins (1984) found the extent to which students’ languages and cultures were integrated into school curricula was a critical predictor of academic success. Thus, curricula that strongly incorporated and reinforced Indigenous students’ home languages and cultural knowledge increased their academic performance by developing the foundations of their cognitive and cultural identity (Cummins, 1997). Nevertheless, most schools have not incorporated Indigenous-centric curricula to challenge the historic assimilative agenda or decolonize the school or classroom spaces by way of developing and sustaining Indigenous cultural identities (Klug, 2012).

### **Situational Context**

The context of this action research project was a prekindergarten through eighth-grade elementary school located within a large southwest metropolitan area. The school facilities were less than 10 years old and were comprised of four buildings within an

open-air campus. The campus also contained a covered playground set, swing set, basketball court, and soccer field.

Of the 780 students attending the school, 58% identified as Hispanic/Latino; 20% as African American; 12% as Caucasian; 5% as American Indian; 2% as Asian; 2% as Two or More Races, and less than 1% as Pacific Islander (School Data, 2016). Due to the high rate, 71% of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch, the school received Title I federal grant funding to support these students (School Data, 2016). The purpose of the Title I grant was to provide low-income students with additional services to better prepare them to meet the targeted academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). At the district-level, 78% of the students came from homes below the poverty level and 6% of the students were English language learners whose primary language was Spanish (District Data, 2016).

Although the curricula for mathematics, English language arts, and science classes were newly adopted and aligned with the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards (2010), teachers were encouraged to integrate other, supplemental resources as necessary to ensure accessibility to students and quality instruction. Within the school, there was a strong focus on academics and data-informed instructional strategies. The curricula for mathematics, English language arts, and science did not facilitate the integration or development of Indigenous cultural identities into the school space (Personal Communication with Assistant Principal, 2016; School Data, 2016).

## **Summary**

The chapter began with the inspiration that sparked the initial interest in conducting this action research study. The purpose of the study along with the rationale



and the corresponding research questions was provided to illuminate the study's basic framework. To demonstrate the study's connection to a greater purpose, the critical need to decolonize school and classroom spaces and an overview of the enduring challenges stemming from both the historical and contemporary contexts were described. Because action research studies have been grounded in the localized contexts in which they were conducted (Mills, 2014), the situational context of this study was described in detail.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND REVIEW OF SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIPS

*Theory enables us to deal with contradictions and uncertainties.*

*Perhaps more significantly, it gives us space to plan,  
to strategize, to take greater control over our resistances.*

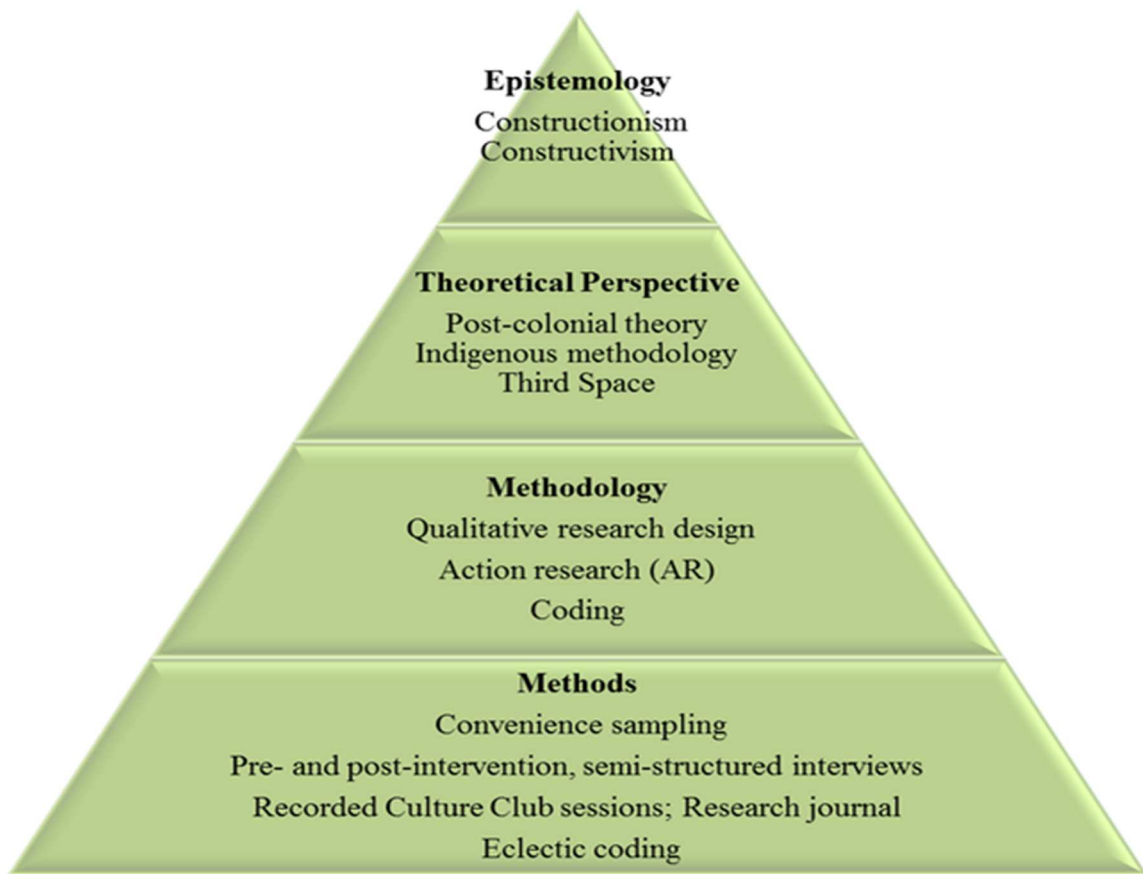
~ Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 40)

Consistent with Smith's (2012) assertion, the focus of my research study was the purposeful exploration and justification of appropriate methodologies and methods to conduct appropriate research with Indigenous students. Accordingly, to ensure transparency, I have begun the chapter with an overview of theoretical components before delving into the study's specific theoretical framing of constructionism, post-colonial theory, Indigenous methodology, and Third Space. Explanations pertaining to the methodologies of the study have also been provided in the qualitative research design and coding sections. Additionally, supporting scholarship of creating a safe, or Third Space, for indigenous youth, as well as other relevant studies were reviewed. Finally, an explanation of how the review of literature rendered a pragmatic approach to the innovation of Culture Club and a brief summary of the chapter were provided.

#### **Overview of Theoretical Components**

Research studies should have been grounded in four intersecting elements: epistemology; theoretical perspective; methodology; and methods (Crotty, 1998). The epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, of a study served as the "philosophical grounding" for determining the types and legitimacy of knowledge (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Within the scope of an epistemological approach, multiple threads of theoretical

perspectives have been articulated. Theoretical perspective provided information about how the world was viewed, analyzed, and understood, and served as the guiding principles and context for the study's methodology. The methodology of a study consisted of the strategy, process, or design of data collection and analysis. It must have been concurrently informed by the selected theoretical perspectives. Finally, the methods were the specific techniques or procedures utilized to gather, analyze, and interpret data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998). The relations between elements along with the specific components of this study have been depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The relations that inform each element and the specific components of the study

Accordingly, the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods employed for this study were exhaustively considered and purposefully selected to ensure their alignment with making “social justice research possible” (Paris & Winn, 2014, p. ix).

Although each of the epistemological approaches, theoretical perspectives, and methodology elements were explored in this chapter, the methods have been discussed at length in Chapter 3 on the Method.

### **Constructionism**

Epistemology has provided a framework within which to ground theoretical direction. Within the Western epistemic tradition, the epistemology of objectivism preceded that of constructionism. Objectivism was the belief that all objectives and reality existed separately from consciousness (Crotty, 1998). Thus, because knowledge and values were objectified within research populations, by remaining detached, the researcher was able to observe the objective truth.

The epistemology of constructionism emerged from a resistance to objectivism. Crotty (1998) defined constructionism as “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). In other words, constructionism held that meaning was not inherent in the object or the observation but, instead, was constructed through social interaction.

A notable branch of constructionism was that of constructivism. Although “both constructivism and social constructionism endorse a subjectivist view of knowledge, the

former emphasizes individuals' biological and cognitive processes, whereas the latter places knowledge in the domain of social interchange" (Guterman, 2006, p. 13).

Expressly, whereas constructivism also espoused the belief that meaning was not inherent, but constructed, it predominantly focused on the creation of meaning within the consciousness of the individual. Thus, for the purposes of this study, both the epistemologies of constructionism and constructivism were employed to understand both the participants' and my own meaning-making.

### **Post-Colonial Theory**

Post-colonial theory served as the first theoretical perspective of this study because of its derivation from constructionism epistemology (Scott, 2005). Post-colonial theory carved out particular ways of conceptualizing and critiquing the "colonial testimony of Third World countries and discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 245). Because these approaches attempted to intervene in the normalized, irregular development of often disadvantaged Indigenous peoples and communities (Bhabha, 1994), it was imperative to examine colonialism.

Colonialism is defined by the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2017) as a noun meaning:

- 1: the quality or state of being colonial;
- 2: something characteristic of a colony;
- 3a: control by one power over a dependent area or people;
- 3b: a policy advocating or based on such control.

Although those who originally lived on colonized land were mentioned in definition 3a, the description with which they and their land were assigned was “dependent” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2017). By doing so, it evaded the violent implications and processes of colonization — conquest and domination (Loomba, 2015). Further, the description of the colonized lands and peoples as “dependent” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) positioned the colonizers as saviors who provided critical support to those whom they colonized. Thus, to include the critical components of power and dominance in the definition, Ania Loomba defines colonialism “...as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods” (p. 20). Although colonization and imperialism were frequently interchangeably used (Kohn, 2012; Loomba; Smith, 2012), there were subtle differences in their meanings (Kohn, 2012).

At first glance, both colonization and imperialism “[involve] political and economic control of a dependent territory” (Kohn, 2012, Colonialism section, para. 1). However, the process of colonialism required relocation of a population into a new land to live as permanent settlers and maintain political allegiance to their country of origin. In contrast, imperialism required that a foreign government superintended the sovereignty of territories without substantial settlement by imposing military dominance and establishing satellite governments (Kohn, 2012). In both the process of colonialism and that of imperialism, Indigenous peoples were seized and subjugated (Smith, 2012).

Although colonialism has typically been employed to describe how the British Empire overtook North America, Australia, and New Zealand, imperialism was frequently used to describe the usurpation of Africa in the late nineteenth century, as well as the American control of the Philippines and Puerto Rico (Kohn, 2012; Loomba, 2015).

Although colonialism and imperialism were effectuated to benefit the British Empire both economically and strategically, the conflation of their meanings can be attributed to the growing complexities of overtaking and dominating foreign lands during the nineteenth century (Kohn, 2012; Smith, 2012). Due to the increasing complexities of acquiring overseas territories, the British Empire employed “the concept of empire” more frequently (Kohn, Definition and Outline section, para. 3) to encompass the agenda of capitalism, which has been identified as modern colonialism (Loomba, 2015).

Consequently,

...modern capitalism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered—it restructured the economics of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonized and colonial countries. (Loomba, 2015, p. 21)

This flow of resources, which traversed both directions, included slaves, indentured laborers, and raw materials to manufacture goods for metropolitan consumption, which trapped the colonies in captive markets for European goods (Loomba, 2015). Moreover, this flow necessitated an increase of travel to distribute the resources and goods, which, in turn, contributed to the development of a global economy (Kohn, 2012; Loomba, 2015). Karl Marx (1972) argued this purposeful economic development was central to colonialism.

Marx (1972) contended that capitalism inherently required expansion into new markets and the development of a global market destabilized local and national markets. Due to both overproduction and competition among producers, wages were driven down.

Consequently, due to the under-consumption of goods, expansion into new markets was critical to prevent economic collapse.

Often espoused as the original work on which post-colonial theory was based was Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism*. In the book, Said employed Michel Foucault's approach to discourse, which analyzed dominance, power, and hegemony in knowledge construction, such as speech (Kohn, 2012; Loomba, 2014; Said, 1978; Smith, 2012) to expose and deconstruct the Western understanding of the Orient and "the Other" – which has been synonymous with Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012, p. 2). Said concluded that the perception of the Other was grounded in a set of stereotypical, imagined, and romanticized anecdotes, which were perpetrated by academic institutions through their gathering, owning, and teaching of the Other (Smith, 2012). Because these anecdotes have deep, intertwining roots with academia, there was a need to "[identify] research as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other" (Smith, 2012, p. 2). Thus, because post-colonial theory challenged the economic exploitation, ownership of ways of knowing, and interjection of sociopolitical hegemony inherent within Western colonization (Bhabha, 1994; Kohn, 2012; Loomba, 2015; Smith, 2012), it was employed to understand and challenge the historic and contemporary Western hegemony and rationale for continuing to reject "opportunities [for Indigenous peoples] to be creators of their own culture and own natures" (Smith, 2012, p. 1).

### **Indigenous Methodology**

Indigenous methodology was the third theoretical perspective integrated into this study. Indigenous methodology branched from post-colonial theory's demand for



decolonizing practices, beliefs, and spaces to challenge the perpetuated rhetoric of the colonizer with the voices of the Indigenous (Smith, 2012). It strived to resist and rebel by integrating Indigenous epistemologies, or ways of knowing, into research practices by highlighting the fact that “research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise, but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (Smith, 2012, p. 5). Indigenous methodologies ensured that voice, reverence, and participation were given to all participants, especially marginalized peoples.

Irrespective of the field and context of study, scientific inquiry and research have historically been conceptually espoused as an *objective* means of understanding the world (Crotty, 1998; Gould, 1996; Smith, 2012). However, this supposed objectivity, or neutrality, dangerously ensnared social scientists to fall “victim to the dictates of prejudice” because it did not demand researcher introspection (Gould, 1996, p. 36). Therefore, objectivity must have been operationally defined and social scientists must also have acknowledged their inherent preconceptions to both understand their influence on the research data and to guard against its employment in the subversive justification of social agendas (Lorde, 1984). Because “science must be understood as a social phenomenon,” all theories and interpretive methods have been subjected to the reification of cultural and sociopolitical ideologies (Gould, 1996, p. 52).

Historically, social research has been employed by those espousing European imperialism and colonialism to justify the subjugation of Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012), namely through various arguments of biological determinism (Gould, 1996; Smith, 2012). Biological determinism was the unfounded or mythological “claim that worth can be assigned to individuals and groups by measuring intelligence as a single

quantity” (Gould, 1996, p. 52). However unsubstantiated, biological determinism has contributed to the sociopolitical and economic subjugation of minorities (Smith, 2012).

For instance, craniometry, the first biological theory supported by extensive quantitative data, justified the servitude and assimilation of minorities by linking cranial volume to intellectual ability (Gould, 1996). The sociocultural context comprised of hard-liners and soft-liners prevailed during the eighteenth and nineteenth-century (Gould, 1996). The hard-liners believed that minorities, including American Indians, were inherently inferior and thus were meant to be enslaved and colonized. By comparison, the soft-liners concurred that minorities were inferior but, they believed individuals’ freedom should not be dependent upon intelligence. Typically, it was the soft-liners who maintained minorities’ inferiorities were purely cultural, and assimilation into the dominant, White culture was a moral imperative (Gould, 1996; Smith, 2012).

Within the contemporary context, popular press works such as *The bell curve* by Herrnstein and Murray (1994) was purported to objectively reveal truths about human nature (Gould, 1996). However, the book was perceived as a thinly-veiled attempt to subtly integrate biological determinism into the public consciousness. *The bell curve’s* weak and objectionable claims resided in social Darwinism and innate intellectual stratification of social classes. Social Darwinism was the belief that given egalitarian circumstances, those with the higher IQs were likely to be more socially and economically successful than those with lower IQs (Gould, 1996). Thus, *The bell curve’s* conclusion reinforced the misconception that those who comprise the lowest social and economic statuses were intellectually incompetent (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994). The innate intellectual stratification also justified the social hierarchy by demonstrating that

Asians were minimally cognitively superior to Caucasians, but Caucasians possessed a substantially higher intellectual caliber than people of African and American Indian descents. Although these findings were extolled, there were multiple inadequacies that rendered it scientifically weak and socially dangerous. The scientific ineptitude resided in the omission of justification for the findings' primary claim, minimal detailing of factor analysis, inclusion of the single analysis of multiple regressions, and low correlation coefficients (Gould, 1996). Nevertheless, *The bell curve* unethically served as justification for the continual marginalization of minorities, including Indigenous peoples (Gould, 1996; Smith, 2012).

The enduring ramifications of research as the justification of racial, economic, and political subjugation of Indigenous peoples and communities, has inextricably connected the term *research* to European imperialism and colonialism (Smith, 2012). It was within these ways that “scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism [that] remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples” (Smith, 2012, p. 1). Although the West has coveted, extracted, and asserted ownership of Indigenous ways of knowing, it also rejected the Indigenous creators and producers and denied them opportunities to further develop their own cultures and nations (Smith, 2012). These restrictive social policies and practices were still employed to deny the validity of Indigenous peoples’ claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of [their] languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to [their] natural resources and systems for living within [their] environments.” (Smith, 2012, p. 1)

The need for a decolonizing methodology arose as a result of this inherent struggle to voice social, economic, and environmental injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012).

Methodology can be conceptualized as the theory of method, the approaches or techniques employed in a study, or the epistemological reasons for selecting a set of methods (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). However, decolonizing methodology was not *as* focused on the actual technique of selecting methods as it was with “the context in which the research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities” (Smith, 2012, p. ix). Indigenous methodology emerged from the disruptive objective of decolonizing methodology on the hegemonic, colonizing framework of research *and* the important, ongoing integration of Indigenous perspectives and participation in research (Smith, 2012). As a result, it has been increasingly implemented to address social issues within the frameworks of decolonization, social justice, and self-determination (Smith, 2012).

### **Third Space**

Third Space theory served as the theoretical heart of this study because it was consistent with the epistemological framework of constructionism and the theories of post-colonialism and Indigenous methodology. Both Homi Bhabha’s (1994) and Edward Soja’s (1996) conceptualizations of Third Space were included in this study and their specific contributions to the theory have been explored in the next section.

**Homi Bhabha.** Third Space theory has been attributed to Homi Bhabha (1994), a post-colonial and literary theorist who challenged the dynamics of sociopolitical power

and culture through discourse analysis. His most prominent contributions to cultural discourse have been the concepts of hybridity and third space.

Bhabha's (1994) analysis of culture was contextualized in post-colonialism because it "bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order" (p. 245). Thus, he challenged the essentialist perspective of cultural identity, "the belief in invariable and fixed properties which define and the 'whatness' of a given entity" (Fuss, 1991, p. xi). Bhabha argued against the notions of identity fixity and fetishism of the confined, binary colonial paradigm by contending that all cultures were continuously in the process of reinvention.

The dominant culture of the colonizer, like all products of language, was open to ambivalence and interpretation separate from the originator's intent (Bhabha, 1994; Young, 1995). It was through this ambivalence that colonial stereotypes, which offered fixed, baseless representations of the Other, or Indigenous peoples, and functioned as a discriminatory power because they actively disavowed the significations of psychic and social relations (Bhabha, 1994). Stereotyping allowed for the continued subjectification, or conceptual construction, of the Other because to acknowledge existence forced the recognition of differences in race, color, and culture, and threatened "the desire for an originality" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 107). Thus, the perpetuation of colonial stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as politically and culturally vestigial or archaic contributed to "cultural mummification" and, consequently, a "mummification of individual thinking" (Fanon, 1970, p. 44). Fanon claimed it was impossible to evolve without recognition from the cultural framework in which one existed, this type of colonial "knowing," or

stereotyping, justified the discriminatory and authoritarian forms of political control enacted to control Indigenous peoples (Bhabha, 1994, p. 119).

Paradoxically, this same ambiguity inherent in colonial stereotypes also allowed for the adoption of mimicry. Bhabha (1994) described mimicry as “the sign of a doable articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power” (p. 122). However, mimicry also challenged dominant or ‘normalized’ knowledges by transforming fixed colonial notions into those of uncertainty. In this way, mimicry was disruptive and menacing to colonial authority because it created a “double vision” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 126) of colonial representation that is at once familiar and new (Meredith, 1998).

Although mimicry challenged the dominant culture, when translated into the narcissistic demands of colonial power, those who represented themselves more similarly to that of the colonizer were typically rewarded through discriminatory practices, including advancement within hegemonic hierarchies and the disavowal of others who were identified as being too much as the Other (Bhabha, 1994). Consequently, Bhabha cogently argued that if the essentialist reference to race, culture, and nation relied on mimicry to preserve authority, the most exigent presence was that of hybridity.

Hybridity signified the productivity of colonial power and shifted in fixities (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha described hybridity as,

the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity efforts. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its

identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. (p. 159)

In this way, colonial hybridization served as the reified articulation of the ambivalent space in which the rite of power intersected the site of desirous ownership, rendering the objects simultaneously ‘disseminatory’ and disciplinary (Bhabha, 1994). This ambivalence directly challenged the validity of authority. By purposefully reframing the effects of colonial power as the production of hybridization and not of the blustery command of colonialist authority or the silencing of Indigenous traditions, a shift in power and a new, powerful perspective was created (Bhabha, 1994). Thus, within this rich, fertile metaphorical space—‘beyond’ binary colonial paradigm—a space rife with innovation and innovation by way of redefining and re-scripting both the historic and present cultures—is an ‘in-between’ space in which multiplicities of hybrid cultural identities flourish. This is Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Rutherford, 1990).

Third Space has not been conceptually confined as simply engendering possibilities but, instead, it has been viewed as an active space in which constant production occurred (Bhabha, 1994; Meredith, 1998; Rutherford, 1990). It was assiduously ‘interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative’ in creating “new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). Therefore, Third Space was a metaphorical space, without a fixed location, and was produced in and through discursive conditions.

**Edward Soja.** Soja’s (1996) version of Thirdspace (note different spelling) was predominantly grounded in the work of Bhabha (1994) and Henri Lefebvre (1991). Soja proposed the central argument of the “trialects of spatiality,” which was comprised of

spatiality, historicity, and sociality, and was grounded in Lefebvre's dualistic Firstspace and Secondspace perspectives (Soja, 1996, p. 10). Soja explained Thirdspace was the product of 'thirthing' of the spatial imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends well beyond them in scope, substance, and meaning. Simultaneously real and imagined and more (both and also)..., the exploration of Thirdspace can be described and inscribed in journeys to 'real-and-imagined' (or perhaps "realandimagined"?) places. (p. 11)

Thus, Thirdspace, which was the social production of space, was constructed upon three premises. The first premise of "spatial practice" (Firstspace) was composed of the physical forms of social spatiality, such as houses, cities, and streets. The second premise was the "representations of space" (Secondspace), which was "the conceptualized space [of] science, planners, urbanists, technocrats, artists" (Soja, 1996, p. 66). It was within this nexus of the "real material world" and the "perspectives that interpret this reality" that Thirdspace emerged (Soja, 1996, p. 6). Within this context of Thirdspace, Soja borrowed Bhabha's (1994) notion of in-between spaces as productive and discursive loci of hybridization. However, Soja reified this metaphorical space as a physical space in which the socialization of human interaction occurred. He explained that Thirdspace was rooted in the critical strategy of "thirthing-as-Othering" to radically recombine and open perspectives beyond hegemonic binaries that confined both thought and political action (Soja, 1996, p. 5). Soja challenged these "binarisms" by proposing "an-Other" set of choices that did not completely dismiss the original binary choice, but instead provided the "creative process of *restructuring* that draws selectively and



strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives” (p. 5). These two opposing categories were Firstspace (real) and Secondspace (imagined), and the new alternatives were rendered within the context of the Thirdspace.

Within this Thirdspace, Soja (1996) emphasized postmodern spatial feminists’ critiques by elaborating on the “border work” of postmodern spatial feminists to highlight the “overlapping borderlands of feminists and post-colonial cultural criticism [as] a particularly fertile meeting ground for initiating new pathways for exploring Thirdspace” (p. 14). Soja contended multiplicities of identities were forged within the intersection of these spaces, which required moving beyond the singularities of identity categories, such as class, gender, and sexuality. Accordingly, Thirdspace

is a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable. It is a space where issues of race, class, and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other. (Soja, 1996, p. 5)

In other words, Thirdspace was the physical and socialized space in which people interacted. This reconceptualization of human interaction through the lens of space concomitantly demonstrated how physical space was operationalized in socialization and how social spaces shaped the physical space (Soja, 1996).

Within the context of school, however, the privileged position of certain discourses legitimized only the dominant ways of knowing disseminated by the colonizer. Accordingly, the type of knowledge with which schools have been charged to

disseminate can invalidate and restrict some students' development of identity "as they struggle to reconcile different ways of knowing, doing, reading, writing, and talking with those that are privileged in their classrooms" (Moje et al., 2004, p. 43).

Because schools were often implemented as assimilative instruments through which only certain outside knowledges and discourses were included and validated, students of diverse identities and funds of knowledge may have struggled to reconcile competing discourses, which resulted in "splitting" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 98-99). This splitting occurred when students adopted *and* simultaneously rejected the privileged language and discourses taught in school. However, this creation of new identities and knowledge can be framed as a form of resistance because "forms of popular rebellion and mobilization are often most subversive and transgressive when they are created through oppositional *cultural* practices" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 29, italics in original). Further, such actions have also contributed to decolonization by way of disrupting the dominant, colonizing culture (Smith, 2012).

### **Implications for Study**

For the purposes of this study, Third Space will be used to mean both the metaphorical space in which hybridity occurs, which was consistent with Bhabha's (1994) theory as well as the socialized and physical space in which multiplicities of identities emerged in Soja's (1996) perspective. Throughout the process of reviewing both Bhabha's and Soja's conceptualizations of Third Space, I deduced four criteria required for both creating (aiding in developing the innovation) and determining the presence (verifying the existence) of a Third Space. These theoretically-deduced criteria,

which emerged as common, but critical qualities required for the creation of a Third Space, have been described below.

**Creation of new knowledge.** Both Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1996) contended a Third Space must have afforded opportunities for the development of new knowledge and paradigms that emerged through the active interactions of disparate participants. Bhabha suggested Third Space was ‘interruptive, interrogative, and enunciative;’ whereas Soja described it as a space, beyond spatial and geographical confines, in which an “interjecting an-Other set of choices” occurred (p. 5).

**Reclaim and reinscribe.** A Third Space must also have afforded those who were historically subjugated to actively challenge hegemonic power differentials and privileged ways of knowing through resistance and assertion of power (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). In the words of Bhabha, Third Space operationalized,

The ‘right’ to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege, [which] does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are ‘in the minority’. (p. 3)

**Creation of new or hybrid identities.** Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1996) claimed Third Space was in part a metaphorical space in which those who possessed disparate power and paradigms authentically engaged in the sharing of epistemologies and ideologies. Through these interactions, new or hybrid

identities emerged as original concepts were revoked, and new ones were constructed and built upon. Bhabha stated Third Space allowed for, “the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, [which] is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (p. 3).

**Development of a more inclusive perspective.** Within a Third Space, through actively reclaiming and reinscribing hegemonic epistemologies and ideologies, new knowledge and new or hybrid identities emerged. Because Third Space provided eternal fertility for continual originations, it was also a space of acceptance of multiple perspectives (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Bhabha asserted, “These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (p. 2). Similarly, Soja contended,

It is instead an efficient invitation to enter a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable. (p. 5)

It was important to note these four theoretically-deduced criteria not only informed the pragmatic construction of Culture Club by ensuring that certain components were purposefully included in the study, but they also served as a set of criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of creating a Third Space within Culture Club. Accordingly, to

address RQ2 and determine whether Culture Club fostered a Third Space, the qualitative data were examined to determine whether these theoretically-deduced criteria were present.

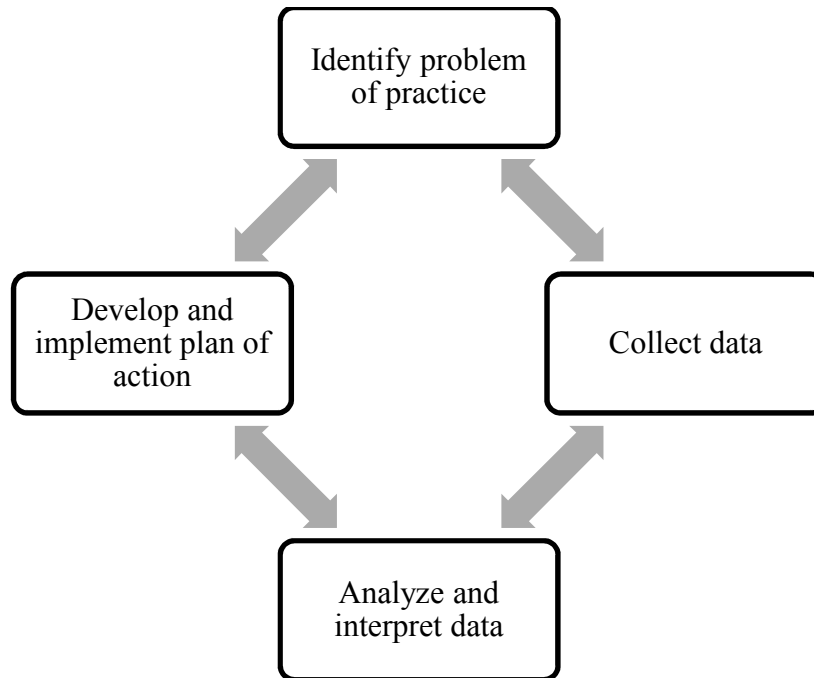
### **Qualitative Research Design**

The theoretical perspective rendered from both Indigenous methodologies and Third Space theory required an understanding of the enduring ramifications of imperialist research on Indigenous peoples and also called for a reframing of how studies were conducted with Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012). Although qualitative research design has, on occasion, been implemented to espouse positivist or objectivist agendas; generally, the quantitative research design has been more closely aligned with the positivist or objectivist epistemology and theoretical perspectives (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998), and has consistently been employed as justification for the colonization and subjugation of Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012). Thus, the first factor in determining that a purely qualitative research design was most appropriate for this study was its alignment with the epistemology of post-colonial theory and the theoretical perspective and Indigenous methodology and Third Space. The second factor in deciding on a purely qualitative research design was that none of the research questions required any quantitative approach to be answered (Creswell, 2014). For these reasons, it was determined that a purely qualitative research design was most appropriate for the purposes of this study, both in terms of alignment with the epistemological and theoretical frameworks as well as in addressing the research questions.

**Action research.** Action research was selected as an approach for this research study because it was consistent with the epistemological and theoretical framing of this

study. The term *action research* (AR) has been attributed to Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) who introduced the term in the early 1930s (Mills, 2014). AR described the iterative process of practitioners within a field identifying an issue, reflecting, and devising and implementing a plan before reflecting again upon the findings and next course of action (Mills, 2014). Although AR has been adopted into numerous disciplines, because of the progressive education movement, namely John Dewey, it has gained much traction in the education field (Mills, 2014; Noffke, 1994). Accordingly, despite the diversity of the sociopolitical and geographical contexts in which AR has been conducted, its cardinal purpose in education has been to enhance the lives of students (Mills, 2014).

AR has been shown to be comprised of the iterative and cyclical process that requires the researcher to (a) identify a problem of practice; (b) collect data; (c) analyze and interpret data; and (d) develop and implement a plan of action (Mills, 2014). Further, in AR the researcher was required to reflect between each step and, upon developing and implementing the plan of action, repeat the iterative cycle from the beginning. See Figure 2 for the dialectic action research cycle. By repositioning the researcher as an insider within a particular context, who identifies a problem of practice, and conducts research along with the participants, AR facilitates discourses of power, reframing experiences, and challenging the way in which research has historically excluded and reduced them (Irzarry & Brown, 2014; Smith, 2012).



**Figure 2.** The dialectic action research cycle (adapted from Mills, 2014)

### **Coding**

Coding was a critical component of qualitative data analysis, because it afforded the researcher opportunities to engage in hermeneutic (or interpretive) transitional processes that moved the study from data collection to analysis (Saldaña, 2013). The cyclical and iterative process of coding required that identified patterns found in the data, which were based on both similarities and differences, were categorized into higher-level concepts or themes (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013). The organization of these data into codes, themes, content descriptions, and examples was maintained in codebooks (Saldaña, 2013).

Although coding has been commonly conceptualized as a process of emergence and discovery, it was also heavily connected to the epistemology of constructivism (Alder & Alder, 1987; Hedlund-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2013), which recognized that

knowledge was created within the individual (Guterman, 2006). Therefore, the practice of being conscious and self-reflective “with respect to one’s own epistemological lens and methodological approach” was essential to the coding process (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013, p. 2). This practice was fundamental in understanding and negotiating the preexisting theories that were held by researchers and, thus, inherently determined the trajectory of the research enterprise (Mason, 2002).

To determine the most appropriate coding methods, an inventory of the epistemological and theoretical frameworks, and research questions was essential. Accordingly, the method of eclectic coding was used because (a) it was epistemologically and theoretically aligned with this study and (b) it also allowed for a richness of data analyses and interpretations.

### **Supporting Scholarship**

A review of the literature revolving around the theme of decolonizing school space rendered studies primarily focused on teacher preparation programs. Although these studies were germane to the decolonization of schools, the purpose of this action research study required a narrower focus, more closely related to the reframing of the school space into one privileging the diverse cultural identities of students. Because the challenges encountered by Indigenous youth were not unique to those within the U.S. education system, international studies exploring the connections between the school space and cultural identity were included.

There has been growing interest in research examining the contributing role of the school space to Indigenous youth identities. However, many of these research studies revealed the negative effects resulting when schools have impose an assimilative agenda



on Indigenous cultural identities (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Spring, 2014; Teske & Nelson, 1974).

In a large study, the Manitoba branch of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) conducted an investigation of the connections between race, culture, and schooling that included over 150 Aboriginals, or Indigenous peoples of Canada, from inner city high schools of Winnipeg (Silver, Mallett, Greene, & Simard, 2002). The study was based on the interviews of 47 Aboriginal students, 50 students who did not graduate, 25 adult community members, and 10 teachers, seven of whom identified as Aboriginal. The findings indicated,

life experiences and cultural values of many Aboriginal students and their families differ significantly from what they experience in the schools, which are run largely by non-Aboriginal, middle class people for the purpose of advancing the values of the dominant culture. (Silver et al. 2002, p. 3)

Further, the participants' descriptions of their school experiences as typically negative underscored the need to challenge the hegemonic paradigm of the school system as inculcating Indigenous youth with a superior, dominant culture. The ramifications of the assimilative agenda espoused in the school space and the Indigenous youths' experiences of cultural dissonance often resulted in the youths' resistance and rejection of the school system, as demonstrated by the comparatively low graduation rates of Indigenous youth (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010; Freeman & Fox, 2005; Silver et al. 2002; U.S. Department of Education 2015a).

These findings were also reflected in a meta-analysis conducted by Deyhle and Swisher (1997) that covered 60 years of research studies *on* American Indian youth. The

meta-analysis revealed that before the 1960s, educational research studies focused on Euro-American centric intelligence and achievement tests. The results purportedly highlighted the inherent cultural and intellectual deficiencies of American Indian youth and communities. Moreover, findings from these early studies often blamed the failings of the education system on the Indigenous youth, which, in other words, “tended to buttress the assimilatory model by locating deficiencies in Indian students and families” (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997, p. 116). In sum, the studies revealed a strong cyclical relationship between the assimilative agenda of the school space, discriminatory research practices, and the systemic failing of Indigenous youth and communities (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). Because these research findings were not anomalous, as demonstrated by the cautionary reflective insights provided by Smith (2012) and the extensive analysis of biased, empirical social research of Gould (1996), the critical need to decolonize the school space was apparent.

Although numerous research studies have explored various methods to decolonize the school space, these approaches were encapsulated in the strategy of culturally responsive schooling (CRS). Castagno and Brayboy (2008) performed a meta-analysis of studies examining the connections between Indigenous cultural identities and school space conducted in the years between 1980 and 2007. The authors found benefits when CRS was integrated into the curriculum for Indigenous youth. CRS promoted equitable and quality education through the incorporation of the Indigenous languages and cultures of those represented in the student population and developed “culturally-healthy students and communities associated with that place” (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998, p. 2). However, because CRS strategies were often reduced to essentializations and

generalizations, changes to schools serving Indigenous youth were often unsustainable. As a result, the authors called for greater focus on developing sovereignty and self-determination and Indigenous epistemologies in future CRS work for Indigenous youth (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

In another quantitative study, Powers (2006) analyzed the survey data of 240 urban American Indian youth to compare the effects of culture-specific education programs with those of universally accepted effective practices. Examples of universal effective instructional practices were peer learning groups and parent support (Diperna, Volpe, & Elliot, 2002). The data were collected for the Indian Youth Resiliency Impact Study (IRIS). IRIS was a three-year study assessing the influence of a community-based American Indian youth development program in a large mid-western city (Powers, 2006).

Participants who completed the questionnaire were 240 American Indian youth who attended public schools, were primarily Ojibwa, Lakota, or Dakota, and ranged in age from 9 to 18 years. A little over half of the participants, 52%, were female and, although almost half, 42%, had moved residences within the past 12 months, 38 youth reported moving three or more times within the previous year. Additionally, 72% reported receiving subsidized school meals and 70% reported that a family member had been shot or stabbed (Powers, 2006).

The surveys administered to the youth were devised through “an extensive consensus-building process that drew from the existing literature on child development, risk and resiliency, cultural identification, and alcohol and substance use” (Powers, 2006). The items included some selected from the National American Indian Adolescent Health Survey and those developed by a team at the University of Minnesota, who

collaborated with the Indian Health Service. Additionally, various stakeholders from local schools and American Indian communities who also contributed to the development of items, and each questionnaire was pilot tested with a group of approximately 40 urban American Indian youth before being revised and administered to study participants. The items from the questionnaires were used to construct 13 scales: family income, cultural program, home support for learning, underachievement, instruction, home-school collaboration, school personnel supportiveness, motivation, safe and drug-free school, achievement, presence and participation, school completion, and cultural identity (Powers, 2006).

The questionnaires were administered during the 1996-1997 academic school year and throughout the following summer. The participants were surveyed either at school, at a community-based American Indian after-school program, or at a community center (Powers, 2006).

The results of the study suggested that culture-based programs influenced urban American Indian youth's educational outcomes by facilitating universal educational conditions that promoted school success for all students. Another finding showed some American Indian youth benefitted more than others from culture-based educational practices. The report noted, "Cultural programming was found to be more strongly associated with the school outcomes of students who most strongly identified with their Native culture" (Powers, 2006, p. 43). Further, a significant correlation was found between the participants' cultural identities and their participation in cultural programs. Although the causality of this relationship was not able to be determined, participants who reported being more highly oriented to their Indigeneity were more likely to

participate in the culture-based programs at school. Additionally, participants who reported being more highly oriented to their Indigeneity also reported greater intention to complete, be present, and participate in school. However, this finding was not associated with achievement (Powers, 2006).

An important finding in the study was the effect size of the school climate on the measured educational outcomes. School climate, for the purposes of this study, was defined as, “school personnel supportiveness and safe, drug-free schools” (Powers, 2006, p. 44). Perceived supportiveness of the school personnel was determined to be the major contributing factor to participants’ perceptions of their schools’ climates, which, in turn, had the largest effect on students’ educational outcomes.

As gleaned from the meta-analyses and the quantitative study, an important aspect of decolonizing the school space required meaningful integration of the Indigenous youths’ cultural identities and knowledge. However, as underscored by Castagno and Brayboy (2008), ensuring that Indigenous cultures were not essentialized or generalized was imperative to decolonizing work.

Although she was not working directly with American Indian youth, Eisenhart (2001) presented a framework for laboring through the muddle of culture. Working with the concept of culture can be challenging because of the combination of complexities inherent within culture, the limited amount of time afforded to the researcher to participate in various settings, and competing ethical purposes in bettering a situation. Eisenhart proposed that researchers engage with their participants via cultural productions, which were the various ways in which people interacted, physically created, made meaning, and practiced tradition (Willis, 1981), as well as drawing upon “funds of

knowledge” (Moll, Tapia, & Witmore, 1993). These intersections constituted “networks of activities and associations that intersect in particular times and spaces” such as school (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 21). Thus, taking the limited amount of time available for my study and the critical need to not essentialize the participants’ unique Indigeneity, I implemented Eisenhart’s proposed framework of determining how public symbols, the amalgamation of cultural production, and funds of knowledge, “are being contested and negotiated in the context of [Culture Club] and in other parts of the [participants’] lives” (p. 21).

To further operationalize the understandings rendered by CRS and Eisenhart’s framework within the context of Culture Club, a review of research studies examining the role of shared activities in shifting participant identities and facilitating the creation of a Third Space was also conducted. Although this review was not exclusively focused upon the cultural identities of Indigenous youth, it demonstrated a clear relation between reframing space and changing identities.

San Pedro (2013; 2017) examined the ways in which Indigenous cultures can be sustained through the creation of “sacred truth spaces” (San Pedro, 2017, p. 101). *Sacred truth spaces* were defined as spaces that pushed “the uncritical boundaries found when theorizing about the goals and outcomes of safe spaces in school” (San Pedro, 2017, p. 102).

A three-year longitudinal qualitative study was conducted in a Native American Literature in a southwest school. The 10 participants were a heterogamous group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students were selected using a dialogic process, which

required the participants' active choice to work with the researcher, in addition to being selected by the researcher.

The role of the researcher was that of participant observer in the classroom of Ms. Bee, a non-Indigenous, high school literature teacher. However, throughout the course of the study, San Pedro (2013) proposed new directions to the Native American Literature class, such as the need to discuss contemporary American Indian activists and how they work through injustices. The data collection instruments were comprised of recorded class sessions, field notes, classwork, and two sets of semi-structured interviews. To analyze the data, mind mapping and incident to incident coding were implemented.

Through the analysis of the San Pedro's (2013; 2017) documented observations, semi-structured interviews, discussions, and the participants' classwork, it was found that the participants gleaned four important "lessons" (2017, p. 112). The participants learned: culture is never static and is always transforming; identities are multiple and varied based on the sociocultural context; the amount of trust developed impacts the information shared with others; and

Hearing, seeing, and feeling the visual and verbal stories of others – and having their stories valued and validated by another – fosters a classroom community in which future discussions of race, colonization, and oppression can be discussed meaningfully and dialogically. (San Pedro, 2017, p. 112)

San Pedro's (2013; 2017) study shared many similarities with this action research study, such as the integration of CRS within southwest school context, Indigenous focus participants, and the objective of providing a sustaining and decolonizing space for the development of the participants' notions of identity and Indigeneity. Moreover, although

San Pedro did not discuss *sacred truth space* as comparable to Bhabha's (1994) and Soja's (1996) notions of Third Space, he was interested in bringing cultural issues into the classroom. Thus, while *sacred truth space* was not directly comparable to that of Bhabha's and Soja's notions of Third Space, their purposes were congruous, as both required safe, trusting spaces in which participants could vulnerably engage in critical identification, examination, negotiation, and reinscribing of hegemonic oppression to facilitate the development and sustainability of their cultural identities.

There were also some crucial differences in the studies, such as the fact that this action research study placed the researcher *in* the study as an active participant by requiring the researcher to identify a problem of practice and create an innovation to address the issue (Irzarry & Brown, 2014; Mills, 2014). San Pedro (2013; 2017), on the other hand, predominantly observed the interactions of Ms. Bee and the students in a pre-existing context, and did not actively devise the materials covered in the class. Additionally, San Pedro's study was conducted in a high school and during school hours. Whereas, Culture Club, was conducted after school hours in an elementary school.

Nonetheless, as San Pedro's (2013; 2017) study highlighted the pragmatic nexus of CRS within a Third Space, the careful consideration of the purpose, timing, and scope of his data collection instruments was implemented. Accordingly, this study employed two sets of semi-structured interviews and session recordings. However, due to the role as the researcher as being active participant in Culture Club, field notes were unable to be employed in this study. Thus, in lieu of field notes, a research journal was maintained to record observations and insights from the Culture Club sessions.



In another study, Glass (2012) explored the connection between identity and the physical and socialized space by drawing upon the phenomena of “scenes,” such as punk, hip-hop, and rave, in a Midwestern town for four months. The data collection instruments included ethnographic participant observations and field-notes and focused on 12 participants. The location in which the participants engaged in “doing scene” was that of a rented house referred to as Pirate House, which was described as “a precarious position by being simultaneously privileged and marginal” (Glass, 2012, p. 703).

Results showed that by rearranging the spatiality and decorum of Pirate House, the participants first made the house more identifiable as a “punk place” before hosting the culminating concert event (Glass, 2012, p. 704). Because scene spaces “have a loose and fluid nature to them, overlapping and merging with other social worlds,” the spaces also shape the identities of the members, including the power hierarchies within the group (Glass, 2012, p. 697). Through “doing scene,” the members simultaneously co-constructed their scene identities and contextualized the space of Pirate House through establishing, transforming, and managing the scene space (Glass, 2012, p. 709). Thus, the interactional and context-specific grounding of scenes, scene space, and the identities of participants was demonstrated.

This finding illuminated the connection of shared experiences in the development of cultural identities in Third Space. Further, the conceptualization of the scene spaces as being fluid and the result of merging other social spaces (Glass, 2012) directly related to Bhabha’s (1994) and Soja’s (1996) construction of Third Space, as the overlapping of identities (Bhabha, 1994) and knowledge from Firstspaces and Secondspaces (Soja, 1996) produced new identities and knowledge.

This interaction between identity and space was also demonstrated in the analysis of the Australian program of *Contact Inc* (Hunter, 2005). *Contact Inc* was initiated in 1989, and was founded on fundamental community cultural development principles of equity, access, participation, and empowerment. Most of its early work involved artistic collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and *Contact Inc* continued to purposefully integrate arts-based projects, specifically performing arts, for “peacebuilding” (Hunter, 2005, p. 140). Because arts-based projects facilitated the dialogue required to actively construct social change, these activities served as the focus of *Contact Inc*.

In 1991, *Contact Inc* initiated a 10-day creative development workshop with Murri and non-Murri artists named the *Meetings/Dandiiri*. This program was designed to create “The Third Place, the meeting/dandiiri place...where we can maintain the values of both cultures, where both can inform a meeting on common ground” (Hunter, 2005, p. 142). This Third Place was to be a negotiated, new space comprised of cross-cultural dialogue. Although it was similar to the work of Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1996) in its conceptualization of a Third Place as fostering cultural multiplicity and the cultivation of social change, the notion of Third Place was developed independently from Third Space (Hunter, 2005).

Initially, both *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* programs struggled with the essentialization of the participants’ cultural identities by combining “two cultures into one in ‘the third place’ using *bits* of both in a single whole [didn’t] seem to work” (Hunter, 2005, p. 144). To navigate this challenge, the Third Place was conceptualized as simply a meeting place to share cultural knowledge. As a result, questions were

understood to be a fundamental component of the Third Place and constructive dialogue was encouraged (Hunter, 2005).

To facilitate the dialogue required to spark social change, the participants of *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* engaged in arts-based projects, such as creating hip hop music and dance. Importantly, the integration of arts-based projects “was a significant turning point because it became evident that the group’s cross-cultural dialogue and difficulties in forging intercultural collaboration were assisted by their united attention to an external event” (Hunter, 2005, p. 146). Further, the sharing of these ideas facilitated the “traditional cultural dance choreographies to merge with contemporary forms to create a fresh blend of physical performance” (Hunter, 2005, p. 152).

Because the frameworks of *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* programs were adopted into different geographic and cultural contexts, the importance of forming connections to Indigenous communities proved to be critical to the programs (Hunter, 2005). Accordingly, each branch of the *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* purposefully forged relationships with Indigenous community members to determine the trajectories of the programs. Additionally, when implementing the program in new geographic and cultural contexts, two phases were identified and integrated to successfully provide Third Places for the local Indigenous peoples (Hunter, 2005).

The first phase of the project required the establishment of a safe *intracultural* space. The participants met in their own cultural groups to explore their experiences and understandings of peace, conflict, culture, and honor, which were suggested terms from the project’s community reference group (Hunter, 2005). To create a safe space, the

*Contact Inc* facilitators collaborated with youth and community workers to provide multi-arts activities to foster discussion about the participants' culture's values of the terms, as well as their perceptions of other cultures' values and belief systems. Because workshop leaders came from similar backgrounds as the participants, they served as mentors and role models to develop and demonstrate expectations for the workshops (Hunter, 2005). The second phase of the project required participants to share their multi-arts projects with the other cultural groups to produce meaningful dialogue and create a Third Place (Hunter, 2005).

Whenever conflict emerged from the cultural dissonance experienced by each group, the workshop leaders did not enact a 'zero-tolerance' policy. Conflict was understood as a means of making meaning. Accordingly, participants were able to discuss and disagree based on their disparate values and belief systems in order to delve into the multifarious elements of culture (Hunter, 2005).

In sum, engaging in the creation of a Third Place through the collaborative arts-based project transformed the participants' space from one of social and economic marginalization to one in which their shifting cultural identities were privileged. Thus, the creation of the Third Place facilitated the primary objective of *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* to "peacebuild" by moving beyond the differences possessed by participants, to create new knowledge and identities (Hunter, 2005).

Fanian (2015) carried out another research study that demonstrated the importance of collaborative, arts-based activities in creating a Third Space when he focused on the *Ko'ts'iihtla ("We Light the Fire") Project* (Fanian, 2015). The *Ko'ts'iihtla Project* endeavored to develop a Tlicho community and youth-led framework to

strengthen resiliency through youth engagement in the arts. The objective of the study was to evaluate the creative arts program with respect to empowering youth to investigate community issues and devise solutions with the arts using a mixed-method approach. The data instruments were observational field-notes, focus groups, questionnaires, and reflective practice to analyze the program. In total, four youth and five facilitators participated in the study (Fanian, 2015).

In the program, the participants were encouraged to share stories, identify issues within their communities, and adopt leadership roles in completing their arts-based projects. Some of the projects in which the participants engaged were collaboratively painting a mural, creating a music video, and producing a short film. The participants' engagement in the collaborative and cultural exploration activities facilitated discussion focused on facets of identity that were not necessarily related to their arts-based projects. Some of these topics were concerns, hopes, and visions for the futures of themselves, as well as their families and communities (Fanian, 2015). Through their engagement in the arts-based projects, the participants were able to share their thoughts in a safe space, which resulted in the creation of new identities and knowledge.

The study found that the youth reported gaining confidence, in addition to new art and interpersonal skills. The youth considered the program to be engaging, enjoyable, and culturally relevant, and expressed their interest in continuing to work in the arts to share their insights with others in their communities. Ultimately, results showed “engagement and participation in the arts have the potential to build resiliency, form relationships, and stimulate discussions for community change amongst youth living in

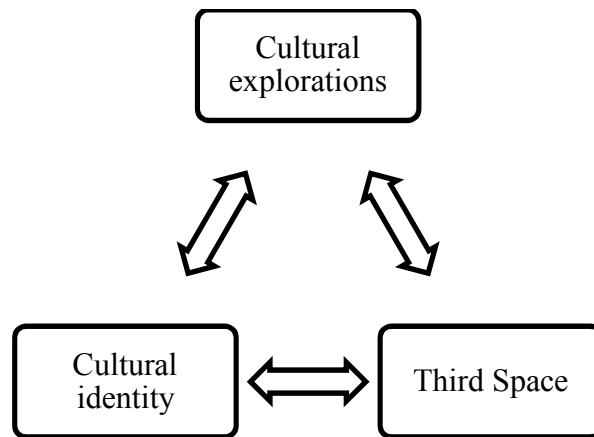
the North” (Fanian, 2015, para. 5). These findings suggested collaborative, arts-based activities facilitated the development of participants’ identities.

Taken together, the review of research studies provided evidence that suggested the need to decolonize the school space (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Powers, 2006; Spring, 2014; Teske & Nelson, 1974) because of the interactional relationship between spatiality and identity (Glass, 2012). Thus, reframing the school space by authentically integrating and privileging the cultural identities of Indigenous youth was imperative to the development of “culturally-healthy students and communities” (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998, p. 2). The approaches highlighted in this research review were culturally responsive schooling, in which participants’ specific cultural languages and knowledges were incorporated into the school space (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Powers, 2006) and arts-based projects that facilitated the required dialogue for the development of cultural identity and Third Space (Fanian, 2015; Glass, 2012; Hunter, 2005).

### **Culture Club**

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the connections between the collaborative, cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, the participants’ cultural identities, and the creation of a Third Space, which served as a decolonizing framework for this Indigenous program conducted within a school space. The focus of the decolonizing framework required the operationalized combination of culturally responsive schooling (CRS) and collaborative, arts-based projects. Accordingly, the participants engaged in elements of CRS by participating in a research project in which participants brainstormed facets of culture, selected cultural interests specific to their

Indigeneity, and interviewed familial cultural leaders to attain cultural knowledge before sharing their learning through arts-based projects. Although the trajectory of Culture Club was revised to include more collaborative and cultural exploration, arts-based projects, the facilitation of the participants' discussion of their specific cultural identities, knowledge, and experiences was paramount. The different components of Culture Club have been illustrated in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3.** The different components of Culture Club

The decolonizing framework operationalized in Culture Club was aligned with the epistemology of constructionism and the theoretical perspectives of post-colonialism and Indigenous methodology to foster understanding and challenging of the hegemonic, assimilative agenda of the school space (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Silver et al, 2002; Smith, 2012). Thus, reframing the physical and socialized space of the classroom into a Third Space was crucial to privilege, explore, and shift the participants' cultural identities (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). To further facilitate the development of the Third Space, AR was integrated to ensure a greater balance of power, which was critical to both post-colonial theory and Indigenous methodology (Irzarry & Brown, 2014; Mills, 2014).

To maintain fidelity with the epistemological and theoretical foundations of this study, a qualitative research design was selected to collect data and eclectic coding was used to analyze data. The qualitative research design was determined to be most appropriate because it allowed the researcher to address the research questions with a small focal population. Like San Pedro's (2013; 2017) study, which also explored Indigenous cultural identity within the school context *sacred truth space* that was analogous to the Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) framework devised for this study, similar data collection instruments were employed. These tools were two sets of semi-structured interviews and session recordings. However, his role as the researcher placed him as a participant-observer of another teacher's Native American Literature class, which allowed him the opportunity to maintain field notes. Because my role as the researcher was that of active participant, I was unable to employ field notes. Thus, I modified the data collection instrument of field notes to that of a research journal.

Eclectic coding was selected because it allowed the researcher to use two or more compatible coding methods to analyze the data. The specific coding strategies of open, descriptive, and in vivo coding were chosen to explore the constructs of cultural identity in RQ1 and Third Space in RQ2. With regard to RQ2, the construct of Third Space was two-fold, as it required the determination of how the Culture Club activities facilitated a Third Space, as well as if Culture Club satisfied all of the theoretically-deduced criteria required for creating a Third Space.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological requirements of a study before describing in great detail the specific



frameworks employed for this study. I also included supporting scholarship that explored different facets of cultural identity, as well as the research that supported creation of a Third Space. I then discussed how the theoretical frameworks and supporting scholarship converged to inform the innovation of Culture Club. In this chapter, I briefly alluded to the study's methods, which have been explicated in much greater detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHOD

*Indigenous peoples' interests, knowledge and experiences must be at the center of research methodologies and construction of knowledge about Indigenous peoples.*

Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1999, p. 119)

As Rigney (1999) claimed, studies with Indigenous populations must have been purposefully focused and constructed to validate and empower Indigeneity. In accordance with this call for action and transparency, I have extensively detailed all facets of this study. In this chapter, I have described the research design, context, role of researcher, participants, and innovation. Additionally, I have described the data collection procedure, data analysis procedure, and triangulation and validity methods. The chapter has been concluded with a summary to highlight the most pivotal facets of this research study.

#### **Research Design**

Consistent with Rigney's (1999) call for research to be grounded in the interests, knowledge, and experiences of Indigenous peoples, this qualitative action research (AR) study focused on the innovation of Culture Club, an after-school club devoted to exploring Indigenous cultures within a school context in an urban public school the southwestern US. In Culture Club, sixth-grade American Indian students engaged in various cultural exploration activities, ranging from research and interviews to arts-based projects. To determine the influence of Culture Club on the participants' cultural identities and the creation of a Third Space, phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured

interviews of participants, recorded Culture Club sessions, and a research journal served as data sources (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015, p. 207). Three phases constituted the research project. To ensure alignment of the action research design with the epistemological framework of this study, the typical verbiage of “pre-intervention”, “intervention”, and “post-intervention” have been replaced with “phase 1”, “phase 2”, and phase 3, respectively. An outline of the three phases and the planned action research procedures have been displayed Table 1 below.

Table 1  
*Research Plan*

<b>Intervention Phases</b>	<b>Action Research Procedures</b>
<b>Phase 1 – Pre- Intervention</b>	<p data-bbox="716 877 1166 909"><b>Pre-Intervention Data Collection</b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 919 1276 1024" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collected data on qualifying student-participants</li> <li>• Gathered parent permission forms</li> <li>• Assembled student assent forms</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="789 1066 1092 1098"><b>Initial Data Collection</b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 1108 1317 1136" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted semi-structured interviews with students</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2 – During the Intervention</b>	<p data-bbox="854 1182 1024 1213"><b>Intervention</b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 1224 1065 1329" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted Culture Club</li> <li>• Recorded Culture Club sessions</li> <li>• Maintained Research Journal</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3 – Post- Intervention</b>	<p data-bbox="711 1371 1170 1402"><b>Post-Intervention Data Collection</b></p> <ul data-bbox="610 1413 1317 1440" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted semi-structured interviews with students</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="602 1482 1276 1587"><b>Analysis of Pre- and Post-Intervention Data</b> <i>Qualitative Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews, Culture Club Sessions, and Research Journal</i></p> <ul data-bbox="610 1598 1219 1696" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev.com program</li> <li>• Thematic and constant comparative analysis method</li> </ul>

## **Culture Club Context**

The setting of this AR study was Title I elementary school located within a large southwest metropolitan region of the United States. The school served 780 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade, with 58% of the students identified as Hispanic/Latino; 20% as African American; 12% as Caucasian; 5% as American Indian; 2% as Asian; 2% as Two or More Races, and less than 1% as Pacific Islander (School Data, 2016). Within the sixth-grade, seven students were officially identified and documented as having tribal affiliations.

Although the student population attending the elementary school was very diverse, the administrators and staff were predominantly Caucasian (School Data, 2016). Further, the demographics of the community did not reflect those of the school's student population. Within the community, 65.9% identified as Caucasian; 40.8% as Hispanic/Latino; 6.5% as African American; 3.6% as Two or More Races; 3.2% as Asian; 2.2% as American Indian; 0.2% as Pacific Islander (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

However, because the school served American Indian students, a local tribal community provided an Indian Student Services coordinator. This individual worked as a liaison between the school and the local tribal community to address the educational challenges and successes of all the American Indian students attending the school. The coordinator was also responsible for providing traditionally-based counseling and guidance for American Indian students struggling with issues at home and at school.

## **Role of the Researcher**

Because I had served the sixth-grade English language arts (ELA) teacher for five years within the context in which I conducted this AR study, I possessed an “insider”

positionality (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Throughout my five years, not only had I taught some of the participants' older siblings and cousins but, due to the high teacher attrition rate, my persistence and dedication to the students and community was known throughout the school. Consequently, many of the students knew of me before entering my classroom as sixth-grade students.

Additionally, my years of teaching at the school allowed me substantial time to recognize the consistent absence of Indigenous cultural inclusion within the school context. Because I had previously taught in the heart of the Navajo Nation as a sixth-grade writing teacher for three years, I had learned to harness and integrate many environmental, cultural, and linguistic "living stones" to include, validate, and develop American Indian students' cultural identities and academic knowledge (Cajete, 1994, p. 29). Some of these approaches consisted of hosting Indigenous community advocates to speak to classes regarding community issues, actively and authentically relating lessons to environmental and community context, developing strong, respectful relationships with the students, devising community activism units, integrating art and storying as consistent components of classroom lessons (Cajete, 1994), and both learning and engaging in cultural and linguistic practices myself when invited.

Within the context of the Navajo Nation, finding these rich community resources and opportunities was fairly uncomplicated. However, within the context in which this AR study was conducted, seeking these experiences was much more difficult. For instance, of the several community leaders and museum directors I invited to speak to the Culture Club members, only one committed.

Moreover, my “insider” position with the participants was two-fold, not only because of my work within the school context, but also because of my connection with one of the participants, Martha. I was not only her ELA teacher, but while living and teaching in the heart of the Navajo Nation, I had also regularly travelled to her hometown. She had consistently brought up our common connection to the Navajo Nation as a point of interest and solidarity.

Switching my role from sixth-grade ELA teacher to that of a facilitator and fellow participant within Culture Club for the purposes of this AR study was a challenge to which I was continually responding. Nevertheless, I worked to enable and empower the participants to actively participate in Culture Club, listened to the participants’ feedback, and facilitated group conversations and activities. I also collected and analyzed the data for the study by way of audio recordings of the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, Culture Club sessions, and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, and maintained a research journal.

## **Participants**

After receiving approval from Arizona State University’s (ASU) Institutional Review Board (IRB), the next step was to identify potential participants. The pool of possible participants was selected based on convenience sampling. This process consisted of obtaining demographic data from Synergy, a district-wide demographic and attendance program, as well as from lists provided by the school district’s Student Services Department and Indian Student Services. During the second week of school, the purpose and participant criteria of Culture Club was announced to all three homerooms in the

sixth-grade to ensure that American Indian students who were not included in a district-wide tribal list would be informed they were still eligible to attend Culture Club.

In total, there were seven potential participants who were identified through official documentation and 10 potential participants who were self-identified. These 17 students were provided parental consent forms to take home to be read and signed by their parents. See Appendix A for the consent form. Three students never returned their parental consent forms despite daily reminders and the reprinting of the forms, and two of the self-selected students stated that they discovered from their parents, they were not American Indian. Although these students were still interested in joining Culture Club, for the purposes of this study, they were not allowed to participate in the Club.

Upon receiving the parental consent forms, the students were then requested to meet to receive and review an assent form. See Appendix B for the assent form. During the meetings, as I read the assent forms aloud to the students, the students were encouraged to ask questions regarding the agreement. Afterward, the students signed the assent forms and immediately returned them. A total of 12 students signed and submitted their assent forms, resulting in a 100% return rate.

All eligible students who participated in Culture Club were awarded extra credit for the assignments and projects completed during the sessions. However, to ensure equality between the participants and non-participants, those who did not participate in Culture Club were provided similar extra credit assignments in class and awarded the same number of points. Further, students who participated in Culture Club were not offered the same extra credit assignments or points in their regular classes to prevent their earning double points.

Of the 12 students eligible to attend Culture Club, only eight students attended the first session. Throughout the course of the 20 sessions, participation was characterized by different combinations of participants, erratic attendance, and attrition. However, a core group of seven participants who regularly attended Culture Club was ultimately formed. This group attended an average of 16 sessions out of 20, which reflected an 80% attendance rate.

The core group was comprised of four boys and three girls who were 11-12 years old. One male participant was dually identified as gifted and emotionally disabled (ED). Further, the only pre-existing relationship between the participants was between one male and one female who were cousins. The remaining participants indicated that although they talked to these other students before the first Culture Club session, they would not have considered each other to be friends.

Six of the seven participants lived on a neighboring reservation, whereas one did not. The tribes represented by the seven participants were Piipaash, Pima, Navajo, Yoeme, and Cherokee. Although six of the seven regularly attending participants were tribally enrolled, one participant was not tribally enrolled. However, because only five participants were selected to participate in the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews due to their tribal enrollment status and ability to commit to consistently attend Culture Club throughout the semester, only these five participants will be discussed for the purposes of this study.

Two males and three females were selected for both the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews. These students were selected due to their official enrollment with tribes and indication, or willingness to commit to consistent attendance of Culture



Club because there were no foreseeable scheduling conflicts. However, of the five participants selected to complete the pre- and post-innovation interviews, only four were able to complete both sets of interviews. To maintain the participants' anonymity, each participant who completed the interviews was assigned a pseudonym.

**Selection of focus participants.** Of the 12 students who returned both the parental consent and student assent forms, only seven of the participants were also identified as "Native American" in the district-wide Synergy program, Student Services Department, or the Indian Students Services. Of the seven students officially recognized as being American Indian, two indicated that they were not able to participate in Culture Club due to their commitments to other sports and clubs. Accordingly, the remaining five students, two males and three females, were selected for the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews. Thus, the five focal participants were selected from a convenience sampling of the eligible sixth-grade American Indian students from three different homerooms. As noted previously, only four completed both interviews.

A description of each of the five focal participants has been provided below.

**Juanita.** Juanita was a 12-year-old female who lived on a neighboring reservation with her parents and one sibling. She identified as being Pima. Juanita consistently attended Culture Club except on days that she had to attend a church club off-campus. On those days, Juanita would inform me when she would not be able to come to the club sessions. As Juanita attended Culture Club sessions 1-3 and 6-20, she had an attendance rate of 90% (18/20). Juanita participated in the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews.

**Martha.** Martha was a 12-year-old female who lived off-reservation land with her parents and two siblings. She identified as Navajo and had previously lived in the Navajo Nation with her family. Martha was identified as having a specific learning disability (SLD) in both reading and mathematics, which appeared to make comprehending and articulating ideas difficult for her. Martha was generally very quiet in every context in which I observed her except in Culture Club. In Culture Club, Martha would bring up topics and share ideas. Martha attended Culture Club sessions 1-5, 7-10, 13-16, and 18-20, thus, she had an attendance rate of 80% (16/20). Martha participated in the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews.

**Charley.** Charley was a 12-year-old male who lived on a neighboring reservation with his father, one sibling, and his grandmother. He identified as being Piipaash. His cousin was Danielle. Charley attended the first Culture Club session and consistently participated in all but one session, in which he was absent from school due to illness. As Charley attended Culture Club sessions 1-14 and 16-20, he had an attendance rate of 95% (19/20). Charley participated in the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews.

**Danielle.** Danielle was a 12-year-old female who lived in the neighboring reservation with her parents. She identified as Navajo and her cousin, Charley, also attended Culture Club. Danielle did not initially attend Culture Club, although she had submitted her consent and assent forms, until Charley invited her. After her cousin's invitation, she attended Culture Club each day that she was present in school. However, because her school attendance was inconsistent, it affected the frequency with which she also attended Culture Club. Danielle attended Culture Club sessions 3-6, 12-14, 17, 18,

and 20, thus, she had an attendance rate of 50% (10/20). Danielle participated in the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews.

**Jesus.** Jesus was a 12-year-old male who lived on a neighboring reservation with his mother. He identified as being Pima. Jesus has a dual diagnosis of emotional disability and gifted. Jesus attended Culture Club sessions 1-4, 6, 8, 10, 12-17, 19, and 20, therefore, he had an attendance rate of 75% (15/20). Jesus moved before the end of Culture Club, therefore, he only completed the phase 1, semi-structured interview.

### **Innovation**

Although Culture Club was originally only scheduled on Tuesdays, the participants requested that Culture Club also be held on Thursdays. However, because many obligatory faculty meetings were held on Thursdays, Culture Club was often rescheduled for Mondays and Wednesdays as well. Ultimately, Culture Club was held one to three times a week for approximately 60 minutes in my ELA classroom. This impromptu scheduling resulted in 20 sessions, which were distributed over 15 weeks. To record the attendance of each participant, a log was provided for each student. See Appendix F.

**Materials.** Based on the activities scheduled for Culture Club, a variety of materials were required. These materials ranged from Chromebooks and recording devices to pottery, and materials for making fry-bread and jewelry. A description of each of these materials has been included below.

**Chromebooks.** The first, 11 Culture Club sessions were devoted to the participants creating interview questions, research questions, research plans, and initial research about their own areas of cultural inquiry. As a result, access to technology was

required. For participants to technologically interact with Google Classroom created specifically for Culture Club, Google Drive, and internet search engines, they used their school-provided Chromebooks.

***Recording devices.*** The interviews the participants conducted with family members regarding their Indigenous cultures were recorded on individual recording USB devices independently purchased for the participants by the researcher. To record the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, Culture Club sessions and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, I used Voice Recorder by TapMedia Ltd, a free audio recording application for iPhones.

***Pottery.*** For the pottery project, two packs of self-drying white clay, paintbrushes and paints were purchased from a local art store. The paper plates in which the participants mixed their paints and the plastic cups in which the participants cleaned their brushes were previously found in the classroom.

***Fry-bread.*** All of the ingredients, including the vegetable oil, baking powder, Blue Bird flour – the specific type of flour used in making fry-bread, honey, and powdered sugar were all purchased from a local grocery store. The portable heating element was purchased online and the cooking utensils were brought-in from my house.

***Jewelry.*** To make the jewelry, twine, glass beads, wood beads, and faux turquoise were all purchased by the researcher.

**Original plan.** A tentative Culture Club schedule was devised to pragmatically enact the three tenets of action research (AR): work toward social transformation; collaboration and power-sharing in research; and honor the experience and knowledge of the participants (Reason, 1994). Accordingly, this schedule focused on the participants’

own initial research in areas of their own cultural interests to drive arts-based projects of their own choice to demonstrate their learning and personal growth. This tentative outline, including the session in which Culture Club was revamped based on the interests and recommendations of the participants, has been displayed in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Outline of First Eleven Sessions of Culture Club*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Required Resources</b>
1-5	Sept.	1-5	Revisit purpose of Culture Club and discuss tentative plan	Ensure that everyone understands the objectives and trajectory of Culture Club	N/A
			Brainstorm facets of culture	Determine what comprises culture	N/A
			Brainstorm different arts-based projects	Prompt initial interest in arts-based projects	N/A
			Select a facet of culture that is interesting and at least two possible arts-based projects to demonstrate learning	Determine area of cultural interest and spark conceptual understanding between arts-based projects and learning	Chromebook – Google Classroom for Culture Club and Google Documents
			Determine family member to interview and begin preparing interview questions	Demonstrate that cultural knowledge is transmitted in families and develop skills necessary to access cultural knowledge	Chromebook – Google Classroom for Culture Club and Google Documents
6-9	Sept.- Oct.	6-10	Devise interview questions based	Demonstrate that cultural knowledge is	Chromebook – Google

			on cultural interest and practice interview protocol	transmitted in families and develop skills necessary to access cultural knowledge	Classroom for Culture Club and Google Documents
10	Nov.	11	Revamping of Culture Club's activities as discussed by participants – more arts-based research	Change the trajectory of Culture Club based on the interests and needs of the participants	N/A

**Revised plan.** AR has required iterative reflection and revision (Mills, 2014; Reason, 1994). As a result, throughout the course of Culture Club, revisions were made to the scheduled topics and activities based on the input of the participants. These revisions included the way in which the participants interacted with cultural topics, such as exploring topics for shorter amounts of time, sharing the learning experience by interacting more with all the members of Culture Club instead of researching their own topics individually, and physically interacting with different cultural components. Thus, beginning with session 12, the trajectory of Culture Club shifted. The schedule for the revised trajectory of Culture Club has been presented in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Outline of Revised Plan for Culture Club*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Required Resources</b>
11-12	Nov.	12-15	Short video on pottery-making and overview and discussion of traditional pottery	Understand how and why pottery was made as well as how different tribes integrated different	Projector for short video on traditional pottery and pictures of traditional

			represented by the different tribes in Culture Club	techniques, colors, styles, etc.	pottery as represented by those in Culture Club
			Pottery-making	Experience and create pottery by integrating as many traditional techniques as possible	Clay, paint, and paintbrushes
13	Nov.	16	Guest speaker on the importance of learning and maintaining Indigenous languages	Understand the importance of and spark interest in learning native languages	Projector for guest speaker's presentation
13	Dec.	17	Finish-pottery and discussion of guest speaker's talk	Experience and create pottery by integrating as many traditional techniques as possible and understand the importance of and spark interest in learning native languages	Projector for pictures of traditional pottery as represented by those in Culture Club
14	Dec.	18	Fry-bread-making – <i>postponed</i> due to missing ingredient	Experience and create fry-bread by integrating as many traditional techniques as possible	Portable grill, small skillet, utensils, and ingredients
			Documentary on Indigenous peoples of the Southwest	Learn about the rich and complex history and way of living of, specifically, the Anasazi	Projector for documentary
13	Dec.	19	Short videos on fry-bread which highlight the history and how to make it	Understand how and why fry-bread was made	Projector for short videos
			Fry-bread-making	Experience and create fry-bread by	Portable grill, small

15	Dec.	20	Short videos on traditional jewelry-making which highlight the history and how to make it	integrating as many traditional techniques as possible Understand how and why jewelry was made	skillet, utensils, and ingredients Projector for short videos
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In addition to altering the content of Culture Club, the physical space of the classroom was altered. The participants repositioned the desks from rows into a large circle by turning their desks inward. I also placed myself within the circumference of the circle as a participant, not a leader. We also reviewed the norms at the beginning of each session encouraged students to behave and speak respectfully before transitioning into the activities. The agendas also included a “looking forward” item, which provided a glimpse into the next session’s topic and activity. In respect to the hands-on, collaborative projects, I attempted to honor the unique Indigenous cultures represented by the Culture Club members by always including photos and videos of each of the participants’ tribal affiliations.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data were collected before, during, and after the innovation of Culture Club using the Voice Recorder by TapMedia Ltd, a free audio recording application for iPhones. To gather data prior to Culture Club, I recorded the five focal participants’ phase 1, semi-structured interviews. During the innovation phase, five Culture Club sessions were recorded and a research journal entry was completed at the end of each Club



session. After the conclusion of Culture Club, four of the five focal participants' completed the recorded phase 3, semi-structured interview. Once the recordings were sent to Rev.com to be externally transcribed, the original recordings were destroyed, and the transcripts were secured on a personal computer with password protection.

**Phase 1, semi-structured interviews.** The semi-structured interview questions asked before the first session of Culture Club were devised to explore the students' self-reported cultural identity and cultural experiences in school. The phase 1, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five participants. The phase 1, semi-structured interviews were held after school in the classroom.

The 11 questions were developed by the researcher based on the conceptual understanding of culture and the theoretically-deduced criteria required for creating a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). The questions revolving around the participants' cultural identities inquired about their cultural practices, beliefs, and interests. Three examples of questions grounded in these areas were, "What are some things that you do that are important to your culture?", "What is something in your culture that you're proud about?", and "What is something you want to learn more about in your culture?" See Appendix A for the complete set of interview questions.

The questions regarding Third Space theory explored their cultural experiences as American Indian youth in a public school. A sampling of questions exploring cultural Third Space experiences in school were, "Do you feel comfortable talking about or sharing your culture at school?," "What would make you feel more comfortable in talking about or sharing your culture at school?," and "If your culture were included more often

in school, would the way in which you see school change?” For a complete list of interview questions, see Appendix A.

To eliminate bias from the participants sharing their interview experiences with each other, for both days, I had the students report to another classroom for a mathematics tutoring class when they were not interviewing with me. Also, in talking with the teachers hosting the mathematics tutoring session, I informed them of my plan and the fact that the students should not be seated near each other when in their rooms. Depending on the depth of the responses the participants provided, the duration of the interviews ranged from 15-45 minutes in length.

**Culture Club session recordings.** Culture Club sessions were audio recorded to document the interactions and discussions of the participants to glean insights into their cultural identities and the creation of a Third Space. These recordings ranged in time from 45 to 55 minutes in length, depending on when the participants were released to attend Culture Club from their last period classes.

For a variety of reasons, including not placing the recording devices in appropriate locations to sufficiently record conversations, flukes in which the Voice Recorder would only record a few minutes of the sessions, and running out of memory on the iPhone to run the Voice Recorder, only five sessions were recorded: sessions 1, 3, 7, 15, and 19. Juanita and Martha were present for all recorded sessions whereas Charley was absent from session 15, Jesus missed session 7, and Danielle did not attend any of the five sessions. Fortunately, these recorded sessions were distributed across the entirety of Culture Club sessions.

**Research journal.** An electronic research journal was devised to record observations and reflections from the Culture Club sessions. Because I was an active participant in Culture Club, I spent 15-40 minutes writing entries into my password-protected, Google Document research journal entitled “Culture Club Reflections” to save details that would otherwise have been lost throughout the 20 sessions of Culture Club. These research journal entries were completed after the conclusion of Culture Club session, once the participants had left for the day. Throughout the course of Culture Club sessions, the length of the research journal entries dramatically increased as the participants and I grew more comfortable with Culture Club.

**Phase 3, semi-structured interviews.** The semi-structured interview questions asked at the conclusion of Culture Club were devised to explore the students’ self-reported cultural identities and experiences in Culture Club. Because there were after-school buses every Monday-Thursday, I scheduled three participants to stay after school one day and two to stay after school the following week.

The 23 questions on the phase 3, semi-structured interviews were a combination of some of the phase 1, semi-structured interviews and some new questions. All 23 questions were written by the researcher based on the conceptual understanding of culture and the theoretically-deduced criteria required for creating a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996).

Questions exploring possible changes in the participants’ cultural identities were: “What are some things that you do that are important to your culture?,” “Have you learned more about yourself as a Native American by participating in Culture Club?,” and

“Have you learned more about Native American culture by participating in Culture Club?” See Appendix A for these and other questions.

A sampling of questions that explored the connection between Culture Club, the participants’ cultural identities, and the creation of a Third Space were: “Has Culture Club made you think or feel differently about your Native culture?” “How comfortable or safe did you feel in exploring your native culture in Culture Club?” and “After completing Culture Club, do you think that you are more comfortable or willing to participate in more Native American traditions?” See Appendix A for the complete set of questions.

As I had done in the phase 1, semi-structured interview, I tried to eliminate bias from the participants sharing their interview experiences with each other. I had the students report to another classroom for a mathematics tutoring class when they were not participating in the interview with me. Also, in talking with the teachers hosting the mathematics tutoring session, I informed them of my plan and the fact that the students should not be seated near each other when in their rooms.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

To explore the connections between the constructs of collaborative, cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, cultural identity, and the creation of a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1994), an eclectic approach to coding (explained in next paragraph) was selected to analyze the data from the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, recorded Culture Club sessions, and phase 3, semi-structured interviews. The research journal, however, served as a reflective tool to provide insight when needed throughout the analysis process. To analyze these data collected during the phase 1, semi-structured

interviews, Culture Club recordings, and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, Microsoft Word was used to color-code and organize the data into categories.

**Explanation of eclectic coding choice.** Because RQ1 and RQ2 allowed for an exploration analysis of the data to examine the constructs of the Culture Club activities, cultural identity, and Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996), an eclectic coding approach was chosen. Eclectic coding “employs a select and compatible combination of two or more first cycle coding methods” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 188). The specific coding strategies employed for the data analysis of this study were open, descriptive, and in vivo coding. With respect to exploring the effectiveness of creating a Third Space based on the innovation, instances that were reflective of the four theoretically-deduced criteria—creating new knowledge, reclaiming and reinscribing notions of identity and school space, creating new and hybrid identities, and developing inclusive perspectives—were identified and categorized into one of the four criterion categories using this eclectic coding approach.

Open coding was selected “to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). Descriptive coding was chosen to assign basic, descriptive labels to data to inventory their topics (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). In vivo coding “honors and prioritizes the participants’ voices” by employing the exact words or phrases from the data as codes (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). In vivo coding was selected because it was epistemologically and theoretically aligned with the study, as well as, allowing rich understanding to be gleaned from the data. All of these coding strategies were considered inductive coding because, although they were framed by the constructs of Culture Club activities, cultural identity, and Third

Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996), these coding strategies allowed for the emergence of codes.

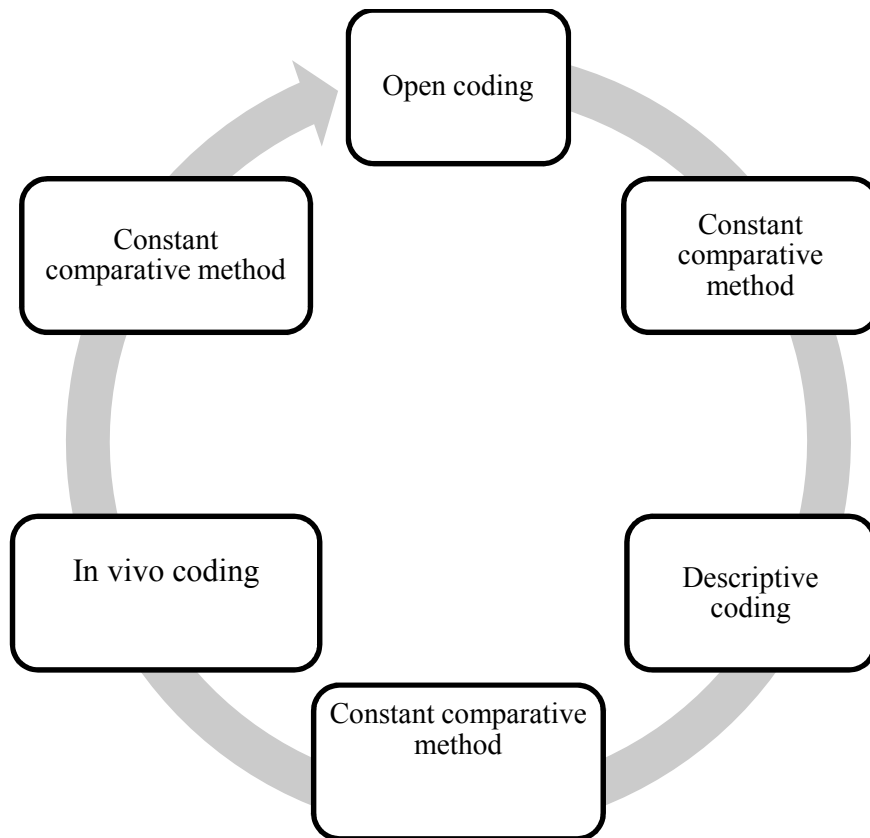
It was important to note that although open, descriptive, and in vivo coding have been associated with grounded theory, the research questions did not require the creation of a theory based on the data. These coding techniques were employed to aid in the interpretation of the data without interest in generating a grounded theory.

**First cycle of coding.** Implementing the systematic and iterative, but fluid process of eclectic coding approaches enabled movement between both individual responses and sets of data to better conceptualize, make meaning, and interpret the participants' experiences, interactions, and thoughts. To answer RQ1 and RQ2, open, descriptive, and in vivo coding were implemented to explore the emergent codes comprising the constructs of Culture Club activities, cultural identity, and Third Space.

I began the analysis of data with an initial read of the material and line-by-line pre-coding to identify inceptive observations (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Hedlund-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). This strategy allowed me to focus on recording my preliminary observations and thoughts of the data.

Throughout the first cycle of coding, data from the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews and the recorded Culture Club sessions were consistently analyzed in relation to emerging and established codes. The iterative process of the constant comparative method, which required the continual comparison, modification, and amalgamation of codes when categorizing new data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Saldaña, 2013), was iteratively implemented throughout the first cycle of coding. This method facilitated a greater conceptualization of the participants' cultural

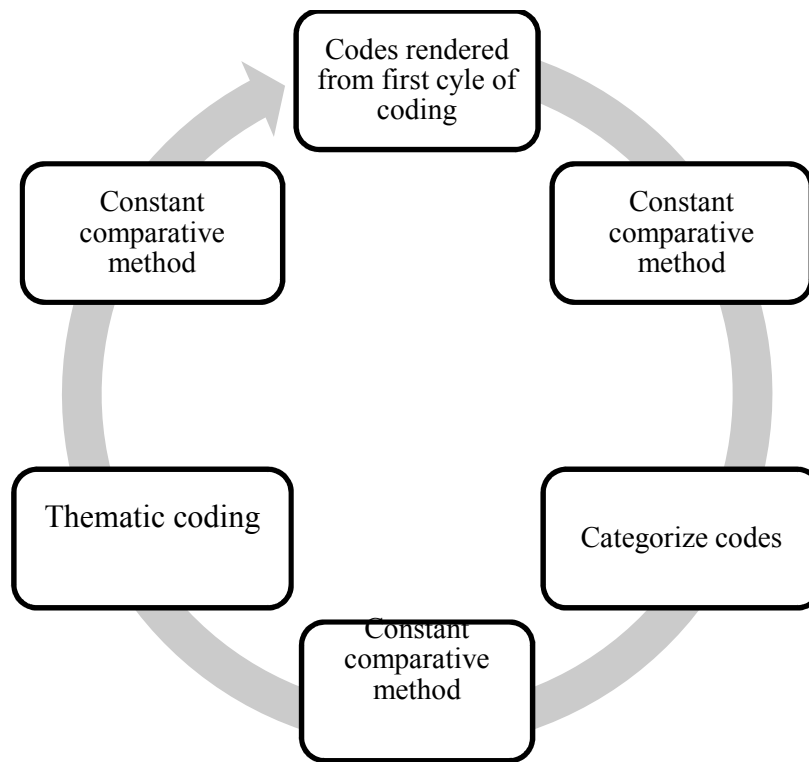
identities in relation to their experiences in Culture Club and the creation of a Third Space. Eventually, through the constant comparative method, the individual codes were organized into conceptual categories. After completing several iterations of eclectic coding and conceptual categorization, when I had exhausted the possibilities of organizing the data, I moved into the second cycle of coding. Displayed in Figure 4 is the iterative first cycle of coding.



**Figure 4.** An outline of the iterative first cycle of coding

**Second cycle of coding.** For this inductive coding process, I implemented the constant comparative method. Using this method, the coding categories from the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews and recorded Culture Club sessions were compared and collapsed into central or core categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser &

Strauss, 1967; Saldaña, 2013). This approach to coding, which has been referred to as thematic coding required the identification of core categories that function as a larger construct (Saldaña, 2013). Thus, the themes identified in this study represented the central phenomena within the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and provided grounding for the interpretations generated (inductive) or substantiated (deductive) from the data analysis (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). To ensure theoretical saturation, I conducted final readings of the data, in which no new insights were gleaned. Displayed in Figure 5 was the depiction of the iterative second cycle coding, which continued until theoretical saturation was achieved.



**Figure 5.** An outline of the iterative second cycle of coding



**Codes.** For RQ1 and RQ2, the eclectic approaches of open, descriptive, and in vivo coding were implemented around the constructs of the Culture Club activities, cultural identities, and Third Space. These coding processes have been described more fully in the following section.

***Coding for RQ1 and RQ2.*** Four codes emerged from the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, recorded Culture Club sessions, and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, which were analyzed to address RQ1, which focused on the constructs of Culture Club activities and cultural identity. The four codes were: cultural knowledge, connections between family and culture, cultural engagement, and descriptions of indigeneity. When analyzing the data to address RQ2, which focused on the constructs of Culture Club activities and the facilitation of a Third Space, the following codes emerged: descriptions of Culture Club experiences and safety in Culture Club.

Additionally, for RQ2 four theoretically-deduced criteria including (a) creating new knowledge; (b) reclaiming and reinscribing notions of identity and school space, (c) creating hybrid or new identities, and (d) developing more inclusive perspectives, served as overarching constructs for which I implemented open, descriptive, and in vivo coding to identify and categorize data to explore the extent to which these criteria were evident in the Culture Club.

After compiling all of the data from both the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews and completing pre-coding, I first pre-coded the data to familiarize myself and recorded initial thoughts and observations. I then conducted the first cycle of coding in which I implemented open, descriptive, and in vivo coding strategies. I identified and grouped the data that described facets of the participants' cultural identity and the

theoretically-deduced criteria of Third Space. When possible, I used the participants' words to describe the emergent codes. For instance, in regard to RQ 1, the in vivo code of "my Native culture" was used to categorize data describing the participants' cultural identities. For RQ2, the in vivo code of "I learned now how to do something" was used to organize data that described the participants' collaboration in learning, which addressed is the first theoretically-deduced criteria of creation of new knowledge.

As I entered into the second cycle of coding, I reorganized the categories of data into those representative of the most common responses before implementing the constant comparison method and organizing the coding categories into those that conceptually represented all the data contained within it. With respect to RQ1, within the in vivo code of "my Native culture," all the data indicated that the participants were unsure of their cultural identities. However, through the constant comparison method, I narrowed the data down to one representative quote that summarized the concepts included in all of the data categorized under the same in vivo code. For RQ2, through employing the constant comparison method for the in vivo code of "I learned now how to do something," one conversation in which the participants engaged in collaborative learning was selected as representative, as it encapsulated the nuances of the remaining data. Finally, I then organized the coding categories into conceptual categories and implemented the constant comparative method to generate themes. For instance, for RQ1, all the data that described different facets of cultural identity were thematically described by the theme of cultural identity. In regard to RQ2, the data that described components of Third Space were described by the themes of Third Space, creation of new knowledge,

reclaim and reinscribe notions of identity and school space, creation of new or hybrid identities, and inclusion of perspectives.

### **Triangulation and Validity**

Demonstrating validity within qualitative research is imperative, and ensured by employing specific procedures such as triangulation of data, presentation of negative or discrepant information, and member checking, which were all purposefully employed to establish validity within this study (Creswell, 2014). Triangulation of data required more than one data collection instrument to be utilized to comprehensively develop the understanding of phenomena, and was premised on the notion that “no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations” (Patton, 1999, p. 1192). Thus, because different data sets may have yielded disparate results, understanding these inconsistencies offered deeper insight into the data collection instrument and the phenomenon explored (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 1999). Further, presenting discrepant data has been used to build validity because it highlighted the natural dichotomies found within rich data, rendering the findings more realistic and valid (Creswell, 2014). Finally, conducting member-checks was imperative (Creswell; Hedlund-de Witt, 2013; Saldaña, 2013), especially in working with marginalized populations (Denzin, 2008). After transcribing and interpreting the data, four of the five participants were asked to review their responses to both the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews as well as those of the Culture Club sessions. Member-checking was not possible for Jesus because he moved before the conclusion of the study. None of the participants added, changed, or articulated dissent to any of the transcriptions or interpretations from either the phase 1

and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, or the audio recordings of the five Culture Club sessions.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided information about the research design and context for the study, the role of researcher, participants, and detailed information about the Culture Club innovation. Further, I described in great detail the data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures, which provided the framework for interpreting the qualitative data from the interviews and the Culture Club recorded sessions along with the means for establish validity of the interpretations of those data, which have been reported as findings in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

*Research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise  
but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs  
in a set of political and social conditions.*

~ Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 5)

Smith's (2012) description of research as part of political and social conditions has reinforced its cogency and inherent complexities in challenging hegemonic practices. Throughout the research process, the participants appeared to be very open and honest about their experiences in Culture Club. Due to their candid responses, shared experiences, and reflections, critical insights were gleaned about the relation between the Culture Club activities, cultural identity, and Third Space.

In this chapter, the analysis and findings have been presented on how participation in Culture Club changed participants' cultural identities and the ways in which the cultural exploration activities in Culture Club facilitated the creation of a Third Space. I have included findings appropriate to respond to Research Questions 1 and 2 along with quotes that support theme-related components, from which themes and assertions were derived based on the analysis of the qualitative data.

Findings from the qualitative data were based on the analysis of four data sources including (a) five phase 1, semi-structured interviews, (b) four phase 3, semi-structured interviews, (c) recordings from five Culture Club sessions, and (d) my research journal entries. Throughout the presentation of the findings, all participants' names were protected by using pseudonyms. Although all of the participants were identified by

pseudonyms in the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interview responses, participant pseudonyms were included in the recorded Culture Club sessions only when I was certain of their identities. Findings were analyzed and presented relative to the specific research questions.

### **Findings for Research Question 1**

**Research question 1. In what ways did the cultural exploration facilitated in Culture Club shift the awareness and attitudes of the sixth-grade American Indian students' cultural identities?**

The corresponding theme-related components, themes, and assertion derived from the data have been captured in Table 4. See Table 4 on the next page. The purpose of Table 4 was to provide a brief summary of these findings. The data supporting the theme-related components, the themes, and the assertion have been included in the description of the findings in the following section.

Table 4

*Assertion 1 – Theme, Theme-Related Components, and Assertion for RQ1*

Theme-Related Components	Theme	Assertion
Participants deepened their cultural knowledge.	Cultural identity	Engaging in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club increased the participants’ cultural identity in the areas of cultural knowledge, connection between family and culture, and willingness to participate in Indigenous cultural experiences outside of Culture Club. However, participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous culture.
Participants developed a better understanding of the connection between family and culture.	Cultural identity	Engaging in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club increased the participants’ cultural identity in the areas of cultural knowledge, connection between family and culture, and willingness to participate in Indigenous cultural experiences outside of Culture Club. However, participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous culture.
Participants were more willing or comfortable to engage in Indigenous cultural experiences and traditions outside of Culture Club.	Cultural identity	Engaging in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club increased the participants’ cultural identity in the areas of cultural knowledge, connection between family and culture, and willingness to participate in Indigenous cultural experiences outside of Culture Club. However, participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous culture.
Participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous culture.	Cultural identity	Engaging in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club increased the participants’ cultural identity in the areas of cultural knowledge, connection between family and culture, and willingness to participate in Indigenous cultural experiences outside of Culture Club. However, participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous culture.

**Assertion 1. Engaging in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club increased the participants’ cultural identity in the areas of cultural knowledge, understanding the connection of family and culture, and willingness or comfort in participating in cultural traditions outside of Culture Club. However, the participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous**

**culture.** Some of the codes that substantiated the construct of cultural identity were the descriptive codes such as “familial connection to Native culture,” and the in vivo code “My Native culture.” As the descriptive and in vivo codes were compared, modified, and merged with other codes, four theme-related components that comprised the cultural identity construct emerged.

*Participants deepened their cultural knowledge.* During both the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants responded to “Tell me about your Native culture”, and “What is something in your culture that you’re proud about?” The phase 1, semi-structured interviews revealed all five participants expressed uncertainty about their tribal identity(ies) and cultural knowledge.

The typical responses were articulated in the statements such as “Like what tribe I’m in? I’m in the Pima tribe. I think Navajo, I’m not sure. I’d have to ask my grandmother” (Charley, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016). Similarly, Danielle commented, “I don’t know much about it” (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016). And Jesus echoed these comments with, “I don’t know [what I’m proud of in my Native culture]” (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016).

The only participant who provided her tribal affiliation and articulated why she was proud to be an American Indian was Martha. She stated, “I am proud that I am Navajo because Natives are very interesting. They help the people, whoever gone on this area, and fed them and taught them like Pocahontas did” (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016). Thus, although the participants generally expressed uncertainty regarding their knowledge of their cultural identities, one participant expressed a sense of pride in being able to identify as American Indian.



Although the participants' responses describing cultural knowledge were varied, the comments demonstrated limited breadth. Most participants' responses were exemplified by the statements of "I'm not really sure [what I know about my Native culture] because I don't really think a lot about it until it's brought up. Once, like, every year [in the Life Skills program]" (Charley, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016). A similar response came from Danielle when she stated, "I don't really know much about it yet" (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016). In these statements, the participants explained their cultural knowledge was limited because they did not discuss their Indigenous cultures frequently. However, as revealed in Danielle's statement, "I don't really know much about it yet" (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016), was her interest in learning more about her Indigeneity.

Although most of the participants demonstrated a finite amount of cultural knowledge, a few participants were able to articulate greater understanding. For instance, Juanita explained,

My Native culture, what I didn't know at all, this is my first time [talking about it], so I didn't know that we were first farmers, and then we lived in northern Arizona and southern S-o-r-a-r, something like that. We built a lot of things, and our weapons would be like knives and everything. Where we would live would be like where there are reptiles, like snakes and everything. We were located at Salt River. (Juanita, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016)

Although Charley initially stated that he did not know much about his Indigenous culture, when prompted by a follow-up question, he shared that "[My grandmother] says things like how England took over America while Native American people were living

there” (Charley, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016). These phase 1, semi-structured interview responses highlight the participants’ limited Indigenous cultural knowledge.

Throughout the course of Culture Club, the participants engaged in multiple cultural exploration activities to increase their cultural knowledge. One of the initial activities of Culture Club required participants to identify cultural interests and devise interview questions to ask a familial cultural leader. Martha interviewed her father about different traditional Navajo dances. After listening to her father’s interview, the participants were encouraged to ask Martha questions regarding the interview experience and other relevant interests. During the discussion following a participants’ question, the following exchange occurred.

Martha: I don’t know how my [tribe dances]. I think, I can, but the only kind of dance I know is [the] shawl dance one.

Student Two: Do it.

Martha: No.

Student Two: Do it, do it! Teach us how to do it!

Martha: There’s this dance, I want to show you guys, and you have to move around and make sure your arms are, like, in the air, and the clothing must, like, twirl around while you’re dancing.

Student Three: You can do it.

Martha: I saw there’s a contest, there’s contests where you can doing that. If the one person dances faster, they win.

Ms. Roy: Have you competed in one?

Martha: No, but my mom said she had an auntie or something who was a dancer, she does [Native] things like that, and they never compete in it. (Culture Club session 7, October 6, 2016)

In this conversation, the participants asked Martha for more information and a demonstration of the shawl dance. This discussion highlighted the participants' cultural interest and the process of acquiring more cultural knowledge because of their engagement in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club.

After the conclusion of Culture Club, at the post-interviews, all four participants demonstrated greater cultural awareness when they responded to questions like "Tell me about your Native culture" and "What is something in your culture that you're proud about?" One participant stated,

[From the interview with my cultural leader, I learned that] we used wool, I think, to wrap the babies in to keep them warm. We would [also] find these rocks and find other rocks and shape them into a knife and spears for our weapons. (Juanita, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

Other participants indicated they had learned "some of my Native language when we were doing research [online]" (Juanita, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016) and "how they make different kinds of jewelry [and] how they make fry-bread" (Charley, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). Martha answered, "I didn't know what pottery is, so that was surprising to me ... Then I learned that [pottery] was [also] from different cultures and that was very interesting to me" (phase 3, semi-structured interviews, December 19, 2016). In all of these examples, participants cited

specific cultural exploration activities from Culture Club as the context in which they learned more about their cultural information.

Taken together, evidence for an increase in the participants' cultural knowledge was demonstrated in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews. The inclusion of specific information in the participants' responses indicated greater cultural knowledge. Further, participants cited the cultural exploration activities featured in Culture Club as the impetus for their growth in knowledge, which highlighted the critical role of Culture Club in increasing the participants' cultural knowledge.

***Participants developed a better understanding of the connection between family and culture.*** To determine participants' current conception of who they considered as a familial cultural leader, in the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked, "Who is someone you go to, to learn more about your culture?" The responses were represented in two powerful illustrative examples. First, Danielle claimed,

[From my grandma, I have learned] not that much. She's still teaching me. I don't get to see my grandma that much either, because I've been going to school that much. So, yeah, I don't get to see her that much. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August, 31, 2016)

Similarly, Juanita suggested, "My dad. No, [my dad doesn't try to teach me things about my culture on his own]. I ask him and then he responds. He just never comes and teaches me" (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016).

These responses were indicative of the experiences for four of the five participants who asked family members, such as parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, for cultural information. Because familial cultural leaders did not often

share cultural knowledge due to physical distance or without prompting by participants, generally participants obtained very limited cultural information from their families.

The one participant who indicated a different familial situation and connection to culture was Jesus. Jesus revealed he received most of his cultural information from his former Life Skills instructor. He stated,

[Someone I would go to for cultural information], I have to say, is the old teacher we had last year [for Life Skills]. He doesn't come to the school no more, so we can't do that class no more. So, I'm going to have to get most of my stuff from here, from your class. I'm guessing it'll have to be you, since he left. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016)

When asked why he does not ask family for cultural information, Jesus responded,

What I mean is that my mom, my grandparents, they don't really like to talk about my tribe, or anything about my culture. Probably because we like to do all our stuff we do in modern day. Your phones, your PlayStations, all that we used to get. We never talk about [our Native culture] because of the modern stuff. We just get distracted by the modern stuff. We just get distracted by all the fun stuff we have today, and never think about our culture. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016)

Although Jesus was interested in Indigenous cultures, he was also aware that he must seek cultural information from sources outside of his family.

Because the primary objective of Culture Club was to encourage participants to actively engage in learning about their own Indigenous cultures through cultural exploration activities, my role was that of a fellow participant and facilitator of cultural

exploration, not an Indigenous cultural expert. Accordingly, one of the initial activities in Culture Club required the participants to solicit information from sources beyond the Internet. Rather than have the participants simply research cultural interests, the participants were asked to identify a family or community member they considered a cultural leader, and devise interview questions regarding their cultural interests to ask the cultural leaders.

After practicing proper interviewing protocol, each participant was supplied an individual voice recorder on which to record the interview. Although all of the participants created the interview questions, only three of the five participants completed the activity. Further, included in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews for this study, two of the four participants' perceptions of the connection between culture and family deepened. For both Juanita and Martha, they realized that their interview questions would have been better addressed by their grandmothers.

Juanita did not share her recorded interview in Culture Club, but when she was asked during the phase 3, semi-structured interview, about who she identified as a cultural leader, she stated,

My grandma [is someone I would ask about my Native culture] because my father doesn't really know about his tribe because he's not that old. My nana, she knows way more. When we were interviewing our Native parents, he had asked my grandma about some of the questions. Yup, [my interview was on child-rearing]. Well, [for the interview], my father asked [my grandma] and then she got back with my father and then we interviewed. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

Martha's experience was similar because her father also did not possess the cultural knowledge required to address her interview questions. She explained,

We're learning more information about my tribe and about what I choose my topic was. It was dancing. My father's like, he bare even know. After I done [the interview], I'm like, "oh, sorry, I could have done something else." He's like, "You could have done spears and gods or something." [I told him], "I'm sorry. I done this because I really liked it." He's like, "Go and do your chores." Then we done that. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

It was important to note that Martha had a very strong relationship with her father, so the tone of her recollection should be read as jovial and teasing, nothing more.

In my research journal, I recorded my observations and thoughts from the seventh session of Culture Club. I wrote that when listening to Martha's recorded interview in Culture Club, "What was especially interesting was the fact that [Martha's father] had really emphasized gender roles in Navajo culture. He indicated that Martha should ask her grandmother about dancing, not him, because of traditional gender roles" (research journal, October 6, 2016). Although Martha did not mention her father's suggestions to ask her grandmother the interview questions, his recommendation illuminated his own connection to culture and family, and his purposeful strengthening of Martha's understanding of the cultural and familial connection. Further, when we listened to Martha's interview in Culture Club, she stated,

I should have asked my grandma [the interview questions] instead, because my father was like, every time I asked him a question about dancing, he barely knew

it. But, I could have asked my grandma because she knows more in that world of things. I could ask my grandma. (Culture Club session 7, October 6, 2016)

Through the cultural interview activity, Juanita's and Martha's understanding of familial cultural leaders expanded to other members of the family beyond the immediate family, specifically to grandmothers. This conceptual expansion deepened their understanding of the connection between culture and family.

During the fry bread activity, another example that highlighted increased connections felt by Martha was reflected when she stated,

I remember that I was a little girl when I was in Chinle, my grandpa gave me the dough. I just ate it. That was the only part I ever remembered. I never remember that a long time. I was six years old when I was at—I cannot remember when I was six years old. Some parts, I have memories of me being six or five. It's kind of weird. Doing the fry bread, also I got to spend time with my family and remember—I remember after when we buried my aunt we had fry bread. That made me feel better. My father just had a bad time but, still [making fry bread in Culture Club] made me feel like happy because I could remember those and also remembering my aunt. It made me feel happy because I'm glad that we went, goes in a better place. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

In this memory, Martha revealed a deeper understanding of the connection between family and culture by participating in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club. This realization was sparked by the fry-bread making activity in which she shared her recollection of making fry-bread with her family in remembrance of her aunt's passing.



Thus, the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, specifically the cultural interviews and fry-bread activities, increased participants' understanding of the connection between family and culture. The cultural interviews expanded, at least two of the participants' conceptions of who they considered to be cultural leaders in their families, and the fry-bread activity sparked distant memories of spending time with relatives in the heart of the Navajo Nation for one participant.

*Participants were more willing or comfortable to engage in Indigenous cultural experiences and traditions outside of Culture Club.* Because the operationalized focus of Culture Club was the cultural exploration activities, participants were required to engage in multiple cultural experiences. To glimpse a snapshot of the participants experiences, and willingness or comfort in participating in cultural traditions, the participants were asked, "What are some things that you do that are important to your culture?" in their phase 1, semi-structured interviews. The participants indicated that they all had limited experiences engaging in cultural practices.

Most participants' responses were summarized by the representative statement of, "I don't really know [what we do that is important to my Native culture]" (Jesus, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016). Two of the five participants revealed that they possessed no experience or did not know if they engaged in any cultural practices. However, three of the five participants indicated that they did have some experiences with cultural traditions.

Juanita shared, "I don't know [what I do that's important to my culture]" (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016). Jesus's explained the cause of his cultural nonparticipation when he stated, "I don't really know [what we do that is important to my

culture because] when I go home, I usually play with my phone, or watch TV” (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016). Thus, two of the participants reported no recollection of participating in cultural practices or traditions. Moreover, Jesus stated that his nonparticipation was due to other priorities.

Initially, Charley claimed, “I don’t really do anythings that are important because I never really do anything. I don’t really do stuff that’s Native a lot” (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016). When asked why not, he indicated that, “I don’t really do much [Native practices] because it’s only me and my three brothers that are Native. I have a baby sister, but she’s from another side of my family [and] I live in the reservation [but, there are not a lot of events that happen]” (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016). Later in the interview, Charley recalled a cultural event in which he participated. When asked to describe his experience, he stated,

I’d say four years ago [was the last time I did something that I would consider part of Native American culture]. They got all the Native American people that lived in the reservation and they talked about the importance of being Native American. They talked about things that were related to us and afterwards ... I’m not sure what they did afterwards because I don’t remember. I was about six or seven years old. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016)

Martha also described experiences in which she participated in cultural practices. She maintained,

[Although] I don’t really know about my culture ... I pray when I eat dinner. My dad does something that I don’t really know how to do, but he draws Native American art, but also we have this little stack, smoky thing that we put on us so

we don't get nightmares. That's kind of a Native American thing, and that's all.  
(phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016)

Danielle shared,

[My grandpa] teaches me how to beat [on the drum], he teaches me how to make mutton, which is cheap (not that fun). Yeah. That's all I know from my grandpa. I don't get to see my grandma that much either, because I've been going to school that much, so yeah, I don't get to see him that much. [However,] my grandma hasn't been teaching me yet our Native Culture, but I sometimes make beads, like those little beads, yeah, I sometimes make those, and she also teaches me how to sew. She's still teaching me how to make moccasins. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016)

Although Charley, Martha, and Danielle described cultural practices in which they were involved, they indicated their participation was infrequent. In Martha's case, although she admitted she did not "really know about my culture," she engaged in some cultural traditions without really knowing how to do them (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016). This inherent contradiction demonstrates the infrequency with which she participated in the cultural example she provided.

Danielle provided many examples of her cultural engagement, such as learning to drum, preparing mutton, and sewing moccasins, but she also shared that she inconsistently visited her grandmother, who was her familial cultural leader. Because Danielle's grandparents were the primary cultural leaders in her family, their physical separation impeded her engagement in cultural practices.

To summarize the results of the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, three participants collectively recalled a few cultural experiences and two participants had not engaged in Indigenous cultural practices before Culture Club. Although the participants' responses did not explicitly indicate willingness or comfort in participating in cultural events, they did suggest a limited inclination to engage in such events.

Throughout the course of Culture Club, participants engaged in several cultural exploration activities, including making fry-bread, pottery, and jewelry. Their participation resulted in many discussions revealing previous participation in culturally related experiences. One such example was described in the exchange that occurred between two participants during a Culture Club meeting.

Student One: [The fry bread] looks familiar, like I ate it before.

Student Two: Looks like a freaking covered up pancakes.

Student One: Tastes like pancake.

Student Two: Tastes better than pancake. No, [I have not had fry bread before]

Student One: Yeah. I had [fry bread] with beans and rice.

Student Two: Me too.

Student One: Peas. (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

In this instance, one participant described the fry-bread as appearing familiar, which resulted in other participants sharing their own observations and experiences, including eating fry-bread before the Culture Club. This conversation highlighted the varied, but limited experiences in participating in cultural practices or traditions.

After the conclusion of Culture Club, in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked, "What are some things that you do that are important to your

culture?” The participants’ responses indicated none of the participants had engaged in any new cultural practices or traditions outside of Culture Club.

Most of the participants responses were represented in the following typical statement, “No, [I have not participated in any traditions since Culture Club]” (Charley, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). However, Martha shared that she continued to participate in the same cultural traditions that occurred prior to her participation in Culture Club. When asked about the practice, Martha stated, “We have those little smoky things, but it’s not actually smoke, but it’s smoke. I think that’s classified. I’m not supposed to tell you about it” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016).

Although Martha did not necessarily demonstrate a greater understanding of the “smoky things” tradition, her continued practice and developed awareness of sacred knowledge was indicative of a developing cultural consciousness. Thus, one out of the four participants who completed the phase 3, semi-structured interviews continued her engagement in cultural traditions after the conclusion of Culture Club.

At the post-innovation interviews, all four participants indicated they were more comfortable or willing to engage in cultural practices or traditions when they were asked, “After completing Culture Club, do you think that you are more or less comfortable or willing to participate in more Native American traditions?” Participants’ responses were summarized well by the statement offered by Juanita when she said,

Yeah, I would feel more comfortable [participating in Native American traditions outside of Culture Club or school] because, since I experienced it with my friends

and my teacher, I think it would be fun with my family that is actually Native”  
(phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016).

This statement demonstrated the participants’ increased willingness and comfort in engaging in cultural experiences outside of Culture Club. Further, it provided some limited evidence about the role played by the cultural exploration activities and the safe space of Culture Club in developing the participants’ efficacy for engaging in cultural practices and traditions.

Aside from Martha’s continued engagement in Indigenous traditions, none of the participants had engaged in any other cultural practices outside of Culture Club. However, all of the participants reported an increased comfort and willingness to participate in cultural practices and traditions outside of Culture Club. Further, it was apparent the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club influenced the participants’ self-reported efficacy for engaging in cultural practices and traditions.

***Participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous cultures.*** Throughout Culture Club, the participants engaged in an array of cultural exploration activities, ranging from a research project to arts-based projects. Each of these activities was designed to increase participants’ cultural identities.

To explore changes in the participants’ perceptions of their Indigeneity, in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked, “Did doing the projects make you think or feel differently about your Native culture?” None of the participants’ reported any changes in their perceptions of their cultural identities due to their engagement in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club.

Specifically, Juanita remarked,

No, [doing the projects did not make me think or feel differently about my Native culture because] you said I was pretty good at it and I felt like I had it in me and I can do it more and I can get better at it. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

Juanita articulated that her natural aptitude revealed by her participation in the cultural exploration activities did not change her perceptions of her cultural identity because she felt that she did not acquire new abilities.

On the other hand, Charley felt much more strongly about the influence of the cultural activities. He stated,

No, [doing the activities in Culture Club did not make me think or feel differently about my Native culture] because – it just seems like something I think everyone would do once in a while. Anyone could've made jewelry like we did; like wooden beads and stuff like that. I'm pretty sure everyone would do that. [What I mean is that] people are already interested in stuff like that; making jewelry like that. I don't feel really different about making that. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

When asked about the other cultural exploration projects, Charley responded,

No, [making fry-bread or having the guest speaker come speak to us did not change how I think or feel about my Native culture] because I'm pretty sure most people eat fry-bread. There are already people out there that the professor speaks to already and – what are the other two? Different kinds of people can make pottery. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

Thus, Charley contended that because the culturally exploration activities were not specific to his cultural identity, they had no impact on his perceptions of his indigeneity.

However, throughout the duration of Culture Club, the participants engaged in conversations revolving around cultural identity. One such exchange demonstrating the variety of perspectives held by the participants regarding their connections to their Indigeneity was recorded in Session 15, as the participants ate their freshly made fry-bread. The discussion began when one participant stated,

Student One: We're eating Native food, you guys. We're Native, we're true Natives.

Student Two: No we're not.

Student One: Yeah, we are.

Student Three: I'm half.

Student One: We don't go outside and hunt animals. That's true Native.

Student Two: No, dude.

Student Three: I'll go hunting. Be savage.

Student Two: Savage? It's not savage. That's not the way.

Student One: True Native is through your blood. (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

In this excerpt, one participant initially conveyed excitement about eating the fry-bread because of the increased feelings of being connected to Indigenous cultures. As the other participants joined the conversation, an exploration of what it meant to be a "true Native" ensued, but concluded with a participant stating that being connected to



Indigenous cultures was inherited because it was “through your blood” (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016).

In the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, participants answered the question of, “After completing Culture Club, how connected do you feel to your Native culture?” Some of the participants’ initial responses revealed stronger feelings of connection to their Indigeneity but, all of the participants ultimately demonstrated minimal or no changes in their connections to Indigenous cultures.

Charley conveyed no feelings of connectivity to this indigeneity; nevertheless, his response was very poignant. He stated, “The only reason I remember [that I am American Indian] is because I come here [to Culture Club]” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). His statement underscored the significance of Culture Club in privileging Indigenous cultures. Charley’s inability to translate his cultural identity into other spaces outside of Culture Club was disconcerting. He later explained,

[My connection to my Native culture] is pretty much the same [as before Culture Club]. I don’t feel connected at all, but then I learn more stuff. But, then, it just makes me feel like I’m not really that much connected or I’m not connected. [In other words,] I don’t feel not connected to it or connected to it. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

Although Charley initially described his connection to his cultural identity as being entirely absent, save for participating in Culture Club, he did clarify that his connectivity to his Indigeneity was maintained or neutral.

Juanita's response also initially indicated a maintained perception of and connection to her Indigeneity. She described her connection as understanding more about herself and her ability to continue with cultural practices. She explained,

I don't think [my connection to my Native culture] has changed [since participating in Culture Club] because I knew I was Native. But yeah, I think it kind of did change, because I know more about me and I can do those things again, like, to keep it alive, maybe. I feel like I'm getting there [in being more connected to my Native culture] because I feel like I have a lot to learn still. Like, I'm taking baby steps on what I know about my tribe and what there is to know about my tribe and why it is going endangered. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

Juanita's initial description of the connection to her Indigeneity was maintained after the conclusion of Culture Club but, she immediately altered to a greater sense of connection. Her connections were grounded in the newly acquired knowledge of herself as an American Indian and her ability to contribute to the survival of her Indigenous culture. However, she also acknowledged that she must continue to learn about her Indigeneity and the cause of Indigenous cultural endangerment.

Similarly, Danielle also indicated that her perception of and connection to her cultural identity was also maintained after her participation in Culture Club. She stated, "No, it's still the same, like how I want to know more about it" (phase 3, semi-structured interview December 20, 2016). Thus, the connectivity to her indigeneity remained the same but, she demonstrated an increased interest in learning more about it.

Martha was the only participant who initially described her connection to her Indigeneity as very strong. She stated,

I felt connected to my tribe and also to my culture, not culture, but my Native American part because I never – I always had these different parts of me that made me my Native American part, that made me connected to that one. It was so fun. I had memories of me being Native [in Culture Club], like doing jewelry and fry-bread, and speaking Native American language. It was fun. I felt really connected to it. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

Nonetheless, later in the post-interview, Martha retracted her initially strong statement. She explained that she actually “felt really close [to my Native culture], not that close, but an inch” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 2016). This change in connectivity may have occurred because, as Martha was first recalling the activities of Culture Club, she was reminded of the fun. However, once Martha began to focus solely on her feelings of connections to her Indigenous culture, she realized that her sense of connection had only increased incrementally.

Thus, of the four participants who completed the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, only Juanita and Martha indicated increased changes in their feelings of connection to their Indigeneity. However, both participants ultimately modified their reported feelings of connection from maintained to increased and greatly increased to minimally increased, respectively. Though Danielle indicated that her connection to her Indigeneity was maintained, she also reported, like Juanita, that she was interested in continuing to learn more about her Indigenous culture. Charley, on the other hand, reported that his connection to his Indigeneity was maintained and Culture Club was the

reason why he remembered being American Indian. Thus, participants' overall feelings of connectivity to their Indigeneity varied.

***RQ1 findings summary.*** Overall, participants' engagement in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club increased their cultural knowledge. The articulation of, "I have a lot more to learn still" (Juanita, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016) revealed an expanded knowledge-base that allowed for greater insight into different cultural components yet to be explored. Further, the cultural exploration activities also increased the participants' understanding of the connection between family and culture as well as their willingness or comfort for engaging in cultural practices outside of Culture Club. However, the activities did not contribute to an increased feeling of connection to cultural identity for all participants. Thus, the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club contributed to multiple facets of the participants' cultural identity, but not necessarily to their feelings of being connected to their Indigenous culture.

## **Findings for Research Question 2**

**Research question 2: In what ways did the shared experiences of cultural exploration in Culture Club facilitate the creation of a Third Space?**

The theme-related components, theme, and assertion derived from the data for RQ2 have been presented in Table 5 to provide an overview of the data. The data corresponding to the theme-related components, theme, and assertion were included in the description of the findings pertaining to this research question.

Table 5

*Assertions 2 and 3– Themes, Theme-Related Components, and Assertions for RQ2*

Theme-Related Components	Themes	Assertions
<p>Participants found the cultural exploration activities fun, interesting, and collaborative.</p> <p>Participants felt safe in exploring and sharing their cultural identities in Culture Club.</p>	<p>Third Space</p>	<p>Participants enjoyed the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, and experienced feelings of safety in exploring and sharing their cultural identities.</p>
<p>Participants generated new knowledge by collaboratively learning and employing knowledge from their Secondspace of home to navigate the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club.</p> <p>Participants shared Culture Club experiences with family to connect and elicit new knowledge.</p> <p>Participants developed specific cultural interests based on the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club.</p>	<p>Creation of new knowledge</p>	<p>The Culture Club activities facilitated the creation of a Third Space.</p>

Participants challenged hegemonic notions of school and culture in Culture Club.

Reclaim and reinscribe

Participants' perceptions of school and cultural identity varied after participating in Culture Club.

Participants engaged in conversations that demonstrated the analysis of their identities.

Creation of hybrid or new identities

Participants were more comfortable in sharing their cultural identities with students who were not Culture Club members.

Participants' interactions contributed to a positive social environment within Culture Club.

Development of inclusive perspectives/Inclusivity of multiplicities

Participants worked through differences and embraced the diversity represented within Culture Club.

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**Assertion 2. Participants enjoyed the culturally exploration activities of Culture Club, and experienced feelings of safety in exploring and sharing their**

**cultural identities.** The descriptive codes that emerged were “sense of community,” “self-expression,” and “safety in sharing culture” for the theme of Third Space. Through the employment of the constant comparative method, the descriptive codes were compared, modified, and collapsed until reaching theoretical saturation and the theme-related components emerged.

*Participants found the cultural exploration activities fun, interesting, and collaborative.* To glean the participants’ general perceptions of the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants responded to “Tell me about Culture Club,” “What were your favorite projects?,” and “What was the most special or meaningful project done in Culture Club?” The participants reported that they enjoyed all of the activities.

Martha’s response exemplified the general perceptions of the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club in her statement of, “Doing the fun part of Culture Club was very fun – pottery, fry-bread, jewelry-making. It was very fun” (Martha, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). Martha’s answer described the participants’ typical assertion that the arts-based projects were particularly enjoyable and other participants provided deeper responses into why the participants relished the activities.

Charley claimed,

[My favorite project was] the making of the jewelry. That was pretty fun because I got to make things. I didn’t feel like I ever make anything; like jewelry and stuff like that. I got to though. [I enjoyed] everything about it. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

In his response, Charley explained that the jewelry-making activity was especially fun and interesting because it was his first experience creating jewelry.

Similarly, Danielle not only described the pottery project as an interesting learning experience, but one in which she had never participated before Culture Club.

Danielle explained,

Clay-making [was my favorite activity] because it was fun and it was also hard at the same time. Like how we made the pinch pot and all that. It was really hard to make. [I learned] that you need to have lots of training before you do that. [It was special] because I never got to do it yet. I don't think, if I [will] do it when I get older, but I don't know. I would say pottery [was my favorite activity]. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

In addition to the depictions of the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club being fun and interesting, the participants also described the activities as being collaborative. The collaborative component to Culture Club was best articulated in Martha's observation when she stated,

Usually at other schools, we never talk about Navajo [or] about our culture because I sometimes meet other Native Americans and Navajo people and other ones. We never really talk about our cultures and where we came from, what tribe are you, we never really talked about it. It was very new because we get to talk about the Native American stuff and do Native American stuff and have fun doing it, like doing the fry bread and pottery and jewelry-making, like this one (holding up necklace). When we do the jewelry one, I still wear this as you see. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)



In this statement, Martha contrasted her previous school experiences with other American Indian students and those within the context of Culture Club. She asserted that, typically, American Indian students did not discuss or share information about their Indigeneity. However, within the context of Culture Club and working collaboratively on the cultural exploration activities, the participants shared cultural experiences and information.

Juanita also articulated this perspective when she said, “I think watching the documentary and asking each other questions and how Student Two knew some of his language, like [what] means ‘friend,’ so we can learn from other tribes” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016). In her example, Juanita described the discussion following the documentary as conducive to collaborative learning because the participants learned from others within Culture Club. In sum, the participants indicated the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club were fun, interesting, and collaborative.

***Participants felt safe in exploring and sharing their cultural identities in Culture Club.*** To determine the comfort and safety of the participants in exploring and sharing their cultural identities in Culture Club, in the phase 3, semi-structured interview, the participants were asked, “How comfortable or safe did you feel in exploring your Native culture in Culture Club?” All of the participants indicated they felt safe and comfortable in sharing and exploring their Indigenous cultures within the context of Culture Club.

However, the participants also conceded that, initially, being vulnerable in Culture Club was challenging. Martha stated,

I felt very uncomfortable a little and safe. Uncomfortable and safe at the same time, because the uncomfortable one because I probably accidentally told a classified information for my tribe. Also, the other one is that I feel safe because there are other Natives here that will not tell anything or tell no one about that. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

In this statement, Martha explained her conflicting feelings of comfort and safety in Culture Club were grounded in her sharing sacred cultural information. However, she also was comfortable and safe in exploring and sharing her Indigeneity because the other participants were also American Indian, and would not share privileged information with those who were not members of Culture Club.

Charley also described feeling uncomfortable with sharing and exploring cultural identities at the inception of Culture Club. He shared,

[I felt] very safe. I did have to [try], especially [because of my experience of the] people that I think would make fun of me because I'm Native American. I just don't want to feel different. I don't want to be left out of things. That's all. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

Charley's statement highlighted his initial fear of being rejected for identifying as American Indian. However, once he realized that no one would make fun of him, he felt comfortable and safe in exploring and sharing his cultural identity.

In addition to the initial obstacles the participants negotiated in Culture Club, I also contended with challenges in fostering a sense of safety in Culture Club in which the participants felt free to share themselves. This difficulty culminated from my inability to

reposition myself from teacher to facilitator, as well as my struggle to determine when to mitigate the participants' negative comments.

Repositioning myself as a facilitator was much more challenging than I had initially realized. This observation was reflected in my research journal entry when I wrote,

The students seem to be interested in coming in to Culture Club, but there is some grumblings about the academic nature of the Club. I'm having a difficult time relinquishing power and am running the club like a classroom. I know that I'm dominating the Club conversations because I'm trying to get them through the research phase of the schedule, but the students are seemingly becoming more distracted when they come into club. (research journal, October 7, 2016)

Perhaps rooted in my strife to fully adopt the role of facilitator, determining when and how to appropriately intervene when participants' interjections were disruptive also proved to be very challenging. For instance, Jesus, whose emotional disability adversely influenced his social interactions and resulted in self-deprecating comments, initially was detrimental in the fostering of safety within Culture Club. However, as Culture Club progressed, other participants began to notice that Jesus' comments were not intentionally malicious, but were simply part of his self-expression. Accordingly, participants were much more positively responsive in communicating with Jesus.

However, in regard to Student Three, who had attended nine of the 20 Culture Club sessions, his repeated negative and disparaging comments toward the other participants persistently deconstructed the sense of safety within Culture Club.

These disruptions were observed by the other Culture Club participants. For instance, Juanita shared with me, after the other Culture Club members had left, that she “would feel safer talking about her culture and sharing it if the boys weren’t so rude and talked over everyone” (research journal, November 15, 2016). Martha also noted in the phase 3, semi-structured interview that,

[I felt like we were having a hard time being listened to] a little because everyone was interrupting us and, finally, you put it on the board. No, it’s [not] being respectful. We still listen to that. We listened to [everyone]. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

Although the participants described an occasionally stifling environment in Culture Club, there were also times in which the participants were comfortable in exploring and sharing their Indigeneity before the removal of Student Three. This comfort was demonstrated in the exchange between Martha, Student Two, and Student Three.

Student Two: Can you try to get your parents to come do the dance?

Martha: They don’t know how. My mom is pregnant, she can’t do it, but my dad.

Student Two: Pregnant.

Martha: Yes. My dad didn’t know how. The dances are only for ladies sometimes.

The butterfly is only for ladies, like, some dances are for, like, everyone.

My grandma’s too old, she can’t do it. Probably my big sister can.

Student Two: Can you get her to come and do the dance?

Martha: No, too busy at school.

Student Two: I want to learn a dance. (Culture Club session 7, October 6, 2016)

In this example, the participants asked Martha to share her father's interview in which he discussed traditional Navajo dances. The other participants requested that Martha bring her parents to demonstrate the dance because of their interest in learning more about it from Martha and her family.

Although there were moments of safety, there was a need to reframe the interactions in Culture Club. To facilitate a safer, more comfortable space explicit behavior norms were established and reviewed at the beginning of each Culture Club session. Martha acknowledged the impact of more explicit behavioral guidelines in facilitating a safe space in Culture Club. She explained,

That was very, very cool that you put that up. I was very thankful because I really want to tell them about me, more about me. Also, I want to listen to more about the others and so being interrupted was rude. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

Further, Juanita stated, "Yeah, I feel comfortable sharing in Culture Club" during session 15 of Culture Club as well as Danielle's additional comment of "Yeah, [I feel] a little [more comfortable talking about being Native since joining Culture Club]" A little. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016). The participants' comfort in exploring and sharing their cultural identities in Culture Club was also reinforced in the research entry I wrote two days after Juanita's and Danielle's comments. In the entry, I recorded,

We began the session with a reminder of the norms of not interrupting others or shouting random things. It's typically when Student Three is in Culture Club that these behaviors become issues. Today was no exception. Student Three was making mean comments toward the other students regarding "hairlines" and such.

I eventually, after two warnings, had him go to another teacher's tutoring session instead of staying in Culture Club. Once I removed him, the remainder of the session went smoothly. We discussed what we learned from the guest speaker's presentation and recapped what we remembered from the "Patty Cake" song. We also discussed issues of racism, how it feels when others try to impersonate Native Americans, and why they're proud to be Native American. Some of the themes that came out during this conversation were that they're proud to be Native American because they are self-sustaining and can take care of themselves. Several students, especially Jesus, restated this sentiment. He stated several times that White Americans should be thankful for Native Americans because they were saved twice by Native Americans. Once when they came as pilgrims and the second time during WWII when they used Navajo Code Talkers. They all indicated that this made them feel very proud. We then captioned our pottery using the directions I posted on the board, and I let the students take pictures of their pottery themselves before we took a group picture of the pottery. I think that in the next session, whenever I get my truck and can run errands, will end with the students taking pictures of the items that make them proud to be Indigenous at home. Oh yeah! Most of the students said that they feel more comfortable in sharing that they are Native American and what that means simply because we're talking about it in Culture Club. However, two indicated that they felt less comfortable talking about it because they weren't used to talking about it. They all indicated, however, they still don't feel safe in sharing about their Native

American cultures outside of the Club. Does this mean that we're successfully creating a third space? (research journal, November 5, 2016)

This entry described the effect of posting and reviewing the behavioral norms and expectations at the beginning of the Culture Club session, and removing Student Three, the consistently disruptive participant. Shortly after his removal from the session, the remaining participants not only began discussing the vulnerable topics of racism and cultural pride, most of the participants stated that they were more comfortable in engaging in these conversations. The remaining participants who indicated that they were not as comfortable explained that their discomfort stemmed from their inexperience in delving into these topics. Nonetheless, the participants all reported that, at the time, they did not feel safe or comfortable in discussing their cultural identities with students outside of Culture Club.

Thus, after addressing negative distractions, the exclusive focus of Culture Club was the cultural exploration activities and building a sense of safety. This refined attention on the activities facilitated the participants' shared learning and collaboration. The participants' experiences were summarized from an exchange in session 19 of Culture Club. After one participant shared, "This, have you guys tried to [make the dough this way]? Mine's coming out pretty good," another participant explained that "Mine's getting bigger and bigger" (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016). Once the first participant observed the strategy of the second participant, the first participant stated, "Yeah, that's what I'm doing," and the second participant communicated support of the first participants' work in the statement of, "That's so cool" (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016).

This example depicted the collaboration of the participants' engagement in cultural explorations and the development of knowledge. Through the participants' supportive suggestions and shared experiences, the participants' comfort and safety in Culture Club blossomed.

After the conclusion of Culture Club, in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, every participant reported that they felt safe in exploring and sharing their cultural identities. The participants' increased comfort and safety were summarized in the statements of "I felt confident expressing my tribe to everybody else's" (Juanita, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016) and "I was comfortable when sharing what my Native culture was with other kids that are Native like me" (Danielle, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016). Both of these responses indicated participants felt comfortable in sharing their cultural identities because all of the Culture Club members identified as American Indian.

However, when further prompted to "Share an experience from Culture Club that was particularly special or meaningful" and answer "What were your favorite projects?" and "What was the most special or meaningful project done in Culture Club?," the participants provided specific examples of how the collaboration facilitated by cultural exploration activities fostered their sense of comfort and safety within Culture Club. Juanita stated,

I would say my favorite projects were the pottery-making and the fry-bread. It was cool making our first time fry-bread and pottery. We were all experiencing our first time making and playing with clay and making fry-bread. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)



Other participants also mentioned the fry-bread activity as a conduit in facilitating safety in exploring Indigenous culture. A representative description was provided by Martha who said, “[Making fry-bread was] a lot of fun. We had a lot of fun. That was actually the first [time], probably, I actually get to experience other people doing something like this” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). In this example, the fry-bread activity was fun because of the collaborative experience. Thus the shared experience contributed to the participants’ ability to feel comfortable and safe in exploring and sharing their cultural identities within the context of Culture Club.

Further underscoring the comfort and safety facilitated by the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club was the fact that participants formed friendships within Culture Club. Juanita’s perspective exemplified those of the other participants in her statement of “I think it was cool [to find out that there were more Native students in sixth-grade than I knew about before]. [Now], we are all friends” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016). Juanita’s report that all the members of Culture Club formed friendships depicted the safe and comfortable space facilitated by the shared experiences in Culture Club. In sum, the participants not only enjoyed the culturally exploration activities in Culture Club, but it also facilitated their feelings of comfort and safety.

**Assertion 3: The Culture Club facilitated the creation of a Third Space.** With respect to exploring the creation of a Third Space in Culture Club, instances that were reflective of the four theoretically-deduced criteria—(a) creating new knowledge, (b) reclaiming and reinscribing notions of school and identity, (c) creating new and hybrid identities, and (d) developing inclusive perspectives, were identified and categorized into one of the four criterion categories. Through the employment of the constant comparative

method, the descriptive codes were compared, modified, and collapsed until reaching theoretical saturation and the theme-related components emerged.

*Participants generated new knowledge by collaboratively learning and employing knowledge from their Secondspace of home to navigate the culturally exploration activities of Culture Club.* Because the focus of Culture Club was to change cultural identity and create Third Space through cultural exploration activities, a range of collaborative learning activities were provided. In Culture Club, the participants researched cultural interests, interviewed familial cultural leaders, viewed a documentary, hosted a guest speaker, and created pottery, fry-bread, and jewelry. Some of the activities were intrinsically more collaborative than others but, all of the cultural exploration activities were designed to facilitate the creation of new knowledge. To examine the ways in which the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club facilitated participants' engagement in collaborative learning, two activities were examined: the research project and the fry-bread activity.

The research project was comprised of two components: initial investigation of cultural facets and interviews of familial cultural leaders. The first component required that the participants brainstorm what comprises culture, select interesting cultural facets to investigate, and devise research questions to guide their explorations. The second component required the participants to create interview questions about their cultural interests for their identified familial cultural leaders to elicit information and to share in Culture Club.

The data for the initial theme-related component for this theme were a bit sparse, but when data for this theme-related component were combined with the next two theme-

related elements, there were sufficient data to support the theme of creation of new knowledge. When analyzing all of the data, only two pieces of data represented the first theme-related component of the research activity as facilitative of shared learning. In the phase 3, semi-structured interview, when asked to “Share an experience from Culture Club that was particularly special or meaningful,” Martha described her experience with the research project as, “Yeah, it was very fun participating and doing [the research in Culture Club]. It was fun sharing a little bit of information with each other” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016).

In this statement, the research activity was described as marginally conducive to collaborative learning in that the participants shared the information they discovered when researching their self-selected cultural interests. Corroborating Martha’s observation was the research journal entry detailing the experiences from the sixth session of Culture Club. In the entry, I noted,

[The students] then wrote down [their] learning goals, or what they want to *know* [sic] by the end of their research. Afterward, we worked in groups and shared out, we brainstormed a list of arts-based projects they could use to show what they learned about their research topics. The students came up with everything on the list, except for the story option. (research journal, October 3, 2016)

In this excerpt, the participants originally completed the task of reflecting and documenting their learning goals individually. However, the next step required the participants to share their ideas aloud. Once the participants heard each other’s ideas, they continued to contribute new ideas to those already shared. As a result, the list was quite comprehensive.

Martha's statement and my observation described the research project as being collaborative and these data were also the only supportive evidence from all four data sources. The fact that the research project, to which 11 sessions were devoted, was not described as collaborative demonstrated the very limited shared learning experiences elicited by the activity.

Further, as mentioned earlier, my personal challenge of relinquishing the position as teacher and sharing power may have also contributed to the lack of collaboration in the research project because it was the first activity introduced in Culture Club. The challenge in reframing my role within Culture Club was described in the research journal entry from the eighth Culture Club session. I observed,

As we continue working after fall break, the students have forgotten much of what we've begun working on in our research. They're still interested in attending, but the Culture Club is not moving very quickly, and there's little conversation. This isn't quite the Third Space that I thought it would be. Maybe some changes need to take place here. However, once we get through the initial research phase, I think that we'll be able to have more conversation. It's just like pulling teeth to get through the smallest of sections. (research journal, October 18, 2016)

This research journal entry documented the observation that there was "little conversation" (research journal, October 18, 2016) and, consequently, Culture Club did not appear to be reflective of a Third Space, as described by both Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1996). In reflecting on this predicament, as noted in the entry, I realized the necessity of revising Culture Club, particularly in the facilitation of shared learning and dialogue. However, even with this understanding, I resolved to continue the research projects

because I anticipated the arts-based projects would foster greater collaborative learning and, subsequently, result in the creation of new knowledge.

The research project rendered minimal collaborative learning among the participants of Culture Club, whereas the fry-bread activity was highly collaborative. The fry-bread activity began with a review of the norms and expectations before watching a video featuring a Navajo woman making fry-bread over a fire pit. After we watched the video, the materials of paper plates and towels, flour, and the dough were distributed. As the participants formed the dough into disks, they shared their learning and assisted others. After the participants provided me with their formed dough, I fried the dough in a portable skillet. The participants then garnished their fry-bread with powdered sugar and honey before eating the fry-bread. During the activity, when another teacher joined the participants, the participants taught her how to make fry-bread as well.

The collaborative learning facilitated by the fry-bread activity was documented in session 19 of Culture Club. Below is an extracted exemplar of the participants' shared learning.

Student One: Look at mine. Mine is getting so big just from keeping doing this.

Student Two: I got to redo it.

Student One: Put flour on it.

Student Two: Here's flour.

Student One: Mine's turning with no lumps. Let's see. Mine's making progress.

Student Two: I think mine doesn't look like a circle.

Student One: Mine doesn't either. (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

In this excerpt, the participants actively engaged in sharing their fry-bread making skills, as demonstrated in the request, “Look at mine. Mine is getting so big just from keeping doing this.” (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016). Also depicted in this example was how the participants engaged in collaboration through actively helping, encouraging, and empathizing with each other. This collaboration was illustrated in the following exchange.

Student 1: I got to redo it. – Put flour on it. – Here’s flour.

Student 2: Mine’s turning with no lumps. Let’s see. Mine’s making progress.

Student 3: I think mine doesn’t look like a circle.

Student 2: Mine doesn’t either. (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016).

Thus, this example demonstrated the participants’ process of creating new knowledge through collaborative learning facilitated by the fry-bread activity.

The culmination of the participants’ creation of new knowledge was revealed when they were asked by the visiting teacher why the participants were puncturing holes in the dough before having it fried. The participants responded.

Student 1: Yeah, [we have to put holes in the fry bread dough] to keep it from going and not floating.

Visiting Teacher: Could be a very useful thing. I guess that holds oil then.

Student 2: I learned now how to do something! (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

This exchange demonstrated the participants’ newly acquired knowledge because the participants justified the creation of holes in the dough. Additionally, the excitement

in realizing they had created new knowledge was indicated in the statement of “I learned now how to do something!” (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

The participants also produced new knowledge by integrating knowledge from their Secondspaces of home into the Secondspace of school. This process was demonstrated in two exemplar exchanges between participants as they negotiated the fry-bread activity. The first example exemplifying this process began when one participant noted, “I know how to do it [make round balls of dough for fry bread],” and another participant offered, “It’s just like a tortilla, right?” (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016). The second example was when a participant offered, “[The fry-bread dough is] technically like clay” (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016). In both of these examples, the participants created new knowledge and understandings by building on their Secondspace knowledge and experiences. In this way, the participants’ comparisons demonstrated a conceptual merging of the Secondspaces of home and school, resulting in the beginnings of a Third Space within Culture Club.

In the phase 3, semi-structured interview, the participants responded to “Share an experience from Culture Club that was particularly special or meaningful” and “What was the most special or meaningful project done in Culture Club?” All of the participants indicated that the fry-bread activity was a favorite experience. Additionally, three of four participants stated that the fry-bread activity was their favorite experience because of the collaboration.

Martha’s description of the fry-bread activity was representative of the other participants’ responses. She stated, “Then, [making the fry-bread] was a lot of fun. We had a lot of fun. That was actually the first [time], probably, I actually get to experience

other people doing something like this” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). In her explanation of why she enjoyed the fry-bread activity, Martha adopted the “we” pronoun, which strongly described the fry-bread activity as a collaborative experience, which was remembered in connection to the corresponding rich social interactions.

Although Danielle was not present for the fry-bread activity, she also indicated that the activity would have been meaningful due to sharing the experience with the other participants. She explained, “Fry-bread, when we did the fry-bread. Well, I wasn’t there actually, but I felt like it was going to be fun to do it with my friends that are Native, too” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016).

Danielle predicted that making fry-bread would have been fun to experience with her friends. Further, because she was absent from the activity her response was illuminated by her choice of pronouns, especially when compared to those included in Martha’s response. In her statement, Danielle maintained the usage of singular first-person pronouns, such as “I” and “my,” whereas in Martha’s statement, she employed the pronoun “we” to describe the fry-bread experience, whereas (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016).

The only participant who did not describe the fry-bread activity as a collaborative learning experience was Charley. When asked about his favorite projects, he responded that “[I learned about] how they make different kinds of jewelry. How they make fry-bread – that was really interesting” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). Although, in this excerpt, Charley described the fry-bread activity as a favorite



experience because it was interesting, he did not mention the collaborative learning component of the activity.

In sum, although all of the culturally exploration activities of Culture Club were described as facilitating collaborative learning, the extent to which the participants were able to engage in collaborative learning varied. The research project elicited minimal collaborative learning because it was predominantly completed independently. However, the fry-bread activity was a conduit for shared learning, as all of the participants enjoyed experiencing the activity together. When working through the fry-bread activity, participants shared their observations and learning, as well as offering assistance and empathy. These dynamic collaborations heightened the participants' cultural exploration experiences and learning. Additionally, the participants' conceptually integrated their Secondspace knowledge from home to negotiate the culturally exploration activities provided in the physical and socialized Secondspace of school through the context of Culture Club. Thus, the participants engaged in collaborative learning and employed knowledge from their Secondspaces of home into the Secondspace of school to create new knowledge.

*Participants shared Culture Club experiences with family to connect and elicit new knowledge.* Participants shared their experiences from Culture Club to connect with and access cultural information from family members. In the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, when asked the follow-up question "Have you talked to your family about what we've covered in Culture Club?" all of the participants indicated they shared their experiences in Culture Club as a way of connecting and learning from family members.

Martha explicitly articulated her primary motivation for sharing experiences in Culture Club was to connect with family. She stated, “I showed my pottery to my father. He was like, ‘What is this?’ ‘Oh, that’s pottery, father.’ He’s like – Also, how I feel good because I get to get connected with my family too by doing Culture Club” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). Martha’s fond, detailed recollections of sharing her experiences in Culture Club with her family, specifically her father, whom she considered a familial cultural leader, clearly articulated the purpose of sharing with her family. Whenever she shared a Culture Club experience with her father, her father reciprocated with cultural information, which provided Martha with a cultural connection.

Notice, Martha was predominantly motivated to continue Culture Club experiences as a way of connecting with family, whereas other participants shared their Culture Club experiences to both connect and learn from family. This desire was demonstrated in Juanita’s representative response when she said,

“Yeah, [I did share the Culture Club experiences with my family]. They thought it was really cool. My father was like, ‘Oh, yeah, I remember that. Me and my tribe used to do that a lot.’ [He was talking about] the fry-bread”. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

Another example that poignantly demonstrated the role of Culture Club in facilitating cultural connections and dialogues between the participants and their families was Danielle’s exemplary statement in which she indicated,

[I’m more comfortable to share my Native culture] with other Native Americans, like my grandma and my great-grandma, and my father. Yeah, [I wasn’t that

comfortable sharing with them before Culture Club]. Well, they're Navajo and I really want to know more about [the Navajo culture], so I would say what I did in Culture Club, and then they'd say something about what my great-grandma used to do. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

In Danielle's case, she shared her experiences in Culture Club to more comfortably connect with her grandma and great-grandma to elicit cultural information. As evidenced in her statement, Danielle's participation in Culture Club increased her understanding and ease in understanding the connection between family and cultural identity.

In sum, all of the participants shared their experiences in Culture Club to connect with and elicit cultural information from their families. Thus, Culture Club provided opportunities for participants to create new knowledge through their conversations with family members.

***Participants developed specific cultural interests based on the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club.*** Because Culture Club focused on the development of the participants' cultural identities through culturally exploration activities, determining the participants' areas of cultural interest was pertinent. Accordingly, in the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked "What is something you want to learn more about in your culture?" In the phase 1, semi-structured interview, all of the participants reported general interest in learning more about their Indigenous cultures. These responses were exemplified in the statement, "I want to learn about my tribe. I really want to learn about my tribe. What my tribe used to do in the history of my life. I don't care. I just really want to know about my tribe" (Jesus, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016). This response demonstrated

most of the participants' unspecific, elevated curiosity regarding their Indigenous cultures.

However, only Jesus and Charley indicated more specific cultural interests. Jesus explained his interest when he asked,

What did my tribe do in the olden days as art? Did they paint with some kind of clay? Did they paint with regular paint we use today? What did they use, or what food did they eat back then? That's what I want to learn about my tribe. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016)

Charley stated, "I would feel like I would want to learn about my language because my grandmother speaks it every time, I think, when her sister comes over" (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August, 2016). Both of these responses highlighted the two participants' interests in investigating specific cultural facets.

During implementation of the Culture Club, the cultural exploration activities facilitated opportunities for participants to ask questions. For example, in the seventh session of Culture Club, after listening to Martha's cultural interview of her father regarding different types of dancing in Navajo culture, the following exchange occurred.

Ms. Roy: Any observations or thoughts? Student Two?

Student Two: I have one I just made up. So, [Martha], most of your questions were about dancing. Do you know how to speak your Native language?

Martha: Yeah.

Students Two: Oh.

Martha: That's like at home, but my mom, she do it know better. Even my grandma. (Culture Club session 7, October 6, 2016)

This discussion demonstrated the participants' curiosity regarding Martha's interview of her father, specifically Martha's ability to speak her Native language. Further underscored in this example was the pertinent role of Culture Club in providing opportunities for participants' to collaboratively explore cultural interests.

At the end of the conversation regarding her father's interview, Martha shared that "Yes, [interviewing my dad has made me more interested in learning about my Native culture]" (Culture Club session 7, October 6, 2016). Thus, based on the Culture Club activity of interviewing a familial cultural leader, Martha's cultural interest increased.

After the conclusion of Culture Club, when students were asked, "What is something you want to learn more about in your culture?" in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants' responses were solidly grounded in their experiences in Culture Club. For instance, Danielle's representative statement, which summarized three of the four responses, indicated,

Yeah, [Culture Club] did, actually [make me want to learn more about my Native culture]. The speaker, how she knew how to make a lot of the things. I really want to know a lot about my Native culture like her, how she knew what to say and all that. Yeah [I'm] interested. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

In Danielle's exemplary response, she connected the specific Culture Club activity of hosting the guest speaker Culture Club as the genesis of her interest in learning more about her Indigeneity. Further, Danielle's statement also depicted the guest speaker

as a role-model due to the extensive cultural knowledge she shared with the Culture Club participants.

Most of the participants indicated that their participation in Culture Club had increased their interest in specific cultural facets, whereas, Charley articulated uncertainty about his cultural interests, which was grounded in his lack of cultural knowledge. Charley explained, “I don’t know [what I’d like to learn more about in my Native culture]. I’m not sure [what I’d like to learn more about] because I don’t know my culture that well. I don’t even know it at all” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). In this statement, Charley articulated that he did not possess enough cultural knowledge from which he could identify interests. Nevertheless, engagement in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club fostered a greater interest in specific cultural facets for most of the participants.

***Participants challenged hegemonic notions of school and culture in Culture Club.*** The cultural exploration activities of Culture Club provided a collaborative and safe space in which participants challenged their understanding of the Secondspace of school by analyzing their Indigeneity. An example representative of the reframing of the school space was one participant’s observation of “the school, they don’t know how to make fry-bread” (Culture Club Session 19, December 8, 2016). The participant later explained the comment when she said,

This is awesome [making fry bread in school]. It feels experiencing and more fun, and we want to eat some more, and also it’s very good, really Native. Make you feel like you can...The world is, you feel like you’re asked to be Native, with your ancestors. You can feel like you can actually know what the human

ancestors... I don't know what I'm saying. It feels.... It feels experiencing. It feels like something that happened? No, feels like... There's no word for it. (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

This statement revealed the participants' process of reinscribing the school space into one in which Indigenous cultures were both embraced and developed. Further, the participant described feeling connected with ancestors in the school context, thus demonstrating that the participant momentarily transcended the contemporary context of school into a reframed version. Therefore, the participant challenged the historic assimilative purpose of the school space to reclaim and reinscribe it into one in which Indigeneity flourished.

An example in which the process of reclaiming and reinscribing cultural identity was detailed occurred in session 15 of Culture Club. As the participants sat in a circle and painted their pottery projects, Student Two initiated a conversation of Indigenous cultural identity.

Student Two: I like being Native because it's the only thing that [I] can fit into, like Mexican.

Jesus: Yeah, a good reason I like being Native, because there's not really that many Natives. Your whole grade is like 10 students that are Native.

Student One: There's only one, two, three, four, five right now (counting the members present in Culture Club).

Jesus: Don't forget about our other students, they're not here too.

Martha: Every time I see a girl wearing a chief's hat, I always wanted to say, "Get

that thing off!” Yeah, my dad got really offended by the [Halloween costumes]. No wonder why everyone’s offended by this.

Danielle: No wonder. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016).

In this example, Student Two began the discussion of Indigenous cultural identity by sharing that the label of “being Native” provided him a way of identifying himself (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016). Jesus’s confirmation and additional observation that there were not many American Indians in the sixth-grade prompted Student One to count the Culture Club members. However, Jesus reminded him that there were other American Indian students in the sixth-grade who were not part of Culture Club. Martha then shifted conversation to non-Indigenous peoples wearing sacred Indigenous regalia as Halloween costumes. She connected her knowledge and experience from her Secondspace of home to the conversation by sharing that her father was offended by this Halloween practice. Danielle agreed with Martha’s and her father’s perspective on the topic.

Martha then continued the conversation by shifting the topic to non-Indigenous peoples adopting or appropriating Indigenous cultures. She stated,

People always lie about being Native.

Student One: Because they want to be Native, they’re jealous.

Juanita: Because that’s a way of saying they’re complementing us, but that is a very bad way. “Oh, I want to be you guys so much,” and they lie about things.

(Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016)

When presented with the observation that non-Indigenous peoples pretended or adopted Indigenous cultural components, Student One articulated that those individuals’



actions were motivated by their jealousy of American Indians. Juanita agreed and offered that although this imitation seemed superficially flattering, it actually contributed to inaccurate portrayals of American Indians. Jesus then joined the conversation by way of reclaiming and reinscribing the appropriation of Indigenous cultures from oppressive to privileged. He stated that when non-Indigenous peoples pretended to be American Indian,

It makes me feel like I'm super important [when people lie and say that they are Native]. I'm the most important, that I'm the king. No [it does not make me feel good], it makes me feel like power. Makes me feel like I have power. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016)

In this example, Jesus reframed appropriation, a form of injustice and oppression, into one of power and privilege. This intentional reclaiming and reinscribing of appropriation was apparent in his admission, "No [it does not make me feel good], it makes me feel like power. Makes me feel like I have power" (Culture Club session 15, November, 2016). Thus, he engaged in the process of reclaiming and reinscribing the oppressive power into one that benefitted and privileged his cultural identity.

Throughout the course of the session fifteen, the discussion of oppression continued. These topics were recorded in the following research journal entry:

When we began painting, the students began voicing their opinions on the election, including that Clinton was not to be trusted because of the e-mail scandal and that the people who voted for Trump were racists. I asked them if they ever experience racism, but when I began asking the question, all simultaneously said "racism." Martha talked about how White people were able to purchase food that she and her family had requested at a restaurant in Tempe, Student Two shared

how his friend called him the “N-word” in his front yard and his dad talking to his friend, and Jesus began to share that he had experienced racism, but couldn’t remember what exactly happened. To help facilitate the safety of the conversation and create a third space, I told them of when I was a freshman in high school and how I was confronted with the question of “Were your people responsible for what happened?” on 9/11 and how I could have been the victim of a hate crime. The students were all very respectful and attentively listened as each of us shared our stories. I then remembered that I could record the conversations, so I began the recording app on my iPhone. The conversation continued and covered topics of what they’re proud of in native culture, their thoughts on Culture Club, how they feel when people say that they’re Native when they’re not, how they feel when people dress in Native clothing for Halloween. (research journal, November 15, 2016)

These topics, which the participants introduced themselves, demonstrated the participants’ interest and work in reclaiming and reinscribing their cultural identities within the context of Culture Club. Although the journal entry did not illuminate the results of these conversations or demonstrate impact on the participants’ cultural identities, the potential of reframing these forms of oppression into those of power and privilege was highlighted. In sum, Culture Club provided opportunities for participants to engage in discussions that encouraged the process of reclaiming and reinscribing fixed notions of cultural identity and school.

***Participants’ perceptions of school and cultural identity varied after participating in Culture Club.*** During the phase 1, semi-structured interview, to

determine participants' responses to how context would influence their perceptions of school and cultural identity, the participants were asked, "If your culture were included more often in school, would the way in which you see school change?" and, "If your culture were included more often in school, would the way in which you see your culture change?" Three of five participants indicated their perceptions would change.

Most participants' responses were exemplified by Martha's statement when she maintained,

[If we talked about] my Native stuff at school? I really will pay attention to school. I'd really listen more, like a lot. I would follow directions more than I do right now [because] I think Native Americans are very interesting, and I want to learn more about them. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016)

Danielle echoed this perspective when she suggested, "maybe a lot of people would be wearing moccasins and basket dancing. Doing a lot culture stuff in Navajo and Pimas to celebrate for them" (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 31, 2016). In both of these statements, the participants indicated there would be an increase in their attention in school as well as greater cultural expression. Thus, these statements revealed the participants' responses about how the context of Culture Club would influence their perceptions of school and cultural identity.

However, Juanita was the only participant to suggest her perceptions of school and her cultural identity would be maintained. She explained,

I don't think [the way I would see school would change if my Native culture were included more often in school]. Why would it? I wouldn't think it would be different because we're all human. We're just different kinds of people. We're all

human. I wouldn't think that would change anybody for me. (phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016)

During implementation of the Culture Club, participants described their experiences of cultural exploration within the school context very differently. One participant was very excited by her experiences as demonstrated when she stated,

This is awesome [making fry bread in school]. – It feels experiencing and more fun, and we want to eat some more, and also it's very good, really Native. Make you feel like you can...The world is, you feel like you're asked to be Native, with your ancestors. You can feel like you can actually know what the human ancestors...I don't know what I'm saying. – [It feels...]. – It feels experiencing. [It feels like something that happened?] – No, feels like... There's no word for it. There's not word for it. Just awesome. (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

For this participant making fry-bread in school sparked the beginnings of her reinscribing of the school space. Her feeling of being at a loss of words to describe her experience while engaged in the activity demonstrated the extent to which she was reframing the school space.

However, another participant explained, "I don't really think [Culture Club] helps me, I just like it because it's fun" (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016). This participant explained that Culture Club was simply fun; it did challenge his perceptions of the school space. Accordingly, both of these statements demonstrated the variety of opinions held by the participants regarding their perceptions of engaging in culturally exploration activities within the school space.

After the conclusion of Culture Club, during the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked modified versions of the same two questions they received in the phase 1, semi-structured interviews. The modified questions were “After learning about Native American cultures in school through Culture Club, has your feeling about school changed?” and “After learning about Native American cultures in school through Culture Club, has your feeling about your Native culture changed?” The participants’ responses were contradictory to their claims, which they made prior to participating in Culture Club.

Although Juanita’s earlier response was confirmed, her statement was also representative of three of four participants’ responses. She stated,

No, [since my Native culture was included more in school, the way I see school has not changed] because since Culture Club is a club, sharing it in front of 10 people is like a feeling of a class sometimes. You’re sharing it to a class, basically, from my vision. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December, 2016)

As demonstrated in this exemplar, for most of the participants, engaging in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club resembled school too much because it Culture Club was hosted within the school context. Thus, their perceptions of school did not change.

However, Martha proved to exhibit the exception in her strong reframed perception of school. She demonstrated the influence of hosting Culture Club within a school context in her statement,

What was fun about it was that we get to actually do Native American stuff inside of school. That was – I never done that before in my entire life. It was very new to

me. I thought we just research and learn about other cultures. Actually, I didn't know that we would actually do them. I thought we would actually [just] learn about them. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

This statement conveyed the power of actively learning and engaging in Indigenous cultural practices within the context of school versus passively being informed about them. Martha further explained, "I thought we just research and learn about other cultures. Actually, I didn't know that we would actually do them. I thought we would actually [just] learn about them" (Martha, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). Thus, for Martha, engaging in hands-on culturally exploration activities within the school space was powerful in reshaping her perceptions of school.

With respect to reinscribing participants' cultural identities, all of the participants maintained their prior perceptions of culture after engaging in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club within the school space. The statement that exemplified the commonly held perspective, "No [how I feel about school has not changed since learning about Native American cultures in Culture Club] because it feels like I'm still learning stuff because I'm still in school" (Charley, phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). Thus, in general, the context in which Culture Club was hosted fostered minimal changes in perception of school and culture for most participants.

***Participants engaged in conversations that demonstrated the analysis of their identities.*** It was important to note that the process of reclaiming and reinscribing was intertwined with the creation of hybrid or new identities. Accordingly, the conversations in which the participants' cultural identities were analyzed and challenged as evidence of the reclaiming and reinscribing process were also relevant in demonstrating the creation

of hybrid or new identities. However, as noted in the second assertion, the discussions revolving around cultural identity demonstrated the reclaiming and reinscribing was related to oppression rather than the creation of a hybrid or new identity. Therefore, this theme-related component focused on discussions around general identity.

The cultural exploration activities of Culture Club facilitated collaboration and discussion. One conversation that was representative of other similar discussions began in session 15 of Culture Club. As participants formed and painted their pottery projects, Jesus initiated a conversation about individual strengths with his comment of “For being a Native, I’m the worst potter-man ever. It makes me feel bad about myself, because that means I’m a terrible potter-man even if I’m a Native” (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016).

In this comment, Jesus compared his inability to create pottery with which he was satisfied with his cultural identity. I documented his frustration in the following excerpted research journal entry where I wrote,

At first, the students, especially the boys were very rowdy. Jesus continued complaining about his pot and threw part of it into the trash. I ended up having to remind the students about the purpose of Culture Club and how certain behaviors were not acceptable, such as talking over each other and making disrespectful comments. Mostly these redirections were geared toward Jesus as he’s much more negative about everything. (research journal, November 15, 2016)

As evidenced, Jesus’ perfectionist proclivity, when combined with his diagnosis of an emotional disability, contributed to his negative comments. In patiently redirecting him, I mitigated further disparaging commentary and facilitated the safety of Culture Club.

After being redirected, Jesus sought reassurance and directed a question to me, which sparked an entire conversation. He asked,

Ms. Roy, I don't have a strength, huh?

Ms. Roy: That's not true, you do.

Jesus: No, I don't. Name one strength.

Ms. Roy: One strength. I'm always impressed at how quickly you're able to do math.

Jesus: I think you're confusing me with someone.

Ms. Roy: No. I remember, it was something with a math game in intervention time.

Jesus: And I lost every round?

Juanita: Because you didn't want to do it.

Student One: Really, all you do is guess.

Jesus: No, I don't.

Student One: That's mainly what you do.

Jesus: Yeah, actually, I guess. I'm not good at math. I'm not good. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016)

In this conversation, Jesus initially asked me about his strengths because of his dissatisfaction with his pottery. After I replied with an observed strength, Jesus humbly dismissed the compliment, as I continued with the example of the mathematics game during the intervention class. When Jesus joked that he had lost every round, Juanita and Student One, who were both in his homeroom, pointed out that he had lost because he



had not actually tried to be successful in the game. Jesus continued to dismiss the participants' explanations of why he had lost the mathematics intervention game.

Jesus then shared his observations of the strengths possessed by the Culture Club members. His sharing of Martha's strength sparked a brief conversation that analyzed Martha's identity. Jesus explained, "I see that [Martha's] the artist. She's a freaking artist, look at that!" Martha commented, "I do, I'm kind of good, almost. [But] there's no such thing as a best artist." To which, Danielle said, "There's no such thing as a most best artist in the world" (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016).

When asked about the qualities they perceived as strengths, Juanita responded, "Me? Athletic." Student Two then agreed, "Yeah, you're athletic" (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016). In this example, Juanita reported that part of her identity resided in her athleticism, which Student Two reinforced.

Jesus again stated, "I don't have a strength" and Danielle both sympathized and relieved Jesus' poor self-concept in her response of "I don't have any too. I have noodle arms" (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016). In this excerpt, Danielle calmed the conversation with her pun of not having physical strength. The conversation concluded positively when Jesus repeated,

I have no skills. Nothing. I'm not good at anything.

Student Two: Yeah, you're probably the best in sixth-grade at math.

Jesus: Not true.

Student Two: You have mainly A's though.

Jesus: No, not true. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016)

In this conversation, Jesus restated his self-concept of his identity as possessing no skills, which developed from a serious intonation to one of teasing. Student Two, however, continued support Jesus's self-image and identity by providing the example of Jesus being "probably the best in sixth-grade at math" and having "mainly A's though" (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016). Although Jesus continued to deny this strength, his tone improved to playfulness, thus demonstrating the positive shift in his identity.

The extended conversation was focused on individual strengths demonstrated the participants' analysis of their own identities as well as their support of each other's analyses. In other words, this excerpt has more to do with Jesus's exploration of his general identity than his cultural identity. Because the Culture Club activity facilitated this discussion, as demonstrated by his beginning with being a "potter-man", it demonstrated his seeking to understand more about his general identity from the other Culture Club members. Thus, as the participants supported Jesus' endeavor, the positive, inclusive space of Culture Club was highlighted by facilitating such vulnerable analysis and discussion.

***Participants were more comfortable in sharing their cultural identities with students who were not Culture Club members.*** The topic of safety was explored in both the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews. For the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, participants were asked, "Do you feel comfortable talking about or sharing your culture at school?" and "What would make you feel more comfortable in talking about or sharing your culture at school?" to explore their comfort in sharing their

Indigenous cultures. For both questions, participants articulated they did not feel safe talking about or sharing their cultural identities within the school context.

Most of the participants' responses were exemplified by, "[I would feel more comfortable] if people wouldn't make fun of me" (Juanita, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 30, 2016). However, other responses delved more deeply into the issue of being bullied for identifying as American Indian. This sentiment was reflected in Charley's example when he said,

Like, three years ago, there was a [Life Skills] program for Native Americans and one of the kids in my class made fun of me because of it, and how, they were saying, there were not many people in there (Life Skills). They were saying, like, "There's only a few of you. We can kill you if we wanted to." [They were talking about me and], like, some other Native American kids. Some of them, not all of them. I think they said that to me because they just don't like the fact that I'm one of the few people that's Native at this school. (Charley, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016)

When asked about the students' motivation for threatening him, Charley explained, "There's only a few people that are Native in this grade and, a few years ago, the kids made fun of me. I guess that's because there's only a few and they wish they were one of the few" (Charley, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016). Thus, Charley's description of his experience demonstrated a conflicted perspective of not belonging, but also a sense of pride in his identity as an American Indian because the students wished that "they were one of the few" (Charley, phase 1, semi-structured interview, August 25, 2016). Similarly, all of phase 1, semi-structured interview results

depicted a general discomfort and even fear about sharing their cultural identities with others.

During implementation of Culture Club, participants indicated they were comfortable in sharing their cultural identities with the other members. Nonetheless, “they all indicated, however, that they still don’t feel safe in sharing about their Native American cultures outside of the Club” (research journal, November 5, 2016). Thus, the participants conveyed a continued discomfort in sharing their cultural identities with students outside of Culture Club.

However, after the conclusion of Culture Club, in the phase 3, semi-structured interview, when asked “After Culture Club, do you feel comfortable talking about or sharing your culture in school?”, three of the four participants’ responses indicated they would as exemplified in Juanita’s statement when she said, “I think that [participating in Culture Club] made me feel more comfortable, just sharing it to everybody else” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016). Thus, because participants discussed and shared their Indigenous cultures with the other members of Culture Club, they were more willing or comfortable in sharing with students outside of Culture Club.

Further, these participants also indicated that the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club served as a conduit for connecting and sharing with non-Culture Club students. For example, Juanita shared,

Yeah, I would keep talking about [my culture and Culture Club] because, maybe, what if one of my friends’ parents are Native, friend’s friends, and they tell their parents, and what if their parents know what kind of tribe and they can come and

say, “Hey, I can teach you some Native language”. (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 20, 2016)

Martha’s response bolstered this notion of connection. She stated,

I never talked [about my culture before]. Yeah, I told some people about [Culture Club]. They would say, “Oh, Culture Club’s fun.” I’m like, “Yeah.” Also, I told some information about Culture Club, like doing fry-breading and doing pottery. I tell them the fun part, like we get to eat the fry-bread. That was fun eating it.

When I told the information about Culture Club, they felt like, “Oh, I want to be Native.” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016)

However, Charley described a continued discomfort in sharing his cultural identity with students who were not members of Culture Club. He stated, “No, [I do not feel more comfortable or willing to share my Native culture with others at all] because, like I said before, I don’t want to be different or treated differently” (phase 3, semi-structured interview, December 19, 2016). Thus, his continued discomfort in sharing his cultural identity with those outside of Culture Club resulted from his desire to fit in with other students, and not stand out for being American Indian. Further, his history of being threatened for identifying as American Indian may also have explained his resistance to sharing his cultural identity with others.

In sum, while the participants indicated in their phase 1, semi-structured interviews that they were uncomfortable sharing their Indigeneity with other students, the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club encouraged and facilitated the their sense of comfort and safety in sharing their cultural identities with others in Culture Club. Interestingly, the participants stated that they did not feel comfortable sharing with other

students outside of Culture Club while participating in Culture Club. However, in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, most of participants indicated that discussing the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club facilitated participants' comfort in sharing their cultural identities.

*Participants' interactions facilitated a positive social environment within Culture Club.* To determine how the participants' interactions influenced the social environment of Culture Club, an observational analysis of their interactions was conducted. Because the first eleven sessions revolved around the research project, which was less conducive to collaboration, there was very limited participant interaction. An analysis of the research journal revealed a general absence of participant interactions, unless I noted that the participants were disruptive, or that we engaged in work that led participants to "discuss" and "talk" (research journal, October 25, 2016). The following excerpt from my journal entry represented the typical observation recorded throughout the first eleven sessions

While the students were productive in giving their first stab at researching their topics, I realized that the misbehavior and random comments were the result of being overwhelmed. The students didn't like seeing how much material they needed to read to conduct their own research. I showed them how to skim and helped them determine important information from the sites that they had selected. However, it was a struggle to get the students, particularly the boys, to stay focused. So, I decided to revamp the structure of the club. I talked to the students as a whole about what the outcomes of the club are to be - a respectful place where they felt comfortable learning about themselves and each other - and

asked for their ideas... Charley, however, mentioned that he would like to continue working on the project he's already started. He doesn't want to work with or talk to the other students during the club. I'm going to see how everything goes during the next session. (research journal, October 25, 2016)

In this excerpt, the limited participant interaction and my continued struggle to share power was highlighted. I began the entry with the observation that the participants' disruptions were due to being overwhelmed by the academic nature of the research project. So, in not sharing power or transitioning my role from teacher to facilitator, I presented a mini-lesson on how to skim information to glean the most salient elements. Still, because the participants were disengaged in the activity, I decided an immediate change in necessary because it was the tenth Culture Club session and we had yet to 'create a Third Space.' Accordingly, I engaged the initial steps to share power with participants by eliciting their ideas for the trajectory of Culture Club. In the end, however, Charley's determination to continue to work individually demonstrated the non-collaborative, stifled environment of Culture Club during these early sessions, which were academically focused.

After the revision of Culture Club, which required the exclusive focus on arts-based projects, the environment of Culture Club dramatically improved. Thus, the collaborative, cultural exploration activities increased both the quantity and quality of participant interactions, as participants engaged in more positive exchanges. This change was observable in the simple exchange observed in a later session.

Student One: I just messed it up.

Student Two: Mine's making progress.

Student One: Good job, my friend. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016)

In this example, although one participant announced that his project was not ideal, he was able to compliment another participant who shared the success of her project. A second example revealed the change in the social environment of Culture Club was the comment of “Your mom is not here to criticize you” (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016). In this instance, a participant encouraged another with the reminder that failure in the process of engaging in the arts-based, cultural exploration activities was acceptable. Both of these instances demonstrated the positive and supportive social environment of Culture Club.

A representative conversation that highlighted jovial interactions of the participants was provided in the following exchange.

Student One: [My fry bread] is the prettiest.

Student Two: Yours looks the prettiest?

Student One: Mine looks so handsome.

Student Two: You sure? I’m pretty sure it came out trash.

Student One: Yours came out trash.

Student Two: Okay, fine. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016)

In this conversation, two participants teased each other about their pottery projects. Though the situation could have escalated, the friendship between the participants facilitated the continued cultivation of the relationship.

In sum, the social environment of Culture Club was greatly influenced by the amount and quality of the participants’ social interactions. For the first eleven sessions, due to a disruptive participant, my inability to share power, and the content of the



sessions, the social climate of Culture Club reflected the stifled social interactions of the participants. However, once more collaborative arts-based projects were introduced, the social environment flourished. Thus, the social environment of Culture Club reflected the participants increased engagement in more collaborative cultural exploration activities, resulting in more positive social interactions.

***Participants worked through differences and embraced the diversity represented within Culture Club.*** As they participated in the collaborative, cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, participants navigated various differences, which, ultimately contributed to becoming more accepting of diversity. An example of the participants negotiating dissimilarities occurred while the participants formed their fry-bread dough in session 19 of Culture Club.

Jesus: I'm [flattening out my dough] on my plate.

Student One: You're cheating. You're supposed to do it like this.

Jesus: I can do it how I want. No one said I'm not to do it like that. You're doing it like, not to be racist, but you're doing it like a White person. You have to do it like this to be a Native.

Student Two: [Jesus], and who cares? That's how people do it. Don't judge.

Jesus: Okay. (Culture Club session 19, December 8, 2016)

Instead of escalating, the conflict was neutralized by Jesus's acceptance of the variety of methods employed to form the fry-bread dough.

Another exemplar that highlighted the participants' proficiency in negotiating and embracing differences occurred during session 15 of Culture Club as the participants painted their pottery projects.

Danielle: I have my own profile. Who wants to add me as a friend?

Student One: Me.

Jesus: What, on Facebook?

Danielle: My name is \*\*\*\*\*.

Jesus: You got Facebook?

Juanita: No, I'm waiting until I'm in high school.

Jesus: What?

Juanita: I'm waiting until I'm in high school.

Jesus: I see six-year-olds have Facebook. For real.

Danielle: I have Facebook since I was like eight.

Juanita: [I'm waiting to have Facebook] because my mom and dad still think that  
there are people like ... (interrupted) ...

Student One: Kidnapping kids on Facebook and stuff.

Student Two: That's why they're waiting until [high school].

Jesus: Oh, okay. (Culture Club session 15, November 15, 2016)

The conversation concluded with Jesus's understanding of Juanita's decision.

In both examples, the participants negotiated potentially contentious differences, such as individualized ways of learning and social media. However, in these instances, the participants successfully navigated their differences to ultimately develop deeper understandings. The development of greater understanding and acceptance was demonstrated in both examples as the participants' embraced the diversity within Culture Club.

***RQ2 findings summary.*** Taken as a whole, the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club were fun, interesting, and collaborative. Although facilitating a sense of comfort and safety in Culture Club was initially challenging, the collaboration reflected in the later cultural exploration activities fostered a space in which the participants felt safe and comfortable in exploring and sharing their cultural identities. Additionally, the positive space of Culture Club cultivated friendships among the participants that extended outside of Culture Club. Thus, the shared experiences provided through the cultural exploration activities contributed to the creation of a Third Space within Culture Club.

With respect to the four theoretically-deduced criteria, including creating new knowledge, reclaiming and reinscribing, creating new or hybrid identities, and developing a more inclusive perspective, all of these criteria were satisfied. The cultural exploration activities of Culture Club provided opportunities for participants to create new knowledge by way of collaborative learning and the integration of their knowledge from their Secondspaces of home into the Secondspace of school, in which Culture Club was hosted. These cultural exploration activities also provided grounding for participants to elicit cultural information from family as well as determine new areas of interest, both of which extended opportunities to create new knowledge. Collaborative learning and the meaningful integration of the participants' First and Secondspaces of home and school produced new knowledge. Thus, Culture Club satisfied the first theoretically-deduced criterion of a Third Space.

For the second criterion, Culture Club was hosted within the Secondspace of school and therefore it did not allow participants to universally reclaim or reinscribe their

paradigms of school or cultural identity. Nevertheless, it provided groundwork for the participants to continue the process of reclaiming and reinscribing the hegemonic notions of school and culture. Thus, although the participants did not indicate enduring changes in their perceptions of school or culture, their engagement in the process demonstrated Culture Club satisfied the theoretically-deduced criterion of reclaim and reinscribe.

With respect to the third criterion, the participants engaged in conversations focused around the analysis of their identities. These formative discussions then contributed to their comfort and willingness to share their cultural identities with other students outside of Culture Club (although they did not yet share them). Therefore, Culture Club facilitated the creation of hybrid or new identities, as the participants demonstrated greater confidence and comfort in their own identities, Culture Club satisfied the third theoretically-deduced criterion of creating new or hybrid identities.

Finally, participants' engagement in collaborative cultural exploration activities facilitated positive interactions and social environment during Culture Club, Cyclically, the positive social environment increased the participants' ability to negotiate differences and embrace diverse ways of thinking. Thus, Culture Club satisfied the Third Space theoretically-deduced criterion ensuring the development of more inclusive perspectives.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, a thorough analysis of the qualitative data, findings supported the notion that cultural exploration activities facilitated very modest changes in participants' cultural identities. Moreover, the shared experiences of Culture Club reflected the initial establishment of a Third Space. Further, the findings also demonstrated that Culture Club satisfied the theoretically-deduced criteria required in the creation of a Third Space.

These findings have been discussed further with respect to their connections to theoretical perspectives and supporting scholarship in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

*There are no neutral spaces for the kind of work required to ensure that traditional Indigenous knowledge flourishes; that it remains connected intimately to Indigenous people as a way of thinking, knowing, and being; that it is sustained and actually grows over future generations.*

~ Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2007, p.81)

In this chapter, I present a discussion of the findings. This discussion consists of a brief recapitulation of the purpose and summary of findings of the study to set the context for the discussion, triangulation of qualitative data, outcomes related to research and theory, and limitations. Additionally, the implications for practice, implications for future research, and conclusions are also included. Within each of these sections, I discuss information appropriate to the section, such as connections to previous research, Third Space, and other pertinent matters.

#### **Recapitulation of Purpose and Summary of Outcomes**

The purpose of this action research study is to examine the relations between Culture Club, cultural identity, and Third Space theory. The focus of Culture Club, which consists of cultural exploration activities, was devised using the theoretically-deduced criteria of Third Space theory (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) to generate a sustainable framework that privileged and developed the cultural identities of the sixth-grade American Indian participants by connecting their knowledge and experiences from their Secondspaces of home and school into a Third Space. Cultural exploration activities of Culture Club modestly changes the participants' cultural identities and facilitates the

creation of a Third Space. As operationalized in this study, Culture Club also satisfies all of the theoretically-deduced criteria that are in use to produce a Third Space. Finally, I posit that Culture Club is critical in decolonizing and reframing the historic assimilative purpose of the school space into a Third Space rich in collaboration, discussion, and inclusivity for Indigenous cultural identities.

### **Triangulation of Qualitative Data**

To ensure the validity and rigor of the findings, triangulation of the qualitative data requires that two or more data sources that are used to examine the same constructs are implemented within a study and a comparison of the collected data to ensure that similar findings for each construct are present. Because this action research study employs four data sources, data from those sources are compared to determine the consistency of those outcomes. To illustrate triangulation, consider the theme-related component entitled, “Participants developed a better understanding of the connection between family and culture.” This theme-related component is supported by data from the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interview data and Culture Club sessions data.

Similarly, another theme-related component is “Participants varied in their overall feelings of being connected to their Indigenous culture.” Evidence from the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, from Culture Club sessions, and from the researcher’s journal support interpretation of this theme-related component. Overall, the theme-related components that are derived in the study are typically supported by two or three data sources, which attest to the adequacy of the interpretive procedures in the study and the constructs derived from the data.

## **Outcomes Related to Research and Theory**

This action research study examines the contributory role of the collaborative, cultural exploration activities of Culture Club using the two constructs of cultural identity and Third Space. Accordingly, the connections between this study's findings and those of other studies is delineated by theme below.

*Cultural identity.* A thorough analysis of the qualitative data examining the influence of the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club on the cultural identities of the participants renders four theme-related components—cultural knowledge; understanding of the connection of family and culture; engagement in cultural traditions and practices outside of Culture Club; and feelings of connection to Indigenous cultures. There are modest changes for three theme-related components including cultural knowledge, understanding of connection of family and culture, and engagement in cultural traditions and practices outside of Culture Club. However, for the fourth theme-related component, participants 'feelings of connection to their Indigenous cultures', the findings were varied.

A comparative analysis of the phase 1, semi-structured interviews and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, and an exploratory analysis of the recorded Culture Club sessions substantiates these findings. In the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, with regard to the first three theme-related components exploring the participants' cultural knowledge, understanding of connection between family and culture, and engagement in cultural practices outside of Culture Club, participants articulated uncertainty. However, in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the participants cited specific Culture Club activities when sharing their cultural knowledge, understandings of the connection



between family and culture, and comfort or willingness to engage in cultural traditions and practices outside of Culture Club. These specific instances demonstrate the influential role of the cultural exploration activities on the first three theme-related components of the participants' cultural identities.

These findings are consistent with those obtained in the *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri*, arts-based programs for Indigenous youth, which show participants' engagement in collaborative, cultural exploration activities facilitated the development of the participants' cultural knowledge through the creation of a "Third Place" (Hunter, 2005, p. 144). Similarly, the participants of Culture Club engaged in cultural exploration activities, including arts-based projects, and also demonstrated increases in their cultural knowledge and identities. In the phase 3, semi-structured interview, the participants cited specific Culture Club activities as the basis for their cultural knowledge. These findings are similar to those from the *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* study (Hunter, 2005), as the participants also cited projects that aided in their development of cultural knowledge. For instance, through collaboratively constructing dance choreography, the discussions pertaining to the projects encouraged the participants to not only learn from one another, but they also deepen their own cultural knowledge through sharing information and experiences.

Culture Club participants also indicate greater interest and comfort in participating in cultural traditions and practices outside of Culture Club. In the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, all of the participants cited specific Culture Club activities that contribute to increasing their interest and comfort for participating in cultural traditions and practices. This finding was similar to the outcomes for participants of the

*Ko'ts'ihtla Project*, which was another arts-based program for Indigenous youth, which also reports increased cultural identities by way of interest in engaging more in tribal communities (Fanian, 2015).

The participants of Culture Club also report increased understandings of the connections between family and culture and cite specific Culture Club activities in both the recorded Culture Club sessions and the phase 3, semi-structured interviews. These findings are consistent with those from the *Ko'ts'ihtla Project*. The arts-based, community activism activities of the *Ko'ts'ihtla Project* facilitated the participants' discussion of cultural knowledge and traditions with not only each other, but other community and family members, which deepened their understandings of the link between family and culture.

When exploring changes in participants' feelings of connection to their Indigenous cultures in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the results were more varied. Participants indicate they maintain about the same level of connection to their Indigenous culture or perceive their connection as being slightly greater. Further, participants suggest Culture Club either had no influence on changing this perceived connection to their Indigenous cultures or it had minimal influence. Nevertheless, participants view Culture Club in a positive way and it has different influences on them.

These findings are aligned with those from the quantitative study examining the effects of culture-specific education programs (Powers, 2006). For example, Powers' results show the extent that the American Indian youth benefited from the culture-based educational practices depends on how strongly the participants identify with their Indigenous cultures (Powers, 2006). Similarly, in this study, those participants who

indicate the most uncertainty of their connections to Indigenous cultures, namely Juanita, Danielle, and Charley, at the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, report either minimal increases or maintain feelings of connections to their Indigenous cultures in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews. Martha, on the other hand, who was the most grounded in her Indigenous culture at the phase 1, semi-structured interview and during Culture Club sessions, initially reports the greatest increase in her feeling of connection to her Indigenous culture in her phase 3, semi-structured interview. Although she did revise her response to indicate an incremental shift, the general finding of the participants' initial self-reported connections to their Indigenous cultures is congruent with that presented in Powers' quantitative study.

Collectively, with respect to the contributory role of the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, the research suggests that shared, culturally-focused experiences, particularly those that are arts-based, facilitate the development of cultural identity. Culture Club participants are provided multiple and varied opportunities to develop their cultural identities through the collaborative, cultural exploration activities. Thus, the shared experiences of Culture Club modestly change participants' cultural identities by way of deepening cultural knowledge; increasing the understanding of the connection between family and culture; and increasing willingness and comfort in engaging in cultural traditions and practices outside of Culture Club. However, only half of the participants indicated a slight, but positive shift in their feelings of connection to their Indigenous cultures, whereas the other half reported that their feelings of connection were maintained.

*Third Space.* A thorough analysis of the qualitative data examining the influence of the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club on the creation of a Third Space provides two theme-related components. These theme-related components are descriptions of how Culture Club activities are seen and safety in exploring and sharing cultural identity within Culture Club. Additionally, the four theoretically-deduced criteria of creating of new knowledge, reclaiming and reinscribing hegemonic notions of school and identity, creating new or hybrid identities, and developing inclusive perspectives are also employed to analyze the role of cultural exploration activities in creating a Third Space. For all six theme-related components, the findings demonstrate the positive, yet critical, influence of the Culture Club activities in facilitating a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996).

In both the recorded Culture Club sessions and phase 3, semi-structured interviews, the important role of the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club in creating a Third Space is substantiated. In the recorded Culture Club sessions, Third Space is evidenced in the participants' enjoyment of the cultural exploration activities, as well as their comfortable discussion of topics, including cultural and general identities, and the negotiation of paradigmatic differences. In the phase 3, semi-structured interview questions, the participants' description of the Culture Club activities as fun, interesting, and collaborative, and their report of feeling safe in sharing and exploring their cultural identities within the context of Culture Club, corroborate the existence of a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) within Culture Club.

These findings are consistent with relevant research studies exploring the importance of engaging in collaborative, cultural exploration activities to facilitate a

Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Results from *Contact Inc*, *Meetings/Dandiiri*, and the *Ko'ts'iihtla Project* programs, arts-based projects, show it is necessary for Indigenous participants to actively create and share with each other, which often encourage discussions of vulnerable topics otherwise left unexplored (Fanian, 2015; Hunter, 2015). In the *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* programs, while working collaboratively on their arts-based projects, participants share aspects of their cultural identities. These conversations encourage the participants to create new understandings of each other by way of discussing and negotiating differences (Hunter, 2015). Ultimately, the participants are able to transcend oppressive stereotypes to reclaim and reinscribe their cultural identities as privileged. Similarly, in the *Ko'ts'iihtla Project*, the arts-based projects, and discussions covered in the Native American Literature class, encourages participants to discuss seemingly unrelated, but deeply personal topics, such as fears and hopes (Fanian, 2015; San Pedro, 2013; 2017). Through these discussions, participants build strong relationships among each other and they also tackle difficult challenges within the community by adopting leadership roles. Thus, these experiences, which are provided through the arts-based projects, ultimately contribute to the development of the participants' identities.

Similarly, within the context of Culture Club, the participants dialogically explore and share their cultural and general identities while collaboratively working on cultural exploration, arts-based activities. A few of the topics discussed during these collaborative ventures are what it means to be Indigenous, hobbies, and personal strengths. Interestingly, the interview of familial cultural leaders for the research project was not an arts-based activity but, it also contributes to a Third Space by fostering dialogue

revolving around Indigenous cultures. However, consistent with the *Contact Inc, Meetings/Dandiiri* (Hunter, 2005), and the *Ko'ts'iihtla Project* (Fanian, 2015), the arts-based projects better facilitate collaboration and powerful discussions of vulnerable, yet critical topics that may influence the development of participants' cultural identities.

**Theoretically-deduced criteria.** The criteria deduced from Bhabha's (1994) and Soja's (1996) notions of Third Space are employed to (a) design the innovation of Culture Club and to (b) determine the degree to which a Third Space is created within Culture Club. Accordingly, through a thorough analysis of the Third Space theories, four criteria must exist to provide evidence of a Third Space. These criteria are: creating new knowledge; reclaiming and reinscribing hegemonic notions of identity and school; creating hybrid or new identities; and developing inclusive perspectives.

The findings demonstrate cultural exploration activities of Culture Club satisfy all four of the theoretically-deduced criteria of a Third Space. A review of these criteria, their summarized justifications, and corresponding findings from the study are provided.

***Creating new knowledge.*** Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) requires thinking beyond the "originary and initial subjectivities to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in an articulation of cultural differences" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). Within the context of Culture Club, the participants create new knowledge through engaging in cultural exploration activities such as the research and arts-based projects. These activities require the active collection of cultural knowledge from familial leaders, collaboration among Culture Club members, and integration of the participants' knowledge from the Secondspace (Soja, 1996) of home and of school. All of these purposefully devised cultural exploration activities facilitate the generation of new

knowledge and also spark specific cultural interests, thus providing further opportunities in which new knowledge can be produced.

***Reclaiming and reinscribing hegemonic notions of identity and school.*** Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) operationalizes “The ‘right’ to...reinscribe through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 3). When participants are involved in the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, they also engage in discussions in which they analyze and challenge their conceptualizations of both their cultural and general identities, as well as their notions of school. This process of reclaiming and reinscribing is clear in the recorded Culture Club discussions of cultural appropriation, personal strengths, and school space. Although these conversations are grounded in the process of reclaiming and reinscribing multiple forms of oppression and negativity into those of power and privilege, most of the discussions did not definitively result in change. Nevertheless, the occurrence of these discussions meets the criteria of reclaiming and reinscribing, as well as highlighting the potential of Culture Club to empower participants to challenge hegemonic oppression.

***Creating new or hybrid identities.*** Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) must encourage “a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 3). Within the context of Culture Club, the cultural exploration activities facilitated the participants’ increased willingness and security to share their cultural identities with students outside of Culture Club. Just as the activities serve as a conduit for collaboration and safety within Culture Club, at the same time, they also provide ways of sharing aspects of the participants’ Indigeneity with which they had previously not been comfortable sharing.

This change in the participants' behavior demonstrates a deeper transformation of their identities.

*Developing more inclusive perspectives.* Third Space must also “encompass a multiplicity of perspectives” (Soja, 1996, p. 5). The cultural exploration activities of Culture Club facilitate positive interactions, which contribute to a safe, inclusive space in which the participants are better supported to navigate differences. This development of inclusion is observable with Jesus' interactions with the other Culture Club members. Although the other members are unaware of his dual diagnosis of an emotional disability and giftedness, which contributed to his sometimes pessimistic comments, the Culture Club members readily support his endeavors, and even diffuse potentially negative situations. The climate of Culture Club, which supports participants to be inclusive about participants' differences, eventually allows Jesus to be more supportive of the other participants as well. As a result, the differences of the participants are voiced and included in Culture Club, creating a positive, safe space for iteratively creating new knowledge, reclaiming and reinscribing hegemonic notions, and creating new or hybrid identities.

Taken together, Culture Club satisfies the four theoretically-deduced criteria that are necessary for creating a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). As demonstrated, constructing and evaluating Culture Club with the theoretically-deduced criteria provides an effective framework to decolonize the school and classroom space.

**Third Space theory and Thirdspace.** Earlier studies highlight the critical need to reframe the school and classroom space into those that integrate, privilege, and cultivate Indigenous cultural identities (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Deyhle &



Swisher, 1997; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Powers, 2006; San Pedro, 2013; 2017). Both Bhabha's (1994) Third Space theory and Soja's (1996) Thirdspace can be employed to explore and explain the effects of colonization and also create a decolonized space. In brief, both theoretical perspectives posit that the merging of two disparate cultures and paradigms generates new knowledge and identities, challenges hegemonic paradigms, and meaningfully includes diversity (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996).

For the purposes of this research study, two spaces that are critical are defined as the Secondspace, which includes participants' cultural identities and knowledge from their homes and the Secondspace as the physical and socialized classroom in which Culture Club is hosted. Culture Club facilitates the creation of a Third Space by allowing participants' to integrate Secondspaces into that of the Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Because Culture Club is devised to decolonize the classroom space, it is purposefully framed by the theoretically-deduced criteria substantiating a true Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996), and the studies underscoring the integration of Indigenous cultural identity (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; San Pedro, 2013; 2017; Silver et al, 2002) and knowledge and arts-based projects (Fanian, 2015; Hunter, 2005). Accordingly, Culture Club provides cultural exploration activities in which multiple, varied opportunities are afforded for participants to engage and explore their Indigenous cultural identities and knowledge. Thus, the creation of a Third Space Culture Club aids in fostering positive changes, albeit ever so small, in the cultural identities of the participants.

**Key components associated with previous research of cultural identity and Third Space.** Culture Club is designed around the key components of CRS (Castagno &

Brayboy, 2008; Powers, 2006) and collaborative, arts-based projects that are shown to be influential in cultural identity programs for Indigenous youth (Fanian, 2015; Hunter, 2005). Consequently, the integration of these components into Culture Club may have contributed to the findings in this study. For example, in the *Contact Inc.*, and *Meetings/Dandiiri* programs (Hunter, 2005) and the *Ko'ts'iihtla Project* (Fanian, 2015), cultural exploration, arts-based projects serve as a conduit to the critical dialogue necessary in moving beyond differences and devising action. These programs also result in the creation of new knowledge and hybrid, or new, identities (Fanian, 2015; Hunter, 2005). Accordingly, the most integral element in Culture Club is the collaborative, cultural exploration activities, many of which are arts-based, that also production of new knowledge and hybrid, or new, identities (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Additionally, one of the key conclusions from the study on “scene” is the importance of the interaction between identity and spatiality (Glass, 2012). In Culture Club, the participants rearrange the desks from straight rows into a circle in which everyone faced each other. By changing the physical, and arguably social, space of the classroom, the creation of a Third Space is enhanced provides greater opportunities for sharing and discussion.

**Lessons learned.** As a result of this study, I am able to glean numerous insights to improve future action research projects and my problem of practice. However, the most pertinent lessons revolve around the action research process and the importance of decolonizing work within the school and classroom space.

Action research (AR) describes the iterative process in which practitioners initially identify a problem of practice specific to their own contexts. Subsequently, the practitioner reflects, devises and implements an action plan, gathers data and analyzes it,

and reflects on the findings before repeating the AR cycle (Mills, 2014). Because AR is conducted to improve the experiences and lives of the participants, despite the sociopolitical and geographical contexts (Mills, 2014), the AR model is purposefully selected to explore the connections between Culture Club activities, cultural identity, and Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Further, by repositioning the researcher as an insider who conducts research *with* the participants, AR facilitates discourses of power and reframes experiences, which challenges the historical purpose and method of research (Irzarry & Brown, 2014). Thus, AR is aligned with the epistemological and theoretical framing of this study by way of sharing power and empowering participants (Irzarry & Brown, 2014; Smith, 2012), and by operationalizing the AR cycle, I glean meaningful and pragmatic insights about the research cycle and the importance of decolonizing work within the school and classroom space.

I find Smith's (2012, p. 5) observation of "Indigenous research is a humble and humbling activity" is poignantly illuminated when conducting this action research project. Throughout the first eleven sessions of Culture Club, I am contending with repositioning my role as a teacher into that of a facilitator of Third Space, and sharing power with the participants. Ultimately, both of these initial challenges are essential to the purposeful decolonizing work of this study as well as the AR model (Irzarry & Brown, 2014; Mills, 2014; Smith, 2012). Although actualizing my role as a facilitator and operationalizing shared power with the participants requires weeks to attain, through consistent reflectivity on the purpose of my action research, I am able to develop as a researcher and a practitioner.

Through engaging in the decolonizing work of providing a Third Space within the context of Culture Club, I am able to observe enduring changes in the participants. The participants report greater comfort and willingness to share and discuss their Indigeneity with other students in the phase 3, semi-structured interviews and I am also able observe these conversations during school hours. The participants also continue to wear the jewelry made on the last day of Culture Club as symbols of solidarity for those who identify as American Indian and who participate in Culture Club. As a researcher and practitioner, these observations distinctly highlight the critical need and power of creating a Third Space within the school and classroom context for Indigenous youth. Taken together, through the implementation of AR to explore the connections between Culture Club, cultural identity, and Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996), I glean deeper insights into the AR process and the importance of decolonizing work within the school and classroom context.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As with any research study, this action research project had limitations that require consideration. Although the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club are adaptable, the small population resulting from the convenience sampling of only the sixth-grade American Indian students curtails transferability of results. The noteworthy limitations of the study consist of the identification of participants, attrition, duration of innovation, recording device, and experimenter effect.

**Identification of participants.** The identification of participants is a limitation to the study. The five participants selected to complete the phase 1 and phase 3, semi-structured interviews are identified using the district-wide Synergy attendance and

demographic program and the district-list of students affiliated with Indigenous tribes. However, other American Indian students are not simply included on these district-wide lists because, for various reasons, their parents elect not to identify them as American Indians. Consequently, identifying possible participants is challenging because some students who are interested in joining Culture Club are unsure of their Indigeneity or could not participate in Culture Club due to scheduling conflicts. Thus, there may be possible participants who are not identified as American Indian, or not included in this study due to scheduling conflicts.

**Attrition.** The small sample size of this study is not considered a limitation, per se, because the purpose of the study is to explore, in-depth through qualitative inquiry, the participants' cultural identities and creation of a Third Space. However, attrition is recognized as a limitation to the study. Because there are only five participants who complete the phase 1, semi-structured interviews, the attrition of Jesus then decreases the number of participants to just four for the phase 3, semi-structured interviews. Because the focal population is so small, the removal of even one participant may greatly reduce the data and interpretations derived from it.

**Duration of the innovation.** The length of Culture Club activities over the course of 15 weeks may also be a limitation to this study. Although the qualitative findings highlight the connections between the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, cultural identity, and Third Space, the participants may experience greater changes in their cultural identities by creating a more substantial Third Space if Culture Club is a year in duration instead of a semester. Further, because the first eleven sessions of Culture Club are clearly not as conducive to changes in participants' cultural identities or

the creation of a Third Space because they were less interactive in nature. By contrast, if Culture Club focuses more heavily on arts-based, cultural exploration activities, greater changes in the participants' cultural identities and the facilitation of a Third Space may occur. Additionally, although I attempted to include all the Indigenous cultures as representatives for the arts-based projects, the limited duration of the innovation prevents deeper explorations of cultural practices and traditions. Another indication of the duration of Culture Club as a limitation is that, after the conclusion of Culture Club, the participants consistently ask if Culture Club would continue the following semester. These questions reveal the participants' desire to extend the duration of Culture Club.

**Recording device.** Technical issues surrounding the recording of the Culture Club sessions also curtail the amount and quality of data collected. For instance, in the first eleven sessions, I dominate most of the verbiage due to struggling with adopting a more facilitative, less instructive role. If I record more Culture Club meetings from sessions 12 to 20, when participants are more actively engaged in critical dialogue, more insights into the cultural exploration activities' influence on the participants' cultural identities and the creation of a Third Space may have been rendered.

**Researcher effect.** The researcher effect occurs when the behavior of the study's participants are influenced by the researcher's personality, attitudes, behavior, or expectations (Bracht & Glass, 1968). In the role of the researcher, I also serve as a teacher of sixth-grade for five years in the school in which the study was conducted. Additionally, I serve as the sixth-grade teacher of the participants and I also had many of the participants' siblings as students. Thus, the limitation of the experimenter effect is unavoidable. Consequently, participants may feel obligated to provide responses they

perceive as desirable to me. Further, because the purpose of an action research project is for the practitioner to identify a problem of practice, completely removing oneself from the role of practitioner into that of only the researcher is impossible (Mills, 2014).

To mitigate the researcher effect, devising and implementing multiple data sources, including phase 1, semi-structured interviews; phase 3, semi-structured interviews; recorded Culture Club sessions; and research journals are paramount. Further, to mitigate this effect I include member-checks and triangulation of the data to ensure validity.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings of this research study provide many important and pragmatic implications for practice. The most pertinent implications include insights into how non-Indigenous educators can more actively and effectively support American Indian youth through collaboration with Indigenous parents and community members, and by firmer monitoring and accountability of Culture Club members,

**Supporting American Indian youth and the role of collaboration.** As I describe earlier, the historical, assimilative agenda of schools continues to systemically fail American Indian youth (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010; Freeman & Fox, 2005; San Pedro, 2013; 2017; Silver et al. 2002; U.S. Department of Education 2015a). Also contributing to the systemic failure of the education system is the incongruence, exclusion, and invalidation of Indigenous peoples' lives and cultures (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; San Pedro, 2013; 2017; Silver et al, 2002; Spring, 2014; Teske & Nelson, 1974). This critical need to challenge the traditional school and classroom space requires educators to actively and purposefully engage in decolonizing

work. However, because most educators do not represent student demographics (Spring, 2014), reflection, cultural competency, and collaboration are imperative.

A review of the literature underscores the critical role of educators in providing educational support for American Indian youth. Powers (2006) quantitative study of 240 American Indian youth clearly demonstrates students' perception of support from educators is imperative to the youths' educational outcomes. Additionally, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) show culturally responsive schooling (CRS) was especially beneficial in promoting equitable and quality education. CRS requires the authentic integration of the Indigenous languages and cultures of those represented within the student population (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). However, because CRS strategies can easily be reduced to essentializations and generalizations active collaboration among educators and Indigenous families and community members is fundamental to the success of CRS (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

Therefore, in proposing modifications for future iterations of Culture Club, a greater effort should be made to actively and purposefully collaborate with the Indigenous families and community members represented by the Club members. Although the current research project is more focused on CRS strategies, the arts-based projects included in Culture Club could be more effective.

Additionally, consistent with San Pedro's (2013; 2017) work, the role of the teacher should be shifted toward one as co-researcher and co-discoverer with the students. In this way, the teacher and students collectively make sense of the realities encountered outside of school that influence their immediate identity construction. By perceiving herself as a constant learner, San Pedro shows Ms. Bee sought future readings



on the discussions held in class and she also reflected on her own growth *with* the students.

In my work with Culture Club, I do not present myself as a cultural leader, rather I learn alongside and from the participants. I also include authentic depictions of the tribal affiliations represented by the members of Culture Club for each of the arts-based projects. Although these attempts may suffice for the limited duration of Culture Club in the present study, the lack of collaboration or involvement with participants' families and community members may also limit the influence of the cultural exploration activities on the participants' cultural identities.

**Monitoring and accountability of Culture Club members.** In addition to the identification of participants in Culture Club being challenging, there are several students who participated in Culture Club, but they are not officially recognized as sharing an affinity with any Indigenous peoples. As a result, several students who joined Culture Club may not be Indigenous, or are too far removed to possess any connections to the Indigenous peoples.

After some reflection on this issue, I feel that the self-selection of the Culture Club members and the confirmation of their official Indigeneity was not necessary for the first iteration of the club. This feeling is reinforced by the decision to officially confirm the Indigenous identities of those who elect to participate in this study.

However, throughout the duration of Culture Club, students who do not actually identify with any Indigenous peoples either left Culture Club or became disruptive. One participant, Student Three in this study, was permitted to remain in Culture Club for nine of the twenty sessions despite several talks and warnings, as recorded in my research

journal. Also, I note in my research journal that upon his leaving Culture Club, participants immediately begin discussing complex and vulnerable issues.

Thus, in proposing changes for future iterations of Culture Club, stricter monitoring and accountability of the members is necessary. Although the authors of the *Contact Inc* and *Meetings/Dandiiri* workshops perceive conflict as a form of making meaning and sharing disparate values and beliefs, malicious, personal comments toward other Culture Club members does not contribute to constructive dialogue. Further, in Third Space theory, Bhabha (1994) underscores the importance of active mediation to facilitate a Third Space. Thus, in the case of disruptive students who persistently inhibit the development of a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996), facilitation requires their removal. Accordingly, I suggest for future iterations of Culture Club, that after some innovations, should the disruptive behavior continue, the students should be removed to preserve the facilitation of the Third Space. Ultimately, the value of decolonizing work conducted within a context constructed on power differentials lies in the reflective consideration of the long-term outcomes of short-term innovations and decisions.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The culturally integrative and exploratory model offered by Culture Club provides schools a framework in which the cultural dissonance experienced by Indigenous youth can be addressed (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Silver et al, 2002). A review of literature pertaining to Indigenous Third Space programs reveals cultural exploration, arts-based projects are paramount in facilitating both a Third Space and the development of the participants' cultural identities (Fanian, 2015; Hunter, 2005). Problematizing the implementation of

similar programs is the continued assimilative agenda espoused within the school and classroom spaces (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; San Pedro, 2013; 2017; Spring, 2014; Teske & Nelson, 1974). Thus, Culture Club serves as a decolonizing resistance to the assimilative agenda by redefining the physical and socialized space of the classroom into a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996).

Although Culture Club proved effective in privileging the participants' identities and the creation of a Third Space, it only marked the beginning in reframing the school and classroom spaces into those in which all peoples, identities, and ideas are authentically voiced, validated, and included. Because Culture Club is always hosted within the Secondspace of the classroom after the conclusion of the school day, the study is limited in terms of spatial and temporal scope. To advance the study, the next step would be to create a Third Space within a highly diverse classroom around the research question of, "How can Third Space be translated into the context of a diverse classroom within a Title I school?" However, as Third Spaces are never stagnant in producing fresh ideas and identities by reclaiming and reinscribing cultural and spatial contexts (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996), the positive findings, but limited scope of this study demonstrate that it can only be understood as an initial step in reframing the physical and socialized school and classroom spaces.

Future research on Culture Club may include investigating the long-term changes in participants' cultural identities and their ideas for improving Culture Club. Research endeavors focusing on cultural exploration activities can examine how different types of activities may influence participants' cultural identities and the creation of a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Other research may include how Third Space (Bhabha,

1994; Soja, 1996) can be extended to Indigenous parents and community members within school, home, and community locations. Such power sharing by students, community members, and educators has the potential to provide for powerfully transformative effects but, such attempts also present a host of complex issues that must be resolved. For example, sharing of information and holding discussions about Third Space and how to create Third Space will be foundational. Determining the curricular activities of the new, improved Culture Club will take considerable time and effort. Nevertheless, inviting students, community members, and educators to work collaboratively to develop and implement a new, improved version of Culture Club appears to offer incredible opportunities to move Culture Club to the next level and afford Indigenous youth powerful opportunities to develop stronger cultural identities and better articulated connections to Indigenous cultures.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this action research is to examine the relations between the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club, cultural identity, and the creation of a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). The findings show cultural exploration activities contribute to very modest changes in many aspects of the participants' cultural identities but, ultimately, did not shift overall feelings of connection to Indigenous cultures. Additionally, the Culture Club activities, through collaboration, facilitate creation of a Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996). Culture Club also successfully reframes the physical and socialized classroom space into a Third Space by satisfying the deduced criteria grounded in Bhabha's (1994) and Soja's (1996) theoretical work.

The operationalized focus of Culture Club, which consists of the collaborative, cultural exploration activities, is devised using the theoretically-deduced criteria of Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996) to generate a sustainable framework that privileges and attempts to develop the cultural identities of sixth-grade American Indian participants. The purpose of the cultural exploration activities is to actively and collaboratively connect the participants' knowledge and experiences from their Secondspaces of home and school into a Third Space. In other words, by integrating Indigenous ways of knowing from local communities into the school or classroom context, Indigenous youth can embrace and develop their cultural identities. Through authentically engaging the participants by including Indigenous cultural leaders from both the participants' homes and communities, the framework of Culture Club may be more sustainable and adaptable to address the unique interests and needs presented by the participants. Thus, Culture Club has the potential to decolonize school and classroom spaces by providing consistent opportunities for Indigenous students to meaningfully engage in their Indigeneity within a hegemonically assimilative context.

Nevertheless, without the thoughtful inclusion and collaboration with Indigenous community leaders, the activities of Culture Club can easily be reduced to essentializations of Indigeneity. Therefore, in moving forward, it is paramount those involved in the program and the school actively involve the local Indigenous communities in the continued iterations of Culture Club. Without collaboration, the cultural exploration activities of Culture Club risk reinforcing deficit perceptions of Indigeneity, and perpetuating assimilative actions, instead of developing Indigenous cultural identity by decolonizing the spaces of schools and classrooms.

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APPENDIX A  
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Tell me about your native culture.
2. What are some things that you do that are important to your culture? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How often do you do them?</li><li>- Who do you do them with?</li></ul>
3. Who is someone you go to, to learn more about your culture? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How often do you visit or ask them things about your culture?</li></ul>
4. What is something in your culture that you're proud about?
5. What is something you want to learn more about in your culture?
6. When is your culture talked about at school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How is our culture talked about at school?</li><li>- How did it make you feel?</li></ul>
7. Do you feel comfortable talking about or sharing your culture at school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Why or why not?</li></ul>
8. What would make you feel more comfortable in talking about or sharing your culture at school?
9. If your culture were included more often in school, would the way in which you see school change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Why or why not?</li></ul>
10. If your culture were included more often in school, would the way in which you see your culture change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Why or why not?</li></ul>
11. Tell me about a time when your home culture was celebrated in school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- In a lesson?</li><li>- When did it happen?</li><li>- How did it happen?</li><li>- Why did it happen?</li><li>- Did it change your view of school?</li><li>- Did it change your academic motivation?</li><li>- <b>Was this a positive or negative experience for you?</b></li></ul>

### POST-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Tell me about your Native culture.
2. What are some things that you do that are important to your culture? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How often do you do them?</li><li>- Who do you do them with?</li></ul>
3. What is something in your culture that you're proud about?
4. What is something you want to learn more about in your culture?
5. After Culture Club, do you feel comfortable talking about or sharing your culture in school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- In class?</li><li>- Outside of class, but still at school?</li><li>- Why or why not?</li></ul>

6. What would make you feel more comfortable in talking about or sharing your culture at school?
7. After learning about Native American cultures in Culture Club, has your feeling about school changed? - If so, how? - If not, how?
8. After learning about Native American cultures in Culture Club, has your feeling about your Native culture changed? - If so, how? - If not, how?
9. If your culture were included more often in school, would the way in which you see your culture change? - Why or why not?

<b>ADDITIONAL POST-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS</b>
1. Tell me about Culture Club. - What do you think was the purpose of Culture Club?
2. Has Culture Club made you think or feel differently about your native culture? - How? - Why or why not?
3. How comfortable or safe did you feel in exploring your native culture in Culture Club? - Can you tell me more about that?
4. Share an experience from Culture Club that was particularly special or meaningful.
5. How involved did you feel in choosing the topics and projects in Culture Club? - Would you have changed how involved you were in what was done in Culture Club? - Why or why not?
6. What were your favorite projects? - Why? - Can you tell me more about that?
7. What was the most special or meaningful project done in Culture Club? - Why?
8. Did doing the projects make you feel or think differently about your native culture? - Can you tell me more about that?
9. How did it/did it not make a difference?
10. Have you learned more about yourself as a Native American by participating in Culture Club? - Why/Why not are these important to you? - Can you tell me more about that?
11. Have you learned more about Native American culture by participating in Culture Club?



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why/Why not are these important to you?</li> <li>- Can you tell me more about that?</li> </ul>
<p>12. After completing Culture Club, do you think that you are more or less comfortable or willing to participate in more Native American traditions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why or why not?</li> <li>- In what ways?</li> </ul>
<p>13. After participating in Culture Club, how connected do you feel to your Native culture?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why or why not?</li> </ul>
<p>14. Are there activities or experiences from Culture Club that make it easier to talk about or share your culture with other students who were not members of Culture Club?</p>

APPENDIX B  
PARENT RECRUITING SCRIPT

I would appreciate your child's participation in my research project required for my dissertation. A dissertation is original research that is required for doctoral students, including me, to publish so that we can graduate with our doctorate degrees. The purpose of my research is to look into how bringing in your child's culture into a school space, including my classroom, may affect his/her cultural identity. The sessions will be once a week for twelve weeks after school and will focus on culture, research, and arts-based projects. Each session will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and there will be late busses that will pick-up your child at 4:45pm from the school. Your child will receive extra credit for attending and participating in the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program. To be fair, the students who do not participate in the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program will be provided opportunities to acquire the same amount of possible extra credit points provided to those students who do participate in the program.

If you choose to let your child participate, he/she will be required to participate in an interview both before and after the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program to see if there are any changes in his/her cultural identity. The interview will be audio recorded and your child will be able to review his/her answers after they've been written down. The interview will be approximately 15-20 minutes and will be conducted after school. The interview will be published in my dissertation. Also, the work that your child will produce throughout the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program will also be published in my dissertation. Although your child's contributions will remain anonymous, his/her interview may be quoted in my dissertation. You and your child will receive a copy of the study if you're interested. If you choose to let your child participate in my research project, your child will not only help contribute to both my knowledge and the knowledge of everyone who will read my dissertation, but will receive extra credit.

If you choose to not participate, your child's standing in my class and how I see your child will not be affected.

Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX C  
STUDENT RECRUITING SCRIPT

I would appreciate your participation in my research project required for my dissertation. A dissertation is original research that is required for doctoral students, including me, to publish so that we can graduate with our doctorate degrees. The purpose of my research is to look into how bringing in your culture into a school space, such as my classroom, may affect your cultural identity. The sessions will be once a week for twelve weeks after school and will focus on culture, research, and arts-based projects. Each session will last approximately 60 minutes, and there will be late busses that will pick you up at 4:45pm. You will receive extra credit for attending and participating in the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program. To be fair, the students who do not participate in the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program will be provided opportunities to acquire the same amount of possible extra credit points provided to those students who do participate in the program.

If you choose to participate, you will be required to participate in an interview both before and after the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program to see if there are any changes in your cultural identity. The interview will be audio recorded and you will be able to review your answers after they've been written down. The interview will be approximately 15-20 minutes and will be done after school. Your interview will be published in my dissertation. Also, the work that you will produce throughout the tutoring program will also be published in my dissertation. Although your contributions will remain anonymous, you may be quoted in my dissertation. You and your parents will receive a copy of the study if you're interested. If you participate in my research project, you will not only help contribute to my knowledge and the knowledge of everyone who will read my dissertation, but you will also receive extra credit.

If you choose to not participate, your standing in my class and how I see you will not be affected.

Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX D  
CONSENT FORM

**Community of United Learners and Teachers to Understand Research in Education  
(C.U.L.T.U.R.E.) Program**

PARENTAL LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear Parent:

My name is Ms. Roy and I am a graduate student under the direction of my chair, Dr. Linda Caterino, in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gather information about cultural identity development in an after-school program. Data from this study will be used in my dissertation as well as other formats, such as conferences or journal articles. If you desire, you and your child will also be provided the study results upon the completion of the research.

I am inviting your child's participation, which will involve two brief, fifteen to twenty minute interviews after school hours. It also will entail a once a week after-school attendance of the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program for 12 weeks on Mondays beginning in August. However, the first session may be scheduled on another day besides Monday. Each session should last for approximately 45-60 minutes. During the sessions, I will take field-note observations and audio recordings of the students' engagement and interests in the activities. The sessions will be audio recordings will be transcribed and destroyed upon the completion of their transcription. There will be late buses provided by the school to pick-up your child from school at 4:45pm.

Your child's participation in this innovation is voluntary. If you choose to not have your child participate or to withdraw your child from the study at any time, there will be no penalty; it will not affect your child's grade, or their standing in the school in any way. Likewise, if your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty for their decision to withdraw.

The potential benefits related to the participation in this program include the development of relationships and rapport between students who participate in the project, increased perceptions of cultural identity, an opportunity to share and gain ideas, and knowledge as it pertains to cultural identity and academic motivation. Your child will also earn extra credit for his/her attendance and participation in the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program. To ensure equality, the students who do not participate in the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. will be provided opportunities in class to acquire the same number of extra credit as those students who do participate in the program. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your child's participation.

Although your child's contributions ***will be kept confidential and anonymous***, he/she **may be quoted** in my dissertation. The results of this study will be used for my dissertation, but ***your child's name will not be included***. Data will be stored with me in my classroom at \_\_\_\_\_ School in a locked filing cabinet.

If you have any questions regarding this research study or your child's participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my chair Dr. Linda Caterino via the information below:

Ms. Roy at 602-237-9110 ext. 3184, or e-mail at [broy@laveeneld.org](mailto:broy@laveeneld.org)

Dr. Linda Caterino ([Linda.Caterino@asu.edu](mailto:Linda.Caterino@asu.edu)).

Sincerely,

Ms. Roy

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*



APPENDIX E  
ASSENT FORM

Community of United Learners and Teachers to Understand Research in Education  
(C.U.L.T.U.R.E.) Program

I am doing a research study about a program that brings in parts of your culture into an after-school program. A research study is a way to learn more about people. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you may be interviewed before the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program begins and after it ends after-school. You will also be asked to attend the after-school sessions once a week for thirteen weeks for a total of 12 sessions. Each session will last for approximately 45-60 minutes. In the sessions, we will cover different parts of culture, research processes and planning, arts-based project, and presentation of your research and project.

You will receive extra credit for your participation in the C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program for both your attendance and the quality of your work. To make sure that it is fair, you cannot do the extra credit offered to the students who are not participating in the program. There are no foreseeable discomforts or risks that may happen because of your participation in this study.

When we are finished with this study I will write a report about what was covered in the after-school C.U.L.T.U.R.E. program. This report **will not include** your name or that you were in the study. **It may include** examples of your contributions during your participation in the study.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you decide to stop after we begin, that's okay too. If you do not want to be in this research study, how I see you and your class grade will not be affected. Your parents know about the study and have approved your participation in it.

If you decide you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, want to be in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign your name here)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

APPENDIX F  
STUDENT SIGN-IN SHEET

### Culturally Sustaining Tutoring Program Log

Date	Time	Student Name

APPENDIX G  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Linda Caterino Kulhavy

Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe

480/965-7524

Linda.Caterino@asu.edu

Dear Linda Caterino Kulhavy:

On 8/18/2016 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Cultural Identity and Third Space: An Exploration at a Title I School
Investigator:	Linda Caterino Kulhavy
IRB ID:	STUDY00003855
Category of review:	(7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None

Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• culturally sustaining, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• District Approval Letter, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Assent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• sign in sheet, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above);</li> <li>• Parent Permission Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Student Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> </ul>
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The IRB approved the protocol from 8/18/2016 to 8/17/2017 inclusive. Three weeks before 8/17/2017 you are to submit a completed Continuing Review application and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 8/17/2017 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the “Documents” tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Brittani Roy  
 Brittani Roy  
 David Carlson  
 Teresa McCarty





APPROVAL: MODIFICATION

Linda Caterino Kulhavy

Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe

480/965-7524

Linda.Caterino@asu.edu

Dear Linda Caterino Kulhavy:

On 11/22/2016 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Modification
Title:	Cultural Identity and Third Space: An Exploration at a Title I School
Investigator:	Linda Caterino Kulhavy
IRB ID:	STUDY00003855
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sign in sheet, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above);</li> <li>• Parent Permission Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Student Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Parent Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Assent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• culturally sustaining, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• Pre&amp;Post Interview Questions with Additional Questions_Roy.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• District Approval Letter, Category: Consent Form;</li> </ul>

The IRB approved the modification.

When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the “Documents” tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Brittani Roy  
Brittani Roy  
David Carlson  
Teresa McCarty