

I'll Teach you, Wasicu:
A Qualitative Study on Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy

in a Teacher Preparation Program in Minnesota

by

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ABSTRACT

The problem of practice addressed in this study specifically examined how teachers lack the knowledge and experience of working with Indigenous students, thus creating a lack of connections with these students. Indigenous students have unique life experiences and world views, and the lack of knowledge and experience from teachers makes it difficult to provide adequate connections for the students in Tribal Schools. One of the driving ideas behind this research was that if non-Native teachers do not understand their students, how will they be able to connect with them and teach them effectively? Connections and relationships with teachers are one of the most beneficial factors for students. Generally, teacher preparation programs within the United States do not explicitly address the unique barriers and histories experienced by Indigenous students. The goal of this study was to assist teachers of varying cultural backgrounds in the transition from their teacher education programs to being in the classroom, teaching Indigenous students. This will better prepare future educators to teach Indigenous students in a Tribal School setting.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

If I were to ask people to describe what a Native American child looks like, they would more than likely describe me when I was young; a small, dark, brown-skinned child, with dark brown eyes, and black hair. I was the only phenotypical Native American student in my kindergarten class. I attended a rural public school in a border town to the reservation where the majority of the student population was non-Native students. As a small child, I was not aware of how different I looked from other kids, or that I even was “different” than my classmates. I knew I was Native American but was never singled out. Then Thanksgiving came. Our teacher, along with the other kindergarten teachers, had planned a play that told the Americanized version of the first Thanksgiving. This included pilgrims and friendly Native Americans. The teachers went as far as “casting” their students to play different roles in this play. When the cast list was posted, I read that I would be playing the role of “friendly Native American.” I was so excited. I went home and excitedly explained to my mom, “Mom! They made me an Indian!” to which she replied, “well I would hope so.” This was my first memory of a schooling experience that promoted stereotypes and was biased against Native Americans.

As I progressed through grade levels, I switched from one public school to another. In my second public school, I had a similar experience to the first public school. It was around Thanksgiving time. My first-grade teacher taught a unit on Native Americans and Pilgrims. In this unit, we discussed how Native Americans were here before the Pilgrims and the types of houses they lived in prior to European settlement. When it came time to explain what Native Americans typically looked like, the teacher

called me and another Indigenous student out and said, “kind of like how Demi and the other student have dark skin and dark hair!” I was not embarrassed by this at the time, because I was so young and enjoyed my classmates thinking I was so different and unique. As we learned more about Native Americans in this unit, the teacher talked about powwows and the regalia Natives wore. One of my classmates asked why they had eagle feather fans and instead of answering, the teacher asked me to explain why dancers carried these fans. I didn’t realize how problematic these experiences were back then because I was very young. These specific experiences have always stuck with me throughout my years in academic programs.

From third through twelfth grade, I moved away from public schools and transferred to Tribal Schools. Here, I was able to receive instruction about Native American history, Dakota culture and language, and even classes about Tribal Government all from Indigenous staff. Native American literature was also used in place of traditional novels in English courses. I, along with my classmates, excelled in these courses not because they were easier or required less work, but because we were genuinely interested in the content being taught. It’s in these courses that I discovered my love for teaching and my passion for education - especially Indigenous education! After graduation, college was a non-negotiable way to achieve my goals of teaching at the Tribal Schools back home.

I understood how difficult it would be to go from a Tribal School to a primarily white university. In my post-secondary educational experience, I was culture-shocked, to say the least. I went from being surrounded by people who looked like me, thought like me and acted like me to being surrounded by people I didn’t know and didn’t trust. I was

so excited to finally have some sense of familiarity when I took a Native American Literature class. On the first day, however, the instructor told us that we couldn't use our experiences as Indigenous people with experience on Native American reservations in our papers or reflections, as this would give us an "unfair advantage" in demonstrating our understanding of the content. This was extremely difficult and disheartening for me because it was my entire identity. If I couldn't relate what I was learning to what I had already lived through, I wasn't sure how to make the content important for myself. Experiencing this helped me understand that it was important to connect the content being taught to a lived experience. This realization guided my teaching style after I graduated from college and got my first classroom teaching job.

In this new teaching job, I was hired to Indigenize the social studies curriculum that was being taught in middle school at a tribal school in South Dakota. This required me to take entire units out of the curriculum map and replace them with Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in areas such as Westward Expansion and Manifest Destiny. While creating these units and lesson plans, I was quickly made aware of the lack of resources for educators about Indigenous people and their struggle for educational inclusion. There were very few resources available to me, an Indigenous, Dakota person, in my first year of teaching. My students, who were all from my tribal community, had no representation of themselves in units where their voices should have been amplified. In my struggle to create a more inclusive curriculum, I always wondered what my students would have been taught if I was not the one creating the lessons and materials. I had more knowledge about Indigenous struggles throughout history than the average history teacher. I minored in Native American and Indigenous studies while in college

and had exposure to classes such as Native American History and Tribal Government while I was in high school. I was well versed in the topics that the lessons I designed would address.

These personal experiences informed the identification of the problem of practice that is central to my study. Most K-12 teachers will not have the personal experience or depth of exposure to Native American culture and history that I brought to my teaching. In response, I have developed an innovation that can better prepare teachers to create curricula that are responsive to and reflective of Indigenous cultures and experiences. This innovation was implemented with preservice teacher candidates who completed their field experiences in Tribal Schools in South Dakota. In the following sections, I describe the national, local, and personal contexts that further illustrate the issues associated with Indigenous education, before describing the problem of practice, my innovation, and research questions in more detail.

Larger/National Context

From loss of traditional languages to enduring physical punishment, Indigenous people have complicated feelings and experiences with the school systems in America. It is difficult for non-Indigenous educators to understand the experiences Native American nations have with educational institutions. Historically, educational settings have been a source of pain and trauma for Indigenous people. In the late 1860s, the United States government created Native American boarding schools to assimilate Indigenous children into mainstream society and separate children from their families and cultures for extended periods of time. As these boarding schools gained popularity, the government

began establishing schools off Native American reservations to take students away from their homes. The most infamous boarding school, and the first off-reservation boarding school was Carlisle Indian Industrial School, located in Pennsylvania (Elliot, 2020). As one scholar states, the students “were not only taught to speak English but were punished for speaking their own languages” (National Museum of the American Indian, 2020).

Boarding schools were created based on the idea that Indigenous people were subhuman and uncivilized. The main goal of Indian Boarding Schools was to, “kill the Indian, save the man.” This idea and phrase were coined by Richard Henry Pratt (National Museum of the American Indian, 2020). It solidified the idea that Indigenous people and culture were not useful to the expansion and development of America and that the only “good” Indian was one who acted colonized and assimilated. Over the years, thousands of children filtered through these school settings and endured severe trauma.

This trauma has been passed through generations and continues to be a source of pain for many students. School settings in the United States are systematically designed and used to push a specific agenda that keeps the Ameri-pean (European American) version of history and education at the forefront of what is being taught (Smith, 2021). This agenda is also evident in the attitudes White teachers hold about students of color. “Scholars in the field have noted that deficit thinking by White teachers is one of the most powerful forces working against students of color” (Davis, 2021, p.18). This deficit thinking by teachers is both detrimental to student development and the overall classroom environment. Deficit thinking isn’t limited to classrooms and Indigenous students, it also encompasses entire Indigenous communities. People often assume that Indigenous people

and communities have more problems than the average non-Native community and that they are inherently inferior to other communities (Brenna & Castagna, 2014).

In any successful learning environment, educators must create positive, healthy learning environments for all their students. This is even more important for Indigenous students, due to the historical role educational settings have played in the overall distrust Indigenous communities have towards schools today. In order to do so, there must be teachers who are sensitive to these historical relationships, societal ills Indigenous people face, and the students' overall wellbeing.

Education, historically, was designed for wealthier, white families in the United States (Lisa, 2020). Families with low socioeconomic status often did not get the opportunity to send their children off to school. This sparks the debate of whether access to education is a right or a privilege. Historically, most Americans would say that a good education is a privilege, but for Indigenous communities, the idea of receiving an education is viewed as a right - a treaty right to be specific. The federal government created treaties with Native American nations that guaranteed education, health care, housing, and other services to these communities (Taylor, 2019). Since education was promised to Indigenous communities in the treaties they signed with the United States, it is fair for Indigenous communities to assume their children would receive an adequate and affordable education. However, the education they received in the past and continue to receive today is far from adequate. A contributing factor is that the voices of indigenous people have been excluded from decisions about curriculum development or teaching strategies adopted in public schools in the United States.

In the United States, Native Americans make up just 2% of the national population (National Congress of American Indians, 2020). An entire demographic that once dominated the population of the North American continent now only makes up 2% of those who live within the United States borders. Lack of Native American student success is amplified on the national level because the population is so sparse (Administration for Native Americans, 2012). When examining national rates of graduation, college attendance, and overall success, Native Americans have limited numbers and little representation. Native Americans have a high school graduation rate of approximately 65% as compared to 75.2% for the rest of the United States population (Education World, n.d.). Native American students often fall through the cracks in educational settings.

While high school graduation rates are lower as compared to their non-Indigenous peers, Native Americans' overall college attendance is also low in comparison to the national average. About 19% of Native Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 are enrolled in college, as opposed to 41% of the overall population (The Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2020). Thus, a more thorough examination of higher education attendance rates and post-secondary graduation rates reveals that Native Americans are represented even less than in high schools. These low participation rates have many potentially negative consequences, including misguided efforts to be inclusive in the classroom. For example, when the topic of Native Americans comes up in general education college courses concerning United States history, the Indigenous students in the classrooms may be asked to share their experiences or are used as examples. This is common for minorities across the United States. As I explained earlier in the chapter, this

was something I endured frequently as a student in K-12 education. Tokenism is when minority students are singled out to speak on behalf of the minority group (Rudra, 2020). Not only is this an unfair request, but it also becomes the students' responsibility to teach their peers about historical events that included Native Americans. This could be difficult for Native American students if they have never received truthful information regarding these historical events.

In Montana, a constitutional provision created an obligation for the public education system to create and provide appropriate and accurate cultural information to all students in Montana (Juneau & Juneau, 2011). By offering different cultural perspectives on the content, teachers can give students a broader view of the world and assist students in creating their own opinions on important topics. Indigenous students may be reluctant to share their thoughts in class, especially when they are vastly outnumbered. However, after a push to include Indigenous perspectives in its curriculum, the graduation rate of Indigenous students in Montana increased approximately 70% from previous years (Lauren Heiser- MTN News, 2020). In addition to changing the curriculum, schools have been getting Indigenous students more involved in school clubs. Schools have also improved cultural understanding and proficiency (Cates, 2016). The state of Montana's accomplishments offers evidence that curriculum standards that are inclusive and highlight Indigenous experiences can lead to more successful student outcomes. By incorporating various aspects of Indigenous knowledge, we can increase the level of inclusion and representation Native American students feel while studying the classroom content. In turn, this can translate into increased student success rates for the Indigenous student population.

To understand the reasons for Native American students' educational challenges, educators need to understand how Indigenous students are impacted by both internal and external factors including family life, home life, and how welcomed and represented they feel at school. While students in bigger schools are more easily forgotten, students at smaller schools have fewer resources available to them which makes learning an even bigger challenge. Battling stereotypes, false narratives of historical events, and the lack of adequate representation in the classroom content makes success hard to come by for minority students. This is where a change in teacher preparation program requirements would be beneficial for students hoping to become teachers and for their future students. Currently, in the state of South Dakota, teacher preparation programs only require one semester of South Dakota Indian Studies and Inclusive Methods for Diverse Learners (South Dakota Department of Education, 2022).

State Context

In South Dakota, on-time graduation rates for Native Americans are about 54%, which is low in comparison to the 85% for students of all backgrounds (Lowrey, 2019). In a state that has one of the highest populations of Native Americans, at 12%, (National Congress of American Indians, 2020) these low achievement rates are magnified and show how little attention Native American students receive from state education programs.

In the South Dakota K-12 Academic Standards, the Native American community is represented minimally. There are only a few standards in the Social Studies Standards that explicitly mention Native Americans (Department of Education - South Dakota,

2020). Teacher preparation programs in South Dakota are required to include a Native American studies course, but there are no requirements to address any of that content in teaching methods courses. Thus, Indigenous students and the way they learn may not be directly considered in teacher preparation programs. Some consequences of the exclusion of Indigenous history are the perpetuation of myths that Indigenous people are extinct, or that they live in teepees, ride buffalos, and can talk to animals. The consequence of the exclusion of teaching strategies for Indigenous students is that Indigenous students struggle to make connections with their teachers and learning environments and do not perform well in their academic careers. Teachers need training on and become well-versed in the complex relationships Indigenous communities have with education and school settings. This would allow teachers to be more responsive to Indigenous students as well as create curricula that are more inclusive for non-Native and Indigenous students alike.

Recruiting, hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers, by many South Dakota school districts is complication the situation. A teacher shortage is exacerbating the issue leading to many students not receiving a quality education in South Dakota. “Rural educators in South Dakota acknowledge they face many of the challenges highlighted by the study and sometimes struggle to find, hire and retain highly qualified teachers” (Pfankuch , 2019). The teacher shortage is felt even more on Native American reservations. In South Dakota, a state with one of the highest populations of Native Americans in the United States, there are 3 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) operated schools and 19 Tribally Controlled Schools (Bureau of Indian Education, 2022). These schools often see a higher rate of teacher turnover than public schools. Rural areas much

like Native American reservations typically have higher rates of students who face educational challenges directly in correlation with socioeconomic status (Pfankuch, 2019).

The state of South Dakota has introduced numerous educational initiatives to address Indigenous populations and they have been working at creating more Indigenous representation among school personnel and curricula at all levels. These programs include the Oceti Sakowin project, the Wookiye project and the Wolakota project (South Dakota Office of Tribal Relations, 2022). This work all stems from the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings, which is a set of standards that aims to be inclusive of Indigenous peoples' histories and traditions (South Dakota Office of Tribal Relations, 2022). These standards offer lesson plans and additional information for teachers but, again, they fall short because of the lack of training for those using the Essential Understandings. This lack of training brings me back to the importance of the research in this dissertation. Training in teacher preparation programs is needed for the successful implementation of programs such as those being introduced in South Dakota.

The federal government officially created the Bureau of Indian Education only 17 years ago, in 2006 (Bureau of Indian Education, 2006). The mission of the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) is to ensure Indigenous students have access to quality educational opportunities at all levels. In South Dakota, these Tribally Controlled Schools are all located on Native American reservations. Having tribally controlled schools allows tribes to have more say and control over what is being taught to the students and decide what curricula they are going to use in their classrooms. These BIE funded, tribally controlled schools were a big change from the traditional boarding schools that

Indigenous communities were used to. This change allowed students to stay closer to home and closer to their families. Switching from Boarding Schools that were off reservation to Day schools that were either on or bordering reservations was a welcomed change for Indigenous families and communities.

Several studies have shown that schools with high minority populations, including the Tribally Controlled and BIE funded schools, undergo the highest rates of teacher turnover (Pfankuch, 2019). Finding teachers who are qualified in each content area is difficult enough, and finding teachers who are trained to specifically teach and work with Indigenous students is nearly impossible. This puts Tribal Schools at an even bigger disadvantage because the teacher shortage impacts their ability to offer adequate education to the students they serve. This teacher shortage and inability to recruit and retain teachers all have a ripple effect on how well students perform academically while they are in the K-12 system, and if they go on to further their education at the post-secondary level. To assist in Indigenous student success, the teacher preparation programs that utilize Tribal Schools for their teacher candidates to complete their student teaching should require teacher candidates to understand the complexities of working with Indigenous students in the K-12 classroom settings.

Personal Context

Moving from student to teacher was a seamless transition for me. I was able to connect with my students and teach a topic I was extremely passionate about. Although I had no formal training in teacher education, I was able to develop teaching strategies that allowed me to work with students from my home community in ways that other non-Native teachers could not. I connected the content that was being taught in class to

something in their lives. For example, when we discussed Nazi Germany, I compared the ghettos Jewish families were forced into to the reservations that their communities lived on. This created a constructivist learning and teaching environment that allowed students to see concrete examples of something they initially felt so far removed from. Since I had previous knowledge and background information about their lives, I was able to help my students make connections between what they were learning and what they already knew.

I was also a familiar face for them and someone who they were able to associate with things that they grew up around. My students trusted me from the beginning because I knew their personal, cultural, familial and historical backgrounds. They were able to find pictures or mentions of me or my name around the school they were attending, and they knew that I was not an outsider and that I was a product of their same environment.

My non-Native colleagues did not have the same connections with the students in my classrooms or even in the entire school. It was so apparent that the other middle school teachers began calling me the “middle school whip” because if there was ever a behavioral issue where they needed help, they would call me and ask me to talk to the students involved. This gave me a sense of importance because I knew these students and my colleagues needed to lean on me in order to be successful. Although it was nice to feel needed, I was feeling the effects of teacher burnout by mid-year of my first academic year. By the end of my first year of teaching, I was exhausted and ended up sleeping for around 15 hours. It took me almost a week of summer break until I felt energized again. This same thing happened the following year and forced me to think about my mental health and why it was important to cultivate teachers who had the tools to create connections with students in the same way as I do.

From my experience as a classroom teacher in a Tribally Controlled BIE school, I was able to pinpoint a specific problem that teachers face in these schools. The struggle for non-Natives to connect with their students is something that not only impacts the students, but all the staff involved with Indigenous education. This creates an unwelcoming and unattractive environment for teachers and does not support the teacher retention efforts in place.

I have since stepped away from direct instruction and working in the classrooms. In my current position, I am working with and redesigning the teacher education program at a small, public university in rural Minnesota. The University of Minnesota Morris (UMN Morris) is a public, liberal-arts institution and is one of 38 Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) across the country (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2021). A NASNTI Institution is required to have at least 10% of their student population identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native. A grant is awarded to institutions to help better the experiences for Indigenous students on their campus (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2021). This institution is primarily white but has a large Indigenous student population of approximately 32.5%. As far as Native American students enrolled in the teacher preparation program, program-level data is not available, but my estimation is that the percentage is low.

The goal of my position at this university is to Indigenize the teacher preparation program and increase the number of Indigenous students enrolling in the teacher preparation program. This aligns with UMN Morris' goal to improve the experiences Indigenous students have while they attend UMN Morris. In a report done by Peterson

and Peters (2021), the American Indian Advisory Council for UMN Morris identified steps that would enhance the experience for Indigenous students currently and potentially attending UMN Morris. Among these steps, one of the main focuses was the Indigenization of the teacher preparation program (Peterson & Peters, 2021). This report supports the creation of my position. My position was created to increase the cultural awareness and competency of teacher candidates coming from the university. While working in this position, I can carry out the needed research associated with this dissertation and research project. This position gives me the opportunity to create an Indigenized teacher education program and influence the next generation of teachers coming from this university to teach in rural, BIE funded, tribally controlled environments.

Problem of Practice

The rurality of most tribally controlled BIE schools hinders their ability to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. In addition to this rurality, teachers also lack the knowledge and experience of working with Indigenous students. Since Indigenous students are unique in their life experiences and world views, this lack of knowledge and experience from teachers makes it difficult to provide adequate education for the students in Tribal Schools. One of the driving ideas behind this research is that if non-Native teachers do not understand their students, how will they be able to connect with them and teach them effectively? Connections and relationships with teachers are one of the most beneficial factors for students.

Generally, teacher preparation programs do not explicitly address the unique barriers, experiences and histories of Indigenous students. The goal of this research is to assist non-Native teachers in the transition from their teacher education programs to being in the classroom, teaching Indigenous students. This will better prepare non-Native teachers to teach Indigenous students in a Tribal School setting.

Intervention

The intervention that was created for this study was an Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy (IRTP) workshop. This workshop included teaching strategies and increased cultural awareness and competency. To introduce this intervention, I worked with the teacher education program where I am currently employed. Students who were interested in an education major but were not yet enrolled in the program. As a part of their Introduction to Education coursework, these students completed a field experience at the nearby Tribally Controlled School. Prior to their onsite experience, students responded to a journal prompt. While at the school they were provided an opportunity to assist a cooperating teacher in their classroom. From there, they participated in the IRTP training session during their regularly scheduled class period. After this, they returned to the Tribal School. The students documented their experiences before and after IRTP and how, if at all, it changed their interactions with Indigenous students. I used the journal prompts to gather the core data to code and interpret but also used lesson plans, classroom observations, and roundtable discussions as supplemental data to gauge their overall experience, attitudes, and the effectiveness of the introduction of Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the outcomes of a workshop designed to introduce student teachers to Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy. IRTP is intended to create connections between teachers and students, increase student engagement, and better prepare teachers to be successful when working with Indigenous students. The following research questions guided the study.

RQ1: How do prospective preservice teachers describe their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and IRTP workshop?

RQ2: How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overall, the rationale for this study and my problem of practice is informed by Critical Race Theory and the related construct of Intersectionality. My innovation is based on concepts drawn from Culturally Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy, but with modifications for Indigenous students. Intergenerational trauma is discussed as one issue to be addressed in my innovation. Constructivist theories, including socio-constructivism, inform the design of my innovation as well as my research questions, which are aimed at understanding how teacher education candidates construct new beliefs and ways of teaching indigenous students. Each of these theories offers unique perspectives on the problem of practice and has guided the creation and implementation of my innovation and educational framework, Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy.

Overall Framework

The theoretical frameworks discussed in this section of the chapter offer a conceptual lens on the problem of practice and the need for this research.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory allows us to understand the dynamics of race and racism in society, as well as in academia. Bhopal (2020) discusses the early development of Critical Race Theory and how CRT scholars “redefined racism as not the acts of individuals, but the larger systemic conventions and customs that uphold and sustain oppressive group relationships, status, income, and educational attainment” (Bhopal, 2020, p. 503). Critical Race Theory argues against the long-held theory that people of color are inherently less intelligent than their White counterparts. As Bhopal states:

“What is clear in CRT is the notion that inequalities are based on ideologies through which people of color have been historically marginalized and oppressed... not all positioned perspectives are equally valued, equally heard or equally included” (p. 503). CRT originally began as a scholarly movement with early contributions in the 1970s from Derrick Bell, a Harvard Law professor: “Bell was one of a small but growing group of scholars and minority activists who realized that the gains of the heady civil rights era had stalled and, indeed, were being rolled back” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1998, p. 467). Bell’s critiques were informed by school desegregation cases he had litigated in the 1960s, thus, educational inequities were central to CRT from its earliest conceptions. Educational scholars who elaborated on CRT’s implications for understanding inequities in schooling and pedagogical implications include Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995), and David Gillborn (2014), editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Race and Ethnicity*.

CRT has become a controversial topic in teacher education and public schooling. In recent years, some states have banned the topic of CRT in public education. For example, in South Dakota, Gov. Kristi Noem drafted a piece of legislation to block the use of Critical Race Theory in South Dakota schools, public universities and technical colleges (Matzen & Huber, 2021). In this news article, the authors discuss how South Dakota’s governor previously addressed Critical Race Theory with an executive order that blocked the Department of Education from using CRT ideas in grants for civics or history. South Dakota’s governor also signed the 1776 Pledge to Save Our Schools (Matzen & Huber, 2021). This article highlights the ideologies, such as extreme nationalism, that are central to the problem of practice being addressed in this

dissertation. In South Dakota, Indigenous students need to receive a well-rounded education that includes Indigenous perspectives on historical events. In a state with a high population of Indigenous people, educators in this state have the responsibility to create a positive learning environment for all students in each of their classes. Ironically, policymakers such as Noem view CRT as potentially divisive, creating antagonism among groups, rather than to address barriers to mutual understanding and positive community change.

Critical race theory is a guiding perspective for this dissertation because it offers a means of understanding the history and ongoing beliefs and structures that continue to marginalize and discredit minority voices. However, incorporating this perspective into teacher education is not a simple task. Crowley and Smith (2020), who describe some educational approaches that explicitly acknowledge racism as “white privilege pedagogy” (WPP), state that “WPP can fail through the resistance it produces and, counter-intuitively, it can also fail when students acknowledge their privileges too readily” (p. 6). Teachers and teacher candidates must be introduced to CRT and culturally responsive pedagogies in ways that encourage mutual respect, critical reflection, and dialogue. Constructivist theories, though they are not overtly political or critical, offer a useful perspective on how teacher candidates might develop new ways of understanding their own experiences and beliefs through my proposed innovation.

Intersectionality

The idea of intersectionality originated in the work of black feminist scholars and activists and is now considered a core construct in CRT. Kelly et al. (2021) explains that “Intersectionality argues identities such as gender, race, sexuality, and other markers of

difference intersect and reflect large social structures of oppression and privilege, such as sexism, racism, and heteronormativity” (p. 1). This theory offers a complex and nuanced perspective on the significance of multiple identities in people’s experiences of privilege and oppression. Acknowledging intersectionality allows us as educators and learners to appreciate the diversity that may exist within and across Indigenous populations, creating a rich learning environment for all involved. Understanding intersectionality in an educational setting would not only be beneficial for students but for teachers as well. Being able to understand Indigenous students and their intersecting identities would give educators a greater understanding of the troubles their students face and combat daily, as well as their diverse strengths and achievements.

The concept of intersectionality was introduced by Crenshaw (1991) to describe how race and gender interact to shape a black woman’s work experiences. Originally, intersectionality was meant to only describe race, class and gender but now includes, “age, attractiveness, body type, caste, citizenship, education, ethnicity, height and weight assessments, immigration status, income, marital status,” and other ways of categorizing humans (Gopaldas, 2013, p. 91). Since the scope of intersectionality has changed to include more categorizations of human identity, it has also changed how researchers and professionals use intersectionality. “The intersectionality paradigm has important implications for diversity, research, marketing, and advocacy” (Gopaldas, 2013, p. 93). Since its creation and usage in scholarly writing, intersectionality has proved to be helpful when it comes to requiring “scholars to come to terms with the legacy of exclusion of multiple marginalized subjects from feminist and anti-racist work, and the impact of those absences on both theory and practice” (Nash, 2008, p. 89).

Pedagogical theorists in general acknowledge the importance of learners' out-of-school experiences, identities, and cultures in affecting their in-school learning. However, all too often students' identities are reduced to a single category, such as "Latino," "learning disabled," or "poor" rather than understood as multiple and complex: "U.S. education discourse is not responsive to how students holding multiple marginalizing social identities experience intersectionality in school and how it shapes their learning" (Lazzell, Jackson, & Skelton, 2018, p. 2). According to theories of intersectionality, educators need to understand how students' intersecting identities impact learning and in turn, develop appropriate teaching methods.

An obvious implication of intersectionality is the importance of challenging stereotypes and generalizations about members of any group, including indigenous students. Another implication is the emphasis on personal insight into how "our identities are shaped by our experiences in social groups and how we as members of those groups encounter institutionalized social structures" (Tefera, et al., 2018, p. 42). These implications are important for the design of my innovation; while I am creating a pedagogical approach that aims to be responsive to the experiences and perspectives of indigenous students, this approach must also prompt teachers and students to recognize and appreciate the diversity of identities that they bring to the classroom. The importance of these identities will vary for each student, for example in relation to their participation in native ceremonies, families, and academics, to something that seems as simple as sports. Sports, family, ceremonies and other cultural activities play a vital role in the lives of Indigenous communities. The idea of intersectionality does not necessarily emphasize identities such as student and athlete but for the sake of understanding Indigenous

students, it is important to include them in the definition of intersectionality for this dissertation.

CRT & intersectionality offer insight into the problem of practice and the challenges of Indigenous education. Structural barriers and ideologies, as described by CRT, affect all aspects of schooling, including teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students. Intersectionality points to the experience of multiple forms of oppression in the lives of Indigenous students, as well as the importance of acknowledging diversity within Indigenous communities. These perspectives are also important as a foundation for my intervention. In the next sections, I discuss pedagogical approaches based on these perspectives.

Pedagogical Approach

The pedagogical theories and frameworks discussed in this section provide a rationale and guidance for the creation and implementation of an educational framework specifically geared towards Indigenous students. In this section, I describe key elements of three related approaches: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy. All these approaches can be described as “Asset-Based Pedagogies” that seek to counter deficit-based approaches to pedagogy by emphasizing and drawing on the strengths of students from diverse backgrounds (California Department of Education, 2022). In order to do so, teachers and educators must take into consideration the cultural lives of their students. Although these theories were proposed decades ago, they have been modified and elaborated over time by educational scholars. In practice, these approaches have become controversial in some communities given the current political climate of the nation. Following a description of

these pedagogies, I discuss selected research on the benefits of such approaches for traditionally marginalized student populations, including indigenous students.

Culturally Responsive Teaching/Pedagogies

Throughout this study, the terms Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy will be used interchangeably. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy also is at times used synonymously with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, but these approaches have different origins and emphases. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is used as a primary starting point for my approach because of its more detailed strategies for understanding and building on students' cultural as well as linguistic backgrounds. Penner (2016, p.1) states "The fundamental theoretical argument for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is that instructional practices are substantially more effective when differentiated to align with the distinctive cultural priors that individual students experience outside of school and when they also affirm both cultural identity and critical social engagement." Culturally responsive teaching and pedagogies are student-centered approaches that draw on students' cultures and experiences beyond the classroom (Samuels, 2018; Wachira & Mburu, 2019). These approaches were created to enrich classroom instruction and promote engagement and achievement of all students. Samuels (2018) argues that "A change in basic assumptions is necessary to highlight cultural responsiveness as an educational asset, as well as cultural identity and integrity as something to be fostered positively and embraced" (p. 29).

But what exactly is Culturally Responsive Teaching? While descriptions of specific strategies associated with this approach can vary, they share several common elements. First and foremost, it is the inclusion of cultural diversity, and the unique

experiences students bring to the classroom. In CRT, teachers highlight and build on these experiences in planning curriculum and instruction. This emphasis on cultural inclusion is found across culturally responsive, culturally sustaining, and culturally relevant pedagogies. In CRT, there is often a more explicit focus on linguistic diversity and attention to diverse communication styles. A second emphasis is on the creation and use of having meaningful conversations about learning: “Such discourse should serve to encourage questions about diversity and difference, as well as provide students the opportunity to discuss real-world experiences, cultural influences, current events related to social (in)justice, and the influence of race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status in historical and current-day inequities” (Samuels, 2018, p. 27). The ability to have difficult questions and conversations in class should be considered one of the biggest accomplishments as a teacher or instructor especially in the political climate we live in today. Since the political climate is a driving factor for the usage and implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy, it makes sense that it allows teachers and course instructors to have conversations about difficult topics. Facilitating such conversations is not given the same attention in culturally sustaining or culturally relevant pedagogies. Another key element is the idea of working directly with families and communities to reduce barriers to educational success and to help educators become more informed about their students’ communities (Munez, 2019). Overall, Munez describes eight competencies of culturally responsive educators that reflect these emphases, as well as the importance of educators’ awareness of their own cultural lens.

Culturally Relevant and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy was proposed by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) to improve the educational achievement of traditionally minoritized students. This approach has three broad components: (a) an emphasis on students' academic success and development, (b) affirmation of students' culture of origin while supporting their acquisition of competence in another culture (i.e., dominant classroom culture, and (c) enhancing their critical awareness of social inequities (California Department of Education, 2022). While Culturally Relevant Pedagogy continues to be popular, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy is often seen as a further development of this approach, as well as an extension of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, by emphasizing the importance not only of affirming students' cultures but seeking to sustain them as part of the educational process.

But what does it mean to sustain something, especially in education? Taking the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition, sustain means to support or strengthen (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Key aspects of culturally responsive teaching that culturally sustaining pedagogy expand are the value placed on community languages, a curriculum that has connections to cultural and language history, and access to the dominant culture (California Department of Education, 2022). Culturally sustaining pedagogy specifically calls for schools to be a site where the cultures of minority communities can be sustained (Paris et al., 2017). Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks not just to make connections to students' cultures, but to actively support and find value in these cultures. Paris et al. (2017) explain how de-centering whiteness requires putting students' literacies, ways of knowing, and teaching styles at the core of classroom learning. Culturally sustaining pedagogy does share similarities to the educational framework created in this study, such

as de-centering the White gaze. Like culturally sustaining pedagogy, Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy aims to take the ideas of culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally sustaining pedagogy a step further and be specific to Indigenous students, Indigenous communities, and Indigenous ideologies.

Empirical Studies

A growing body of research has explored the impact of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy on historically marginalized students' educational engagement and achievement. For example, Penner (2016) describes a quantitative study in which the researchers observed significant improvements in GPA, attendance, and credits earned and attributed these improvements to the implementations of an ethnic studies curriculum, a form of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. "Taken at face value, these findings provide a compelling confirmation of an extensive literature that has emphasized the capacity of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy to unlock the educational potential of historically marginalized students (Penner, 2016). In the study, all students who participated were part of minority groups, including Hispanic, Asian, ELL, Black, and female. After implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy, attendance increased by 21 percentage points, and average GPA was increased by 1.4 grade points (Penner, 2016). This study, alone, shows the potential value of including culturally relevant pedagogy and more representation for minority students in the curriculum. However, an only issue with this study is that it leaves out Indigenous students and their perspectives. The lack of representation of Indigenous perspectives in curriculum, pedagogies and academic studies only solidifies the need for Indigenous focused research.

Indigenous representation in academic research on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has gained popularity within the last couple of years. Numerous studies have been conducted on education in Native American communities and one in particular focuses on how Indigenous students respond better to culturally responsive instruction and curriculum than the traditional curriculum and instruction in K-12 education (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009). In this literature review, Brayboy and Castagno (2009) discuss the importance of inclusion rather than replacement in academia. Instead of replacing traditional curriculum with Indigenous only curriculum, they report that most of the participants found it more helpful to have Indigenous ideologies and beliefs integrated into the curriculum already in place - creating a more of a "both/and" approach (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009). This "both/and" approach gives students a broader perspective and includes what is typically taught in the classroom in an average public school while also incorporating Indigenous perspectives and ideologies.

This form of inclusion forces teachers to use the same curriculum, just in new ways. Culturally responsive teaching with an Indigenous emphasis allows students to learn the traditional curriculum that is taught at most schools while getting additional information and resources about Indigenous communities. The issue with this approach is that teachers often lack the cultural competence needed to sustain this Culturally Responsive Teaching in the long run. Brayboy and Castagno (2009) address this issue in their article as well. They explain that cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and other skills that are required are typically not covered in teacher education programs and most people who become teachers in the United States do not grow up with these backgrounds

(Brayboy & Castagno, 2009). This is the limitation of Culturally Responsive Teaching in classrooms and solidifies the need for this study.

The belief that culturally responsive teaching methods drive student engagement and academic achievement also is supported by other studies done within educational settings. Masta & Rosa's (2019) qualitative single case study investigated how curriculum created by teachers directly addressed key events in Native American history and how this provided students with a better representation of Native American content. This qualitative single case study utilized discourse analysis and considered what meanings different phrases and words held amongst their students (Masta & Rosa, 2019). This study provides suggestions for teachers who wish to create accurate content specific to Native American history.

Masta and Rosa's (2019) study examined one teacher and their attempt to create a social studies curriculum that offered more than just the dominant narrative of American history. This study had a goal of using one teacher and their attempt to implement an inclusive curriculum to call attention to the difficulty of this implementation and that even when teachers intend to offer outside perspectives, their words and content could potentially do the opposite. The main finding from the study was that implementing a teacher-created curriculum allows teachers to reveal the historical inaccuracies hidden within most U.S. history textbooks and that these textbooks fail to address many concepts and even key people in U.S. history (Masta & Rosa, 2019). The findings of this study solidify the literature review conducted by Brayboy and Castagno (2009) where they discuss that in order to create a better curriculum, there needs to be an inclusion of information rather than a replacement of information happening within the curriculum.

This would provide teachers with a resource in offering more historically accurate information and offer the opportunity to discuss where the traditional textbooks fall short of teaching true and accurate history. Masta and Rosa (2019) describe that even when designing a new curriculum, the teacher of focus in their study still used problematic words and phrases that reinforced narratives they were trying to change. This finding also offers credibility to the need for cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and other skills required to offer adequate supplemental information and resources to boost historical accuracy.

In summary, these studies build on the idea that a structural change to teacher preparation programs is needed by laying out specific issues that teachers face while they are trying to implement cultural knowledge and culturally responsive teaching methods. Penner (2016) discusses how the GPA, attendance, and credits earned increased with the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogies. This study, however, left out an Indigenous perspective. Masta and Rosa (2019) discuss the importance of cultural inclusion and how important it is to provide teachers with resources to create better sets of curricula for use in their classrooms. This finding supports the need for professional development sessions on how to include culturally relevant and culturally responsive teaching methods and pedagogical approaches. Finally, in Brayboy and Castagno's (2009) literature review, the authors discuss the importance of cultural inclusion rather than cultural replacement. The issues Brayboy and Castagno identify, however, are the lack of cultural competence and cultural knowledge that are not typically covered in teacher preparation programs.

These studies and literature reviews reiterate the need for attention to culturally responsive pedagogies throughout teacher preparation programs to give potential preservice teachers the opportunity to gain confidence with these pedagogies and ideologies. My own innovation is just a starting point for a much more expansive approach in the UMN Morris program.

Intergenerational Trauma

One topic typically not addressed in the pedagogies described above, yet crucial for teaching Indigenous students, is intergenerational trauma. As I described in Chapter 1, the historical background of Indigenous students can lead to significant distrust of educational institutions in Indigenous communities. The idea of intergenerational trauma is a new concept that aims to explain how the traumatic events our ancestors experienced could impact generations to come in different ways. Intergenerational trauma comes from the study and exploration of epigenetics, and it suggests that, “our genes can carry memories of trauma experienced by our ancestors and can influence how we react to trauma and stress” (Pember, 2016, p. 3). Students typically are not exposed to this concept and go through their young adult lives not understanding what it is or what it means for them while growing up.

Until recently, a primary focus has been on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder that is most common in veterans of war. The idea that trauma can be passed down through generations is only gradually gaining recognition. Since Indigenous communities have such a troubled history with the United States Government and policies created to erase Native peoples, Indigenous communities are prime examples of how traumatic experiences can impact multiple generations. Pember (2016) explains that health care

professionals and community leaders within Indigenous communities have always stressed the importance of considering how deadly the historic and ongoing trauma and violence can play on their communities. “With our high rates of addiction, suicide, diabetes, violence against women and other ills, we could be viewed as ground zero for Adverse Childhood Experiences” (Pember, 2016, p. 7). Understanding how intergenerational trauma impacts students can be beneficial for not only the students but for the teachers and everyone involved in the educational process of Indigenous students. It allows educators to understand their students’ often unconscious emotional responses as well as behavioral responses toward education.

Changing Teacher Beliefs and Practices with Indigenous Students

Developing teachers’ cultural awareness, ability to challenge stereotypes, and appropriate teaching approaches is not a simple task. As the above research suggests, teachers need repeated opportunities to deepen their awareness and experiment with alternative ways to incorporate elements of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (or any other pedagogical innovation) into their teaching practice. My innovation represents only a first step towards better preparing prospective teachers to work with Indigenous students through the IRTP approach. Accordingly, my focus was on understanding how participants engage with and make meaning of their initial experiences in a tribal school classroom and of the IRTP approach. My study is informed by theories of constructivism and social constructivism; these theories serve as a basis for IRTP and at the same time suggest a way to conceptualize how teacher candidates’ existing beliefs about Indigenous students might change over the course of the innovation.

Constructivist Theories

Constructivist theories look to explain how people use what they know to create new understandings. This theory is beneficial for understanding how a culturally responsive curriculum would increase student achievement and engagement. We connect previous knowledge to the new information we are learning in order to truly understand it (Carley, 2015). With the constructivist approach, we never really learn something as a “blank slate” - we are always building on past experiences. Constructivism emphasizes the importance of pedagogical practices that prompt students to actively make meaning of new ideas or experiences, such as through personal reflection, group discussion, or application. It also stresses the idea that each student may have different interpretations of new material and asks teachers to assist students in the process of constructing new knowledge by building on what they already know.

As a branch of constructivist theories, social constructivism explains that “Learning takes place primarily in social and cultural settings, rather than solely within the individual” (Davis & Smits, 2017). Social constructivism, according to Lynch (2016), is knowledge that develops through individuals and their interactions with the culture and society that surrounds them (Lynch, 2016). As a theory of learning, social constructivism is foundational to Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy because it acknowledges that students will bring diverse perspectives and experiences to any learning experience. These perspectives and experiences are viewed as a resource for social interactions and dialogue that create mutually beneficial opportunities for co-creating new knowledge. Students are not forced to forget who they are once they walk into a classroom. Students can use what they know and combine that with knowledge

gained from peers and teachers to create their own opinions and ideas. It is also critical for teachers to understand how their students' individual lives, upbringings and cultures impact their experiences in academia (Hamza & Hernandez de Hahn, 2012). "This is especially important because often the lowest-performing students belong to a racial, ethnic, income, or cultural group different from the teachers themselves, who are overwhelmingly female, white and middle class" (Wachira & Mburu, 2019). With the application of this theory, students' beliefs, prior knowledge, and backgrounds are valued while learning through a culturally responsive curriculum.

Pedagogies and educational frameworks based on the idea of socio-constructivism suggest that students use what they are learning to build on what they have already learned and experienced in their lives. Intersectionality serves as an additional way to understand what students bring to a learning situation: "Intersectionality asserts that all aspects of one's identity need to be examined as simultaneously interacting with each other and affecting one's perception within a society" (Besic, 2020). Intersectionality can encompass every defining aspect of a person's background. In education, this concept is crucial to understanding our students and the backgrounds they come from.

Intersectionality can be used to describe how systems of oppression connect, overlap, and influence each other based on social, economic, and political status (Skelton, 2021).

Intersectionality can be a challenging concept to apply in education since students' identities are complex and their relevance in any particular learning situation may vary.

Perhaps most important is that educators offer opportunities for students to develop an understanding of their own complex identities and seek ways to acknowledge diversity in many different forms.

Constructivism and its Influence on Potential Teacher Candidates

Understanding constructivist theories is crucial to the overall goal of this research. It is important that teachers understand how students build knowledge and how students incorporate their previous knowledge into what they are learning. Pledger (2018) explains that their study about constructivism “indicates that a person’s beliefs are formed by their background experiences and a person’s behavior is informed by their beliefs” (p 107). As the researcher, I used constructivist theories to understand how potential teacher candidates are making new meanings using this study’s intervention workshop. This theory is beneficial to understanding how this intervention workshop might change or affect teacher candidate beliefs. My focus was primarily on the teacher candidates’ prior beliefs and interactions with indigenous students, and how the intervention offers opportunities for them to construct new ways of understanding these students and appropriate educational approaches. In addition, a socio constructivist lens suggests the importance of understanding how the social and cultural context of the intervention, teacher candidates’ interactions with each other and me as the facilitator, contribute to collective understandings. This theory also was useful for understanding any negative concepts about Indigenous students these potential teacher candidates might have developed throughout their education experiences. These negative concepts or beliefs are a form of prior knowledge I would be interested in both making explicit and ultimately altering.

Previous Cycles of Research

Previous cycles of research focused on defining Culturally Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy. Once a general definition was constructed, it was easier for me to dig

deeper into what was missing for Indigenous students. Two cycles of research have been conducted and each has contributed to my overall understanding of what it means to be Culturally Responsive as a teacher.

In the first cycle of research, the goal was to determine barriers faced by teachers who work with Indigenous students. The data were collected using the interview process. Three different teachers of various experience levels were interviewed. Their backgrounds in education varied and the grade levels they taught ranged from 5th grade all the way up to undergraduate courses at a small university. Each of the participants explained that their experiences with Indigenous students all had some sort of barrier or challenge. These barriers ranged from lack of resources to lack of connections with the students. By conducting these interviews, I was able to determine that there was a need to help teachers connect with their students from Indigenous backgrounds. Whether that meant giving lessons on cultural background knowledge or helping teachers understand their Indigenous students' motivations to learn, it was beneficial for the teachers to get that information to have success with the Indigenous students in their classrooms.

In the next cycle of research, I focused on what culturally responsive teaching was and what it looked like in the classroom. This time, there were 5 teachers involved in the process. These teachers again ranged in levels of experience, grade levels being taught, subjects being taught, and states they were located in. This cycle of research's data was collected using surveys and interviews. The surveys asked each participant to name what they considered culture, how they incorporated their students' cultures in their classrooms or lessons, and whether they connected with their students using the students' cultural backgrounds. When participants were answering the questions about what culture

includes, I was surprised to see answers like music, favorite basketball teams, clothing brands, and social media apps they used. It hadn't ever occurred to me that culture was more than just where a student came from or traditional beliefs.

In the interview process for the second cycle of research, I narrowed my group down from 5 teachers to 3. These interviews lasted for 45 minutes and covered information about the techniques these teachers used to incorporate culture into their everyday classroom settings. The participant techniques ranged from playing specific music for students every Monday and calling it "Music Monday," to attending community events and having classroom discussions based on these events to prompt student participation. It was interesting to see the active steps teachers were taking to include various cultural backgrounds into their classroom environments. These teachers did not specifically teach Indigenous students, but their classroom demographics were very diverse considering their geographic locations, with the White student population being around 55% in rural towns from different states in the Midwest.

These two cycles of research gave me a deeper understanding of culture and how to differentiate Culturally Responsive Teaching from Indigenous Responsive Teaching because it showed me the areas in which Culturally Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy can be more specific to Indigenous cultural backgrounds. This was an important distinction because it allowed me to finally pull apart what worked in rural public-school settings and what might work better for rural Tribal Schools. Understanding the demographics of the sample population for this research is important here because this research focuses specifically on rural Tribal Schools and Indigenous students from that community. These cycles allowed me to understand that I did not have to reinvent the

wheel, but simply adjust the pre-existing framework to better fit a community that is often overlooked in academia.

Discussion

The theoretical frameworks of Intersectionality, Constructivist Theory, and Critical Race theory work together and form a foundation for this research study. The theories and frameworks used in this dissertation reference the importance of prior knowledge, marginalized identities, and the voices of marginalized peoples. More specifically, the theoretical frameworks laid out in this chapter aim to place importance on Indigenous knowledge and experiences, especially in academia. When discussing the importance of cultural experiences and why it is important for educators to use these experiences as points of reference in the classroom, we must also place importance on Indigenous student experiences. Since their populations have taken such a drastic decline since European arrival, it is important to highlight and uplift their voices, experiences and overall world views and knowledge.

The idea of intersectionality is important because it allows teachers to understand that the lives of their students outside of the classroom play an important role in their overall learning styles and personalities. Asking students to leave the outside world outside of the classroom is an unfair ask. Students should be taught to embrace each of their identities and teachers should be expected to help students learn how to use each of their identities to guide them throughout their educational journeys.

Constructivism and socio-constructivism allow students to build on prior knowledge and internalize the concepts they are learning in class. This allows students to be able to connect what they are learning with what they already know. Indigenous

students, in my personal experience, have real world experiences that can be beneficial for understanding new information. Speaking from personal experience, any time that a new topic was introduced in school, I would find some experience to connect it to in order to understand it in a new way. This gave me a better overall understanding of all the topics we covered in my educational experiences.

Critical Race Theory and the movement to ban it play an important role in defining the importance and relevance of this study. The push to ban Critical Race Theory in schools is alarming, simply because of the important topics in American history and literature classes that would be excluded if the ban were to pass. In order to create a better learning environment for students, they must be exposed to differentiating ideologies in a safe environment. This exposure typically comes from schools and by taking these standards and resources out of school would be detrimental to the overall education of students, in my opinion.

As someone who has navigated the academic world as an Indigenous student and now as an Indigenous teacher and educator, it has become important for me to bring an Indigenous perspective to everything I do. I first noticed the lack of representation of Indigenous ideologies when I began teaching and it only became more apparent as I continued in higher education. The further I go in my academic career, the more I notice how Indigenous ideas, beliefs, and perspectives are not taken seriously or considered at all. As an Indigenous student myself, it was difficult to see myself being successful in academia and academic programs because I had little to no exposure of Indigenous people in these roles. Being a teacher and understanding my students on a deeper level has given my students the opportunity to see someone who looks like them and who

comes from a similar background successfully navigate the world of higher education. It has also given them a chance to see themselves in the classroom and content that they are learning in school - which has changed their attitudes towards education and schooling. In order to create a world where Indigenous students are successful, we must create culturally competent teachers who are willing to utilize Indigenous knowledge and experiences, Indigenous resources and Indigenous people to elevate the voices of their Indigenous students.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

In the previous chapter, I described the guiding theoretical frameworks for the overall intervention and dissertation. In this chapter, I will present methods and methodology for a qualitative action research study. The problem to be addressed in this study is how to better prepare potential preservice teachers to teach Indigenous students from a rural school on a Native American reservation. The purpose of this research is to investigate these prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching Indigenous middle school students and the effects of participating in an innovation that combines field experience with a workshop on Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy (IRTP) in their Introduction to Education course.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- **RQ1:** How do prospective preservice teachers describe their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and IRTP workshop?
- **RQ2:** How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices?

In this chapter, I will first discuss the study's purpose and its alignment with the action research approach practiced by Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College EdD program. Then, I will describe the setting of my study as well as the prospective participants and my role at the university. Next, I will provide an overview of the IRTP innovation that I designed to increase potential preservice teachers'

understanding of Indigenous students and supportive teaching practices in a Tribal School. I will also explain the data sources used to assess the effects of the innovation on preservice teachers and how this data was analyzed.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine and further understand the effect an Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy intervention has on potential teacher candidates and their beliefs and attitudes towards teaching Indigenous students. The need for this study arose from my personal experiences in education both as a student and as a teacher. Understanding the implications of the lack of Indigenous representation in academia for me as an Indigenous person was crucial to my personal dissatisfaction with how Indigenous students were perceived by my non-Indigenous colleagues.

This dissatisfaction fueled the urgency I felt was needed to address this issue. As a social studies teacher at a rural Tribal School, I observed that the teachers who were employed at this school had little to no experience working with Indigenous students. Teachers struggled to make connections with students and behavior referrals were high. This lack of connection stemmed not only from the teachers' lack of community involvement, but this lack of connection also stemmed from the teachers' lack of knowledge about students and their histories and home lives. This issue has been one I have noticed as both a teacher and student in Tribal Schools. Since the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher College's EdD program emphasizes action research, the program offered an optimal way to address this issue.

Setting and Participants

The University of Minnesota Morris (UMN Morris) is one of 38 Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) across the United States (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2021). Being a NASNTI institution requires a minimum of 10% of the student population to identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native. UMN Morris currently has 32.5% of their student body population who identify as Native American, Alaskan Native or Canadian First Nations. As a NASNTI institution, UMN Morris created an assessment of progress and action steps report to ensure NASNTI funds are used to better the lives of Indigenous students (Peterson & Peters, 2021). In this report, one action step is to Indigenize the teacher education program at the institution (p. 15). This would weave Indigenous ideologies throughout the coursework required in the program. The goal was to create culturally competent teachers who feel confident in their ability to serve Indigenous students and communities once the potential teacher candidates complete the program. This aim aligns with the overall goal for this dissertation to create a framework that guides potential preservice teachers to build cultural competency around Indigenous ideologies, issues, and perspectives in education.

This study took place at the University of Minnesota Morris (UMN Morris). The focus of this study was on participants from UMN Morris. The participants were enrolled in the Introduction to Education course at this university. This course is designed to introduce the teaching profession to students enrolled in the course by covering topics such as learning theories, lesson planning, assessment creation, and differentiated learning. A full copy of the syllabi for both the Introduction to Education and the Tutor-Aide Practicum is included in Appendix A. In total, there were 15 students enrolled in the course but only 4 of the students chose to participate in the study. These students were

second-year students or beyond, having completed 24 or more credits. As an extension of this Introduction to Education course, students were also enrolled in a sister-course titled Tutor-Aide Practicum. In the practicum, students participate in school classroom observations and are expected to teach a lesson to the classroom they are assigned to.

These two courses were the first time the potential preservice teachers were in the classroom as a professional potential teacher. The students who participated were from various majors and focuses of study but were interested in the education program at this institution. For the purpose of this study, these students were placed in a reservation Tribal School in South Dakota, Tiospa Zina Tribal School. This school is a rural, Bureau of Indian Education funded, tribally controlled school. Students at this Tribal School are enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe. It is a school that serves the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate and has students in all grades from kindergarten to 12th grade. The enrollment estimate for this institution is roughly 500 students. This placement gave participants first-hand experience with Indigenous students and an opportunity to apply what they learned in the IRTP workshop. I was able to observe and understand how the potential preservice teachers interacted with Indigenous students and their beliefs and attitudes towards Indigenous students. This included their lesson plans, worksheets, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings while teaching. No data was collected from Indigenous students.

The Tutor-Aide Practicum was taught by a UMN Morris faculty member; I was not the instructor of record for this course and had no role in grading or evaluating participants. This was made clear to the participants in the hope of alleviating pressure to participate and concerns about grading biases. The instructor of record was not present

during the initial meeting about participation in this study. The instructor of record also did not participate in the field experience at the Tribal School. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary and had no impact on students' grades. Data collection consisted of observations of potential preservice teachers and how they lead their classrooms. Daily journals, lesson plans, interviews and a group debrief once the potential preservice teachers completed their time requirements at the school were used as both primary and supplemental data sources.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was as an insider of the University of Minnesota Morris, as an employee. My role as an outsider at Tiospa Zina Tribal School was only partially true since I both graduated from and taught at TZTS. Since I currently do not teach at Tiospa Zina Tribal School, I was at the site as a visitor when the potential preservice teachers were participating in classrooms. It is important to note that none of the data collected was on Indigenous students at Tiospa Zina Tribal School. The data was focused on the potential preservice teachers who were tasked with facilitating lesson plans and implementing aspects of IRTP.

While my primary purpose was to examine the beliefs, practices, and attitudes towards Indigenous students among potential preservice teachers, I was also mindful that my identity as an Indigenous person with personal ties to the host site (TZTS) could have potentially created unintended biases. My research role was to collect and analyze qualitative data on pre- and post-intervention beliefs, practices, and attitudes. As a member of my community and an educator, my personal role was to create positive

change for Indigenous students. This was really the driving force behind my motivation to create Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy.

Innovation

In the Introduction to Education course, the potential preservice teachers are typically required to complete 6 different assignments over the course of a semester. These assignments include but are not limited to: participation and attendance (10%), context paper (10%), peer teaching (30%), mini-unit (30%), classroom management/self-management model (10%), and a final exam or project (10%). Classroom observations or participation within a classroom setting are not required for Introduction to Education. While potential preservice teachers are enrolled in Introduction to Education, they simultaneously take the partner course Tutor-Aide Practicum. In this course, potential preservice teachers complete 5 assignments that ultimately count towards their final grade for this course. These assignments include but are not limited to an observation record, tutoring and teaching, technology inventory, a context paper, and the tutor-aide evaluation. Students enrolled in both Introduction to Education and the Tutor-aide Practicum are required to complete 30 hours of classroom observation.

Participation in the innovation was voluntary and was not part of the course requirements described above. In addition to gaining additional, valuable classroom experience, potential preservice teachers who chose to participate in this research study were offered participation stipends. These totaled up to \$100 for each student. These participation stipends were provided by the University of Minnesota Morris as part of the institution's larger effort to gather data and understand the value and impact that Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy has on potential preservice teachers. The

justification for using grant funding is outlined in the report from Peterson and Peters (2021) that lays out the Native American student educational equity and post-secondary attainment action steps for the University of Minnesota Morris as a part of the Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution and Salt Springs Endowment grants.

The innovation was an integrated series of experiences that took place over a month. Students spent a total of six days at a Tribal School in South Dakota for field experience. This time was split into two different weeks. During the first week, the students interacted with Indigenous students in the classroom with no prior instruction on best practices for working with Indigenous students in an educational setting. While there, the prospective preservice teachers journaled about their experiences and their interactions with the students. These journal entries were prompted so the prospective preservice teachers answered specific questions about their experiences.

After they completed the first three days at the Tribal School, students discussed their experiences and what they wished they knew going into this experience. This was conducted as a roundtable discussion to give students the opportunity to listen to their peers and connect with their experiences. When they completed the first section of their time at the Tribal School, they took part in an Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy training workshop at their university for two 100-minute class periods. In these sessions, I explained the differences between Culturally Responsive Teaching, Culturally Relevant, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, differentiated these educational frameworks from Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy, and offered ways for the students to make genuine connections with their students. In this workshop, teaching strategies and elements of culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and culturally

sustaining pedagogies were introduced to the prospective preservice teachers. Once these strategies and elements were introduced, Indigenous specific teaching strategies and elements of Indigenous Responsive Teaching were also introduced. Some examples of these strategies and elements are listed in the chart below. In this workshop, students were given examples of how Indigenous culture impacts Indigenous students and their efforts at school. Potential preservice teachers were also given a short lesson on the historical relationship Indigenous communities have with educational settings. This information on the histories of schools on reservations helped potential preservice teachers understand the societal ills facing Indigenous communities and why the relationships between Indigenous families are sometimes strained. This gave them a better understanding of where their students come from and how their home lives and traditional and cultural beliefs impact their time, effort and attention at school.

After students took part in the Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy workshop, they returned to the tribal school, where they spent two days teaching students in their respective subject or specific grade areas. During this time, the students continued completing their daily journal responses and submitting their lesson plans and observations. Once this portion of the field experience was completed, the students took part in a debriefing session where they were able to discuss their experiences in their classrooms. I facilitated this debriefing session, and this served as a roundtable discussion.

Table 1

Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Teaching	Culturally Relevant Teaching	Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy	Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy
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Cultural Sensitivity	<p>Texts are diverse in subjects, topics.</p> <p>Resources are related to student's lives.</p> <p>Open communication with families.</p> <p>Discussion is inclusive.</p>	<p>Creating a supportive learning community.</p> <p>Empowering students.</p>	<p>Students' cultures and identities are centered and valued in the classroom.</p>	<p>Understand that schooling and the relationship the students have with school might be strained because of historical aspects of government to tribe relationships and termination policies.</p> <p>Acknowledging and altering the preconceived notions teachers may have towards or against Indigenous students, communities, and tribes.</p>
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<p>Familial and Communal Perspectives</p>	<p>Parent Surveys. Collaboration between parent and teacher. Conferences, home visits.</p>	<p>Validation of cultures in students' home communities.</p>	<p>Strong, positive relationships are built between students, families, and school staff.</p>	<p>Knowing/asking about their family makeup. Positive perspectives on parents and families and the overall tribal community. Partnering with tribal communities to bring knowledge into the classroom. Understanding how kinship works in Indigenous communities.</p>
<p>Curriculum Changes</p>	<p>Uses a variety of learning strategies. Conversations are diverse. Research on their communities is encouraged.</p>	<p>Multicultural curricula and content is incorporated. Heritage and culture is incorporated.</p>	<p>Relevant and rigorous curriculum.</p>	<p>Use students' cultural knowledge as supplemental resources. Using a curriculum that includes Indigenous perspectives.</p>

Community Involvement	Participation in community events.	*Does not address this category*	*Does not address this category*	Being an active participant in activities that are deemed as appropriate for non-Indigenous people to join.
Connections with Students	Lessons include content relevant to students' lives.	Caring relationships. Interaction. Classroom atmosphere.	Strong, positive relationships are built between students, families, and school staff.	Asking students what cultural activities they take part in and when they take place. Using humor as a way to connect with students. (Indigenous humor is different from non-Indigenous humor)
Authenticity	*Does not address this category*	Affirming diversity.	*Does not address this category*	Being authentic with gaining and implementing culture into the classrooms and lessons. Knowing and understanding that as a non-Indigenous teacher, you do not know more about your

				students' culture than they do.
High Expectations	Data tracking. Students are asking questions and making their own choices. Clear expectations for students.	Expectations are high for all students. Access is equal for all students.	Rigorous curriculum is used.	Teachers having high expectations for students. Teachers assisting students to have higher expectations of themselves. Building intrinsic motivation for students. Using the desire to give back to tribal and home communities as a resource to have high expectations of themselves. Providing opportunities for Indigenous excellence to be presented and showcased in lessons, discussions, research projects, etc.

Cultural Inclusion	Lessons include content relevant to student’s lives. Classroom embraces and encourages diverse cultures.	Developing skills within a cultural context. Bringing school, home, and community together.	Anti-oppressive teaching practices.	Using Indigenous languages in the classroom. Making active efforts to learn and use Indigenous languages. Knowing the Indigenous cultures that are represented in your classroom. (Specific ceremonies, ideologies, etc.)
Student Centered Discourse	Language inclusion. Students bring their own stories to share.	Dispositions. Development of identity. Perspectives come from multiple sources.	Students’ cultures and identities are centered and valued in the classroom.	Giving students the opportunity to showcase their knowledge of their culture. Students are experts on their culture. Letting students teach you about their culture. Allowing students to show ownership of their culture and not acting like you, as a

teacher, know more
about their culture
than they do.

Notes. ^aBrown University. (2008). ^bBond. (2017, p. 157). ^cCulturally Responsive Education Hub. (2022).

Research Plan

In the first step of the process, I placed students enrolled in Introduction to Education with cooperating teachers at Tiospa Zina Tribal School in South Dakota. Prior to their experience in the classroom, they were expected to complete their first of five journal prompts. The second step consisted of focusing on the students and their time at the Tribal School. In this step, I visited each of the participants in their classrooms and observed their interactions with Indigenous students. This was documented via a research journal. This type of data was used primarily as supplemental data. This step also included a journal entry of their experiences in the classroom. The third step included the workshop that I facilitated concerning best practices for Indigenous students. This workshop was titled Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy and focused on what potential preservice teachers can do to create better connections with their Indigenous students - specifically at the Tribal School they are placed at for their research participation. This was done in two consecutive 100-minute class periods. Again, there was a journal prompt that asked students to describe how the training impacted their ideas on Indigenous education and their attitudes towards Indigenous students. The fourth step took place when the students returned to the Tribal School in South Dakota and were able

to implement their newly learned teaching methods and strategies to test if it translates to their connections with students. These teaching strategies included the use of learning theories such as constructivism and cultural connections, an opportunity for students to incorporate their favorite cultural activities into an assignment, and time for potential preservice teachers to address and alter any preconceived notions they may have had prior to learning about IRTP. In the fifth step, students journaled about their final experience - specifically noting student engagement and student participation after IRTP was introduced. These prompts were given to the students after they completed each of the steps of this research. The sixth step was the final step where I facilitated a roundtable discussion with participants to debrief their experiences and discuss what information they wished they had prior to the intervention and what they used after receiving training on IRTP and how they used this work in their classrooms. The audio of this roundtable discussion was recorded and further transcribed and analyzed.

In this research project, only qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze data. For the primary qualitative data, participants were asked to complete a total of five journal prompts. These journals were based on the experience they had during the innovation. The first journal entry focused on their expectations for their field experiences. The second journal prompt specifically asked about their initial experiences in the classroom at Tiospa Zina Tribal School. Since this was the first time many of the students worked with an entirely Indigenous group of students, the journal prompt asked about details of their experiences and how it was different from other experiences in the classroom. The third journal entry came after the Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy training that took place between their two field experiences. Here, they

received a plethora of information on Indigenous histories and how this idea of Indigenous Responsiveness is different from Culturally Responsive, Culturally Sustaining, or Culturally Relevant Pedagogies. The fourth journal entry was completed after their second trip to Tiospa Zina Tribal School for their final portion of the field experience. Since they were returning to Tiospa Zina equipped with IRTP, they focused on what is different in this field experience from the first field experience. The fifth and final journal entry came after they finished their fourth journal and prior to their participation in the roundtable discussion. This journal entry was a reflection on their entire experience with the IRTP data collection process and if they felt that their attitudes and beliefs towards Indigenous students have changed as a result of participating in the IRTP intervention. These journal prompts directly address each of the research questions and may suggest growth throughout the IRTP process.

Participant journals are a reliable and trustworthy source of data, depending on the prompts that are used. Participant journals are a beneficial way to get information on the thoughts the students have as they progressed through their experiences at the Tribal School. It gave the students a space to be honest about their experiences and gave them a sense of debriefing during the week to gather their thoughts while they were still fresh. Like any journaling, it gave students a sense of relief. Students could use this journal as a resource to write down questions and for important notes or things they notice throughout the week. If students are given a specific prompt that asks about their experiences with Indigenous students, however, they might be inclined to fabricate their journal entries because they want to look successful. One potential prompt could be “How would you describe your experience at Tiospa Zina Tribal School? What are some cultural

connections you witnessed while participating in the classroom at Tiospa Zina Tribal School?”

One potential issue about using participant journals is the concern of students only writing about positive interactions or positive experiences. Since this took place within the confines of a structured course that counts towards graduation, students might be hesitant to write their true feelings and experiences they have had throughout their participation. In order to prevent this from happening, participation journals were set up with anonymity in mind. Participants were able to answer journal prompts as an anonymous responder. This was done using a google form where identifying information was not collected. Another measure to combat this bias is reiterating the fact that participation does not influence their grade in the course. Grading the journals might lead to lack of trustworthiness. Any prompt that would lead participants to report what they think we want to hear rather than what they experienced would be harmful to the overall data collection process. In order to combat this, I was very selective in the prompts for students to complete as they worked throughout the week.

Roundtable discussions can also be very beneficial to the overall qualitative data collection process. They can be beneficial in providing students with a common space to share their experiences, or such discussions can be an intimidating environment for students who don't feel comfortable sharing their thoughts about the overall experience. Students' answers could also be shaped by their peers. Since their peers have tremendous influence as it is, putting all students together to answer questions and discuss topics might make it difficult for some students to create their own ideas and form their own opinions. Students might also fear backlash from the facilitator or faculty involved in this

portion of the process. Alternatively, the roundtable discussion could also be a very powerful way to decompress and debrief their entire experience. It gives students the opportunity to listen to their peers and know that they aren't alone in their experiences and that their peers often face the same struggles that they do. To increase participants' comfort with the roundtable discussion, I used several strategies. It was important for participants to feel comfortable with me as the facilitator, and with the questions they answered. By providing a few example questions and allowing students to prepare for the discussion, I allowed time for students to form responses that they feel confident in sharing with their peers. I also reminded them that their participation in the discussion did not impact their final grade and the course instructor of record was not involved in the discussion.

These data collection methods each provided useful information and complemented each other. Although I only intended to use the 5 journal entries as the primary data, the roundtable discussion was also used as part of the official data collection process to further explore student experiences and elicit more specific examples of what they experienced throughout their time at their field experience placements. Some of their responses to the journal entries were elaborated on further in the roundtable discussion portion of this project. Some students also brought one journal prompt to discuss at the roundtable discussion. I had a set list of questions that was used to facilitate discussion and the journal prompts that were used. The journal prompts are listed in Appendix B. The roundtable discussion questions are listed in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

In this section, I discuss my qualitative data analysis process, which consisted of several steps. My primary data included five written journal entries from 4 students (a total of 20 entries), as well as the transcription of the roundtable discussion. I also recorded my own observations and reflections on the innovation; these notes served as an additional resource for interpreting participants' experiences but are not included in my data analysis.

Journal entries were analyzed and coded using the hand coding method. In the first step, I entered all five journal entries from each student into one google document. The roundtable audio recording was transcribed by hand and entered into a separate google document. In the second step, I used a highlighter and a hard copy of the journal entries for an initial coding of the data using inductive coding (Saldana, 2021). Inductive coding, according to Saldana (2021) is appropriate for research that is considered exploratory or when researchers are coming up with new ideas.

In a third step, I recoded the data using pattern coding. Saldana (2021) explains that pattern coding can be used to simplify large sets of data to a smaller amount such as categories, themes and concepts (Saldana, 2021). In this step, I looked for patterns in the data and codes that relate to my two research questions. Finally, I used categorical theming to understand patterns or similar ideas that are present throughout the data.

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research can be established using many forms. Using methods that ensure the data being collected is accurate and the data interpretations are logical are important to increasing the validity and reliability of qualitative studies

(Franklin & Ballan, 2011). Data and observer triangulation are two methods to ensure the data that is being collected is accurate. Observer triangulation comes in the coding process where an additional, outside person looks at the data that was collected anonymously and determines if plausible codes, categories, and themes were pulled from the data. This outside observer checks the codes, categories, and themes created in the data analysis process by reading through the data and cross referencing the codes and themes I have already determined. The data has already gone through the de-identification process. Data triangulation is the process of using two or more data sources to compare evidence in support of findings (Franklin & Ballan, 2011). Data triangulation was done via google documents. The outside observer was given permission to view and comment on the journal response coding google document. From here, the outside observer went through and checked the codes, added codes that were missed, and connected themes that were overlooked and left out. The data that was collected in this study focuses on the participant journal entries and the transcription of the roundtable discussion. In addition to these journals, classroom observations, and individual lesson plans were used to triangulate the overall growth potential preservice teachers show throughout the data collection process (Franklin & Ballan, 2011). The questions that are proposed in Franklin and Ballan's (2011) handbook were used to further increase the reliability of the data and this study. The questions are as follows.

1. Are the research questions clear, and are the features of the study design congruent with them?
 - a. The research questions and the design of the study was reviewed by my committee to ensure clarity and congruency.

2. Is the researcher's role and status within the site explicitly described?
 - a. The role of the researcher is explicitly stated in chapter 3 of this study.
3. Were coding checks made, and did they show adequate agreement?
 - a. Observer triangulation was implemented to check codes and show agreement or offer alternatives.
4. Were any forms of peer or colleague review in place? (p. 277)
 - a. The dissertation committee that was chosen to guide this study offers a form of peer or colleague review.

One additional strategy to enhance reliability was the researcher journal that was kept by myself. I used this journal to document the different steps along the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. This journal was useful for comparing my observations throughout the process to the participants' descriptions, providing another means of data triangulation.

Table 1

Timeline of events

Time frame	Action	Procedure
January-March 2023	Create Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy	Finalize details of IRTP and create lesson plan
Mid-March 2023	Place students enrolled in the class with cooperating teachers (CTs) at Tribal School	Students from Intro to Education were placed with CTs to align with content area
April 4, 2023	Students enrolled in Intro to Education completed their first journal entry. Baseline data established.	Collect baseline data on students
April 5-7, 2023	Students were taken to Tribal School to conduct their field	Travel to Tribal School with students.

	experience in this	Students
	research study.	answered
	Students answered	journal prompts
	journal prompts in a	in their
	response journal on	response
	Google Forms to	journals using
	document their time at	Google Forms.
	the Tribal School.	
April 11-13, 2023	Conduct IRTP	Teach IRTP to
	training with students	students in
	enrolled in Intro to	Intro to
	Education and how	Education
	this training	
	information can be	
	utilized in the	
	classroom	
April 18-20, 2023	Students enrolled in	Travel to Tribal
	Intro to Education	School with
	returned to the Tribal	students and
	School and	observe
	classrooms to utilize	students.

April 25, 2023

information from
IRTP training.
Students answered
journal prompts in
their response
journals.
Students were given
final journal entries
and were asked to
complete it.

In class, students
debriefed their
experience at the
tribal school and how
their ideas changed
because of the
implementation of
IRTP.

Students
answered
journal prompts
in their
response
journals.
Collect data on
students'
experience in
the Tribal
School.
Roundtable
discussion with
students to
debrief.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the effectiveness of Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy on potential preservice teachers. The following research questions informed this study:

RQ1: How do prospective preservice teachers describe their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and IRTP workshop?

RQ2: How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices?

Through journal prompts and a roundtable discussion, as well as classroom observations, participants described their experiences with interacting with Indigenous students in a Tribal School setting. They also discussed their ideas on how to utilize the education framework of Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy in their future classrooms.

Research participants also discussed how their levels of comfortability working with Indigenous students increased throughout the entire research process. The research findings in this chapter are based on analysis of the following qualitative data sources: five journal prompts asking about their daily experiences and a transcription of the roundtable discussion.

Background

The participants of this study were four students enrolled in the Introduction to Education course at the University of Minnesota Morris. Students in this course are required to be in their second year of college or have the equivalent number of credits. There were four research participants who completed the entire data collection process which included completing five of the five journal prompts, taking part in the round table discussion, and completing their onsite field experiences at the nearby Tribal School. The research participants consisted of three females and one male. They ranged in age from 20-24 and each ranged in levels of experience with education with the most experienced participant having a full year of substitute teaching experience and the least experienced participant having no experience in the classroom. The participants are all interested in applying to the education program at UMN Morris but are still completing the prerequisites for the program. Each of the research participants identified as Indigenous. Some participants had more experience with their cultural teachings and beliefs than others did. Their varying levels of indigeneity had little to no effect on their overall growth and experience in the data collection process or the overall research being conducted. The identity of the participants is essential to note because although the participants identified themselves as Indigenous, there were still levels of uneasiness and hesitancy around working in the Tribal School. Each participant's background knowledge of their Indigenous culture varied from participating in ceremonies and other cultural events to having no connection with their Indigenous communities or culture.

The setting of the innovation was split between two locations. The first location was the University of Minnesota Morris, a public liberal arts university located in a town

with a total population under 6,000. This was the primary data collection site. The second location was used solely for the field experience portion of the research. Data was not collected at this site, though I did observe the students and take notes. Research participants completed their required field experience at Tiospa Zina Tribal School in Sisseton, South Dakota. This school is located on the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate homelands, on the Lake Traverse reservation. This location is a BIE school that is tribally controlled.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Throughout the course of the data collection process, participants were asked to respond to five journal prompts. These journal prompts were strategically placed throughout the data collection timeline to assist participants in their overall ability to discuss their daily experiences with the innovation and build personal knowledge throughout the entire data collection process. Journals were done via Google Forms under code names to ensure anonymity. This anonymous journal allowed participants to be open and honest about their educational experiences both with the innovation and their time at the Tribal School. The anonymity was strategic because I wanted to alleviate the pressure of needing to say the right thing for participants. There were five journal entries total and each of the journal entries came after an event in the research timeline (Table 2).

At the conclusion of their innovation experience, participants participated in a roundtable discussion. This allowed participants to connect with each other on similarities and differences in their experiences both with the research and the tribal school and community. Here, participants discussed the different teaching techniques and

relationship-building strategies they learned from their cooperating teacher. They also discussed the importance of representation in classrooms and how important it is for students to have stability in their lives. This roundtable discussion was facilitated by the researcher but was led by the research participants. This discussion was audio recorded with participant consent and transcribed in order to assist in data analysis as a reference point for concluding thoughts from participants.

In the data analysis, I coded each of the participant journal entries by hand. Key phrases were pulled from each participant. These were highlighted in yellow. Most phrases included ideas of inclusion, connections, relationship-building, and feeling comfortable with the students and in the classroom. They also discussed topics such as inclusive pedagogy and the importance of representation within the classroom and school building. The total number of codes was 411. After this initial coding, I re-typed everything into a table, Appendix D. By doing this, it allowed me to catch any of the codes I may have missed in the initial coding process. From here, I was able to move from coding to categorizing. These categories allowed me to see patterns that ran throughout the data set. This is known as pattern coding, as referenced earlier in this dissertation. The total number of categories present throughout this data set totaled 38 different categories. From here, I created themes that included the categories. In total, there were five themes that addressed the research questions and included each category and code listed. An example of the themes, with supporting categories and codes, is listed below.

Table 3*Journal Entry Code-to-Theory Example*

Key Comment	Code	Category	Theme
Standards are lowered because some educators think that Indigenous people are not as intelligent and therefore cannot reach the same standards as their white peers.	“Standards are lowered”	Lower standards	“Stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true”: Disconnections and differences between prior beliefs,
Some educators also believe that Indigenous people do not care as much about school and are more likely to cause trouble.	“Some educators think that Indigenous people are not as intelligent and therefore cannot reach the same standards as their white peers”	Indigenous people aren’t as smart They need lower standards	
The stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true, they might just need to approach things differently.	“Educators also believe that Indigenous people do not care as much about school” “More likely to cause trouble”	Indigenous people don’t care about school Stereotypes about Indigenous students	
	“Stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true”	Different approach	and training.

Study Findings

Prior to discussing the themes, in the first section of the study findings I describe each individual participant's journal responses over the course of the innovation. Due to the anonymity of the journal responses, I cannot associate individual demographic or personal characteristics with these responses. As stated previously, the participants were students at a primarily white institution who were at least second year students. Each participant self-identified as Indigenous with varying levels of connections to their tribal communities. The participants were enrolled in the Introduction to Education course and had varying levels of experience in the field of education. The following summaries suggest similarities and differences in participants' perspectives and experiences and are useful as context for the discussion of themes in the subsequent section.

Participant 1 - Connecting despite cultural differences.

In their first journal entry response, prior to their field experience, Participant 1 discussed how they thought teaching at a Tribal School would be much different from public schools in the ways that day-to-day operations were carried out. They noted that the school's central methodology and pedagogy might seem similar, but teaching at a Tribal School would look "a lot more brown" in terms of the content and curricula. This comment stood out for its evocative phrasing as well as how the participant explained how teaching at the Tribal School might include Indigenous traditions and more accurate histories that locate the tribal community at the forefront of the content. Participant 1 also

discussed the importance of establishing comfortable connections with students right away and how these connections could be especially beneficial for high-risk students from communities such as tribal nations. Participant 1 also talked about how important it is for students to see themselves represented in the classroom and how much easier it might be for students to create connections with teachers who look like them.

Representation was something that each of the participants discussed at length and thus became an important thread throughout data analysis.

Participant 1's second journal response centered around their experience at the Tribal School and how impressed they were by teachers who possessed extensive awareness of trauma and difficulties that students might experience. This participant explained how their CT from the Tribal School spent the majority of their day with their students and how this differed from other schools: "The only times the class was not with the CT was during their Dakota and gym classes, otherwise things like breakfast, lunch, and recess were spent with the same teacher." They speculated that this extended contact could help students feel more comfortable, by being around the same, attentive, supportive adult throughout their day.

In the third journal response, written after the IRTP workshop, Participant 1 claimed that the workshop did not change their ideas on Indigenous education a whole lot, but it did enhance their ability to verbalize and understand why teaching Indigenous students can be different from teaching other students. Participant 1 described their personal experiences as an Indigenous student in public schools and how they were treated very differently from their classmates. To this participant, the stereotypes they

faced as a student were harmful. This negative experience with stereotypes in the classroom pushed this student to claim that “the stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true; they might just need to approach things differently.” They discussed how using inclusive language instead of asking about a mom or a dad could be beneficial for Indigenous students since they may not have a traditional, nuclear family or home life. Participant 1 also discussed the importance of using humor to connect with Indigenous students, which was mentioned in the IRTP workshop. “Also connecting with humor was something I always thought would be a good idea and now I have that idea confirmed through IRTP.” This participant then discussed how they planned on changing their lesson plan to better accommodate their Indigenous students when they returned to the Tribal School. This particular journal response was interesting because they began this response with how IRTP didn’t change their ideas and ended with how they would change their lesson plans for their return to the Tribal School because of what they learned from IRTP. The IRTP workshop might not have given Participant 1 huge revelations about Indigenous education, but it did solidify their pre-existing ideas on what would work best for Indigenous students and education and perhaps gave them more concrete strategies.

In Participant 1’s fourth journal response, which followed their return to the Tribal School, they discussed how this field experience cycle went much more smoothly for them. They attributed this smooth return to their familiarity with the school and the students as well as the students’ familiarity with Participant 1. They explained the lesson plan that they taught and how they used their cultural Anishinaabe knowledge with the Dakota students to create connections, by comparing their own cultural stories with those

that these students might have heard and identifying similarities or differences between their cultures. This lesson that Participant 1 shared was especially important in revealing what information from IRTP they found useful enough to implement. Participant 1 explained that the students were excited to hear about traditional Anishinaabe stories even though they were from a different culture.

The fifth and final journal entry required participants to reflect on their entire experience with the IRTP data collection process. Participant 1 shared their initial concerns about not being able to connect with Indigenous students and how stereotypes would influence their connections and interactions with Indigenous students. Participant 1 confirmed that the IRTP workshop helped them feel more comfortable working with Indigenous students. Although Participant 1 identified as Indigenous themselves, they felt like they would not be able to connect with the students since they were from a different tribal culture: “This experience has helped calm some of those fears because I now know that it doesn’t matter if I’m “Native enough” and I feel comfortable in the Tribal School environment and I can still connect with the kids.” This comment was significant in demonstrating that even Indigenous educators benefitted from the IRTP workshop, even if it was just to solidify and affirm their pre-existing knowledge and ideas about Indigenous education. Participant 1 continued their journal response by sharing their hopes for their future classrooms and how they wished to create a community for their Indigenous students within their classrooms.

Participant 1, throughout the entire IRTP data collection process, worked towards affirming their prior beliefs about Indigenous students. It was obvious that they were

passionate about being an educator, but they were nervous about their ability to connect with other Indigenous students. Although they self-identified as Indigenous, they claimed that they were nervous about their ability to create connections with Indigenous students due to being from a different tribe. As they continued to work with Indigenous students, they found that when they shared aspects of their culture, their students were receptive because this participant helped them create connections to the cultural aspects of their lesson.

Participant 2 - Creating inclusive classes in all settings

Before their initial field experience at the Tribal School, Participant 2 wrote about the differences they might observe between the Tribal School and public schools.

Participant 2 had firm beliefs that the Tribal School would have Indigenous cultural elements integrated throughout the school building and in the content presented to the students: “My expectation when arriving at a Tribal School is to see a lot of cultural connections being displayed throughout the school and classroom.” This participant explained how they thought the Tribal School would resemble more of an immersion school than a public school. “With that being said, we should see a lot more history in Native American culture through the Tribal School and less of the hefty American-European history throughout the whole country.” Participant 2 explained that in the American education system, the central focus of history curricula includes an emphasis on the processes of colonization and industrialization that created the towns we know today. This participant was especially excited about the control Tribal Schools had over what they were able to teach: “A Tribal School has the ability to change that teaching by

being able to provide teachings of events that apply to their own culture and history.”

Overall, Participant 2 was eager to have their field experience take place at a Tribal School due to the potential differences they might encounter.

In their second journal response entry, Participant 2 discussed their initial experience at the Tribal School and how beneficial it was for them as a future educator: “I feel like the experience at the Tribal School is one everyone going into education needs to experience.” This was a strong statement that they explained further by saying that although they are taught many different teaching strategies that might work in a public school, they typically don’t get to adapt these strategies to fit student learning styles outside of that setting. Participant 2 discussed how they felt the teacher education program was “very centralized towards high Caucasian population settings, almost in a way that is saying that we may not ever see diversity in a classroom.” This statement suggests that this participant was already sensitive to biases in teacher education curricula, perhaps contributing to their interest in learning about an educational framework that better serves Indigenous students, who are typically underrepresented and underserved in education. While Participant 2 was especially critical of teacher preparation programs, they highlighted positive experiences at the Tribal School. For example, they observed that “Teachers have the ability to manipulate a subject, as well as the unit to encourage students learning about their own culture.” Participant 2 noted the Tribal School teachers’ ability to use resources that surround them, such as elders and family stories, traditional language, and tribal knowledge, and how beneficial this was for not only the students but also their families and the tribal elders who were able to share accurate information and histories. This observation was pivotal for this participant, who

goes on to state that “if there was a way for all students to find a deeper connection, such as the one presented in this Tribal School, then we should find a way to help public school students create a deeper connection, maybe not through just one language, but through many different understandings of history and learning methods.” This participant was not only thinking about how to set up their future classroom but also the changes they could make in a public school setting overall.

In their third journal response, Participant 2 expressed how their experience with the IRTP workshop was very beneficial for them. They explained how they had a “better understanding of how to go about teaching not only in a Tribal School but also a public school that may present a Native American population.” This participant described how the IRTP workshop highlighted differences between Indigenous students and how each family, community, and tribe is not the same. Participant 3 also discussed how their beliefs about Indigenous students changed as a result of participating in the IRTP workshop. “If I was to change my teaching strategy, now compared to before the training, I would focus on teaching lessons in a more personal manner rather than looking at it from a state standard point of view.” They explained how the education system judges students in terms of how well they perform on standardized tests while many times, students are struggling “a lot more personally, culturally, and/or mentally.” They talked about how they want students to be interested in what they are learning about by connecting it to their interests while keeping standards the same. Participant 2 also discussed how important it is for educators to understand the history of their Indigenous students, how negative aspects of this history are hidden, and yet contribute greatly to the overall level of comfort Indigenous students feel in the classroom. “Histories are the

things that we are tied to as human beings, and sometimes it can have a greater impact on how a child views the world.” The ideas and understandings this participant gained through the IRTP workshop helped shape their ideas on what education should and could look like for Indigenous students. They immediately started thinking about how they would conduct their classroom to be more inclusive for their future Indigenous students.

Their fourth journal response entry highlighted Participant 2’s second cycle of their field experience at the Tribal School. They expressed that this experience went more smoothly than the first experience. “The biggest difference compared to last time was maybe just a little bit more of a relationship with the students even though I was only there for six hours.” They explained how their interactions with students were more frequent and the students were more comfortable asking them questions. Participant 2 explained their lesson and how they were able to guide students through questions following the article they read as part of the lesson. This participant expressed how much more comfortable they felt in the second field experience by saying, “I felt very confident going into teaching a lesson this time more so than I would’ve if I was to teach a lesson at the last field experience.” The comfort level both the students and Participant 2 had with each other made the second field experience cycle much more successful for everyone.

In their fifth journal entry, Participant 2 reflected on their entire experience with IRTP and the Tribal School. They found the autonomy the Tribal School held over the curriculum was helpful. “When a tribally controlled school can utilize students’ time for a more relevant teaching curriculum, it seems to produce more interest from students and the staff when they can implement more connecting content.” They expressed that the

experience had changed their lesson plans and approach to teaching students at the Tribal School. “The experience even had me changing my own lesson plan format and materials in order to better adapt to the diverse classroom that we predominantly see in today’s current classroom environment.” Participant 2 explained how this strengthened their plans and ability to connect with students. This participant was even thinking about how their ability to connect with students could create a passion for learning that went well beyond their classroom and grade level. “This is where you help build a bridge where we are losing connection to our Indigenous students inside K-12 settings therefore we lose numbers of Indigenous students pursuing higher education.”

Seeing this participant’s considerable awareness of the biases in existing teacher education programs was intimidating to me since they seemed to “know it all” before participating in the workshop. They mentioned how they had family that worked in administrative roles for the Bureau of Indian Education and that these familial connections to the BIE shaped their expectations before participating. I do, however, think this was a beneficial experience for them. The IRTP workshop helped this participant understand the various factors Indigenous students face in the classroom and in the education system as a whole. This participant, throughout the entire process, articulated some concrete ways to personalize their teaching and otherwise build bridges between Indigenous students and the academic world.

Participant 3 - Replacing shyness with excitement

In their initial journal entry, Participant 3 discussed their experience at public schools as an Indigenous student. They explain how they only learned about one specific

tribe in their state and how they experienced discrimination against the Indigenous students in their school, including lower standards: “Native students had a different GPA set and I remember getting special awards for being an A honor roll student for the Native requirements, which were lower than the GPA requirements for white students.” They described how a Tribal School might form more of a community because everyone would hold similar beliefs. Although this is not entirely true, it was gratifying that Participant 3 showed excitement about the Tribal School experience because they might feel more connected.

Participant 3 noted in their second journal entry that the Tribal School followed a different set of academic standards. Since it was a tribally controlled school, this participant noted that the school follows standards created by the Tribe and Bureau of Indian Education. “The BIE standards include traditional language that has to be implemented in each grade that goes along with the terms they are learning that year.” This participant explained that the school also did not hold “traditional expectations” of students. This was not a negative to the participant, however. Participant 3 explained that “they seem to care more about the students’ wellbeing and are more accepting of things because they understand students’ home lives.” Participant 3 also discussed how the first teacher they observed didn’t have a significant connection with students, but a second CT used humor and other strategies to create a more personal and relaxed atmosphere: “The second teacher I observed had more of a connection with the students. This teacher joked around a lot more and teased the students.” In addition, this participant noted that students in the second setting were more engaged in the schoolwork, potentially as a result of this comfortable environment.

Participant 3's third journal entry demonstrated considerable growth from the IRTP workshop. They explained that they were shy about being involved in the classroom because of their lack of knowledge about the students' cultural background and fear of offending their students. One of the biggest lessons they learned from the IRTP workshop was that "it made me realize that it's okay to not know about culture if you're willing to and open to learn about it." They were able to take a few of the teachings from the IRTP workshop and consider how to incorporate them into their future approach to teaching. They explained the "tips" they gained from the IRTP workshop, including "make sure the students know that you are open to learning and are interested in their culture. Another tip is to share things about your life with them, so they feel comfortable sharing their life with you." This was an important insight in allowing the participant to put some feelings of uneasiness about cultural knowledge to rest.

Participant 3 explained how they would implement some of the teachings from the workshop: "In my next class session, I plan on implementing the following things: being open to learning new things, making connections with students, and being able to have a welcoming classroom." As the researcher, I was excited to see the ideas they planned on implementing because it showed concrete growth they were experiencing as a prospective preservice teacher. This participant also discussed the importance of making connections with the students and how they planned on creating these connections with students. "Students will not just open up and tell you about themselves, you have to make them feel welcome and part of that is showing them that you actually care and are interested in them." This was a remarkable aspect of this participant's growth after they described their shyness and inability to fully participate in class due to this shyness.

In their fourth journal response, Participant 3 discussed their return to the Tribal School and compared it to their initial field experience. They explained that “when I first came to the school, I noticed the students were kind of stand-off-ish and did not really want to talk to me because I was a stranger.” They went on to say that the second field experience was more comfortable, not only for them but for the students at the Tribal School as well. They described how the students approached them and were more willing to talk to them. This participant discussed their lesson plan and how they incorporated some of the students’ traditional knowledge into this lesson. “I led a lesson about Greek mythology and led a discussion about how it relates to stories they may have heard at home to talk about how the world was created.” Participant 3 explained how well the lesson went, though a lack of participation was likely because their students were shy. They described how they tried to engage the students by ensuring that their stories were relevant and that there was no “right” answer. Overall, their second field experience at the Tribal School was positive and they were able to implement new ideas for student engagement into their lessons.

To wrap up their entire experience, Participant 3 noted that “incorporating Indigenous culture and beliefs into the classroom is a great way to create a more inclusive and diverse learning environment” in their fifth and final journal entry. They discussed the harmful stereotypes that Indigenous students face and how “including Native perspectives in the classroom can help combat these misconceptions and promote a more accurate and nuanced understanding of Indigenous peoples.” Connections with students was clearly important for this participant because they mention that “to build these connections, teachers can incorporate Indigenous voices and stories into their lessons,

invite guest speakers from Indigenous communities, and incorporate Indigenous art and culture into classroom decorations and activities.” One of the most important comments from this participant, however, comes at the very end of their journal response. They state, “Overall, building strong connections with students and incorporating diverse perspectives into the classroom is essential for creating a positive and inclusive learning environment. By making an effort to understand and include Indigenous culture, teachers can help create a more respectful and understanding society for all.”

Participant 3 showed exceptional candor throughout the entire IRTP process. Their negative experiences shaped their desire to create connections with students and focus on the cultural differences each student might bring to their classes. They were open and honest about their feelings of shyness and unwillingness to participate in the classroom due to this shyness and how the IRTP workshop helped them understand their ability to create change in the classroom for Indigenous students. Participant 3 talked about their excitement to create a welcoming environment for their Indigenous students and how important it was for them to develop a sense of confidence when working with Indigenous students, even if they knew nothing about the cultural backgrounds of their students. As the researcher, it was exciting to see Participant 3’s confidence grow even within the workshop. Toward the end of the IRTP experience, they were leading discussions with other participants and their excitement was contagious.

Participant 4 - Creating accurate content for classrooms

Participant 4 offers an interesting and useful contrast to the other three participants. Participant 4 initially stated that there would be few differences between the

Tribal School and other public schools. Like other participants, they discussed differences in the way content might be presented to the students and what the lessons contain. They stated that “some of the classes may talk more about important dates and major themes that Native Americans were involved in and the importance of the beliefs that Indigenous people have.” The similarities they expected to encounter were the administrative aspects of school such as schedules, different backgrounds of students, and how the teachers work together at the Tribal School. Participant 4 described how there might only be a few different ways teachers interact with students - which differs from other participants. They also discussed community involvement, which was something that I had not thought of. Overall, Participant 4 gave an extensive list of the similarities and differences they expected to see but the similarities vastly outweighed the differences.

In their second journal response, Participant 4 noted how the teacher they observed was able to handle behavioral issues without losing control of the entire class. “The teacher manages the behavior by giving them something to do; for students who have trouble with engagement and learning, she gave them an assignment that had more detailed instructions to keep them engaged.” This observation stood out because classroom management was not a topic that I anticipated anyone would discuss. Participant 4, however, wrote about how the teacher kept students engaged by frequent “brain breaks” and allowing students to move around a lot more. This participant was not shy and jumped right into walking around the room and monitoring students. “While observing the class, I also walked around the room to check on how students were doing as well as help them if they had any questions.” This was notable because this participant

described themselves as having little to no connection with their own Indigenous culture and to be as confident in front of Indigenous students was admirable (and a contrast to other participants).

The third journal entry asked participants to discuss their experience with the IRTP workshop. Participant 4 explained that “This lesson impacted my ideas by making me want to make sure my students feel welcomed and represented correctly in the classroom.” Being open-minded and building relationships with students also was important for this participant: “I would also like to include in my classroom being open and willing to learn from my students because I find it will build my relationship with students.” Participant 4 discussed the importance of presenting historically accurate information to their students. “I would also like to talk more about Native American history because it is part of U.S. history and I find it very important that all students get the opportunity to learn about their history.” Notably, this participant was actively thinking about how they could change historical content to be more accurate for their students.

Participant 4’s fourth journal entry compared their initial experience at the Tribal School and their most recent field experience. They explained that there was little difference between the two, with the greatest difference that the students showed a little defiance this time around. Participant 4 stated that the schedule was the same and they followed the students to all their classes. They discussed their ability to help students with their work when they needed it and how they still felt comfortable working with the students at the Tribal School. “This time going the students were more open to me and

some even showed some defiance.” They described how this could be attributed to their students feeling more comfortable with Participant 4. This participant offered an overview of what they did for the day and how they helped students throughout the classroom. They were the only participant who said there was little to no change between their initial field experience cycle and their final field experience cycle.

Their fifth and final journal prompt asked Participant 5 to write about their entire experience with IRTP, the workshop, and their field experiences. This participant explained that they had a good experience overall and that IRTP “helped me realize the differences in schools and how schools manage their students in different ways.” They discussed their future plans for their classroom. They again highlighted the importance of including adequate information in their classrooms for students to “have a better knowledge of everyone’s cultural backgrounds.” Participant 4 also discussed the importance of Indigenous students’ culture, keeping aspects of their culture alive in the classroom, and not asking students to leave their culture at the door.

Overall, this participant was the outlier of the group. They discussed the topics of IRTP they planned on incorporating into their future classroom but also talked about how their initial experience and their second experience were not that different from one another. The participant’s statements about the importance of inclusivity and accurate information in the classroom were consistent with other participants’ observations, however. Their reflection after the IRTP workshop and following the second cycle of field experiences was more technical in nature. This participant, however, did not make any mentions of their personal experiences in the K-12 system, which was different from

the other participants and likely speaks to the lack of Participant 4 including anything about student engagement in their journal responses. Since they had no mention of negative experiences, it is less likely that engagement would be a focal point for them as they debriefed their experiences at the Tribal School.

Each participant brought unique perspectives to this study. Each one identified what was important for them and what they thought they should include in their future classrooms. Participant 1's main concern was their inability to create connections because of their different cultural background but found success in sharing their culture with their students, which resulted in engagement from their students. Participant 2 described their hope to create inclusive classes in all settings and how their field experiences at the Tribal School could be translated to the public-school classroom setting. Participant 3 was like Participant 1 in terms of being hesitant about their ability to create connections in the Tribal School setting because of their lack of knowledge about the students' cultures. By the end of the IRTP experience, however, Participant 3 explained how they replaced their initial feelings of shyness with overall excitement to be in the classroom. Participant 4's main focus was to create relevant and accurate information to be presented and taught within the classrooms for Indigenous students. In the following section, I move from individual cases to discuss themes that were common across the participants' experiences.

Themes

In this section, the research questions stated at the beginning of this chapter are used to organize the study findings. There were five themes that were common across all

participants that helped answer the research questions. In the following sections, I will list the research question and the corresponding theme from the qualitative data analysis. In the coding process described in Chapter 3, I reference Saldana (2021) and discuss the coding practices from Saldana. (Saldana, 2021) This will be important to note because the themes being discussed throughout this chapter are supported by categorical data that was coded using initial, inductive, and thematic coding ideologies that stem from Saldana. (Saldana, 2021) The themes and their supporting categories are listed below in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Qualitative Thematic Outline

Theme 1. “Stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true”: Disconnections and differences between prior beliefs, stereotypes, and training

Supporting Categories

- I. Stereotypes
- II. Lower Expectations
- III. Racism
- IV. Colonization of Education
- V. Classroom Content

Assertion: Students expressed prior beliefs that negative stereotypes of Indigenous students were untrue.

Theme 2. Education “looks a lot more brown”: Differences between Tribal Schools and other schools regarding flexibility, standards, acceptance, and responsiveness.

Supporting Categories

- I. Diversity
- II. Differences
- III. Standards
- IV. Accommodations
- V. Inclusive Pedagogy
- VI. Cultural Representation

Assertion: The students described their experiences in Tribal Schools as significantly different than their experiences in other schools.

Theme 3. “Connecting with the kids”: Comfortability, relationship building, and student acceptance

Supporting Categories

- I. Comfort
- II. Welcoming Environment
- III. Connections
- IV. Openness
- V. Engagement
- VI. Experiences

Assertion: The students expressed the importance of connections and relationship building as being vital to bridging the gap between Indigenous students and educators.

Theme 4. Inclusive pedagogy and cultural representation creates better connections with Indigenous students

Supporting Categories

- I. Connections
- II. Differences
- III. Stereotypes
- IV. Better understanding/understanding

Assertion: The combination of the IRTP workshop and the Tribal School experiences contributed to their understanding of and ability to relate to the students.

Theme 4. Creating a welcoming and open environment for Indigenous students by changing teaching methods

Supporting Categories

- I. Experiences
- II. Welcoming Environment
- III. Openness
- IV. Comfortable
- V. Teaching Methods

VI. IRTP Training

Assertion: The combination of field experience and workshop enabled preservice teachers to see how IRTP created a more welcoming and accepting environment for Indigenous students.

Following the identification and refinement of the themes, I created an assertion for each theme that, as Saldana discusses, “proposes a summative, interpretive observation of the local contexts of a study” (p. 14). Assertions are claims based on the study findings that are intended to reflect, in this case, broader patterns of experience, actions, or outcomes.

RQ1: How do prospective preservice teachers describe their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and IRTP workshop?

Three themes addressed the first research question on participants’ experiences in the IRTP workshop and tribal classroom. These themes include “Stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true”: Disconnections and differences between prior beliefs, stereotypes, and training,” and “Education looks a lot more brown”: Differences between Tribal Schools and other schools regarding flexibility, standards, acceptance, and responsiveness.” I discuss each theme and a corresponding assertion in more detail below.

Theme 1: “Stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true”: Disconnections and differences between prior beliefs, stereotypes, and training.

Participant comments in support of this theme came primarily from their initial journal entry responses. In this initial entry, participants were asked to talk about their expectations of the workshop and field experience, and how teaching at a Tribal School might be similar or different from teaching at a public school. In general, their journal entries suggested that research participants were aware of stereotypes about Indigenous students prior to the innovation and the initial field experience. Each participant discussed in detail the stereotypes they had heard or as Indigenous students, they personally had experienced.

The supporting categories for this theme reflect the varied stereotypes and beliefs that participants critiqued, including stereotypes, lower expectations, racism, and classroom content, and even included mentions of the colonization of education (see Figure 1). One participant mentions that the American education system focuses strongly on colonization and industrialization that created the towns and cities we have today in the name of the American dream. Another participant highlights how the lives and education of Indigenous people were far different prior to the colonization of America and how colonization now impacts Indigenous students in the classroom. Participants also discussed their experiences with education and how they experienced lowered expectations as Indigenous students, including lower GPAs to achieve A honor roll. “For example, during my time in High School, Native students had a different GPA set of standards than the white students. I remember getting special awards for being an A honor roll student for the Native requirements, which were lower than the GPA requirements for white students.” These lowered expectations contributed to the overall negative stereotypes Indigenous students face.

Drawing on the above categories and theme, I created the following assertion:

Assertion for Theme 1: Students expressed prior beliefs that negative stereotypes of Indigenous students were untrue.

This assertion, while it appears simple, has important implications for IRTP preservice teacher education. Both the Indigenous participants as well as those who did not identify as Indigenous were already aware of potentially harmful stereotypes about Indigenous people and how these stereotypes negatively affect educators' beliefs about and expectations for Indigenous students. Since the current participants volunteered to be a part of the innovation, they might be more conscious of these stereotypes than a less selective group. Nonetheless, while this existing awareness can be a motivation for more inclusive pedagogies, they are not sufficient. As laid out in Chapter 2, when teachers are asked to implement Indigenous ideologies in their classrooms, they fail due in large part to their lack of pedagogical knowledge. Many studies highlight this lack of knowledge and therefore the failed implementation of Indigenous ideologies in classroom content (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Masta & Rosa, 2019; Penner, 2016). These failed implementations can perpetuate the marginalization and lower achievement of Indigenous students, and ironically, reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes.

The value of exposure to concrete examples of inclusive pedagogies is reflected in participants' descriptions of their field experiences and the following theme.

Theme 2: Education “looks a lot more brown”: Differences between Tribal Schools and other schools regarding flexibility, standards, acceptance, and responsiveness

The second theme that answers research question 1 centers around the differences between Tribal Schools and other private or public schools; Education “looks a lot more brown”: Differences between Tribal Schools and other schools regarding flexibility, standards, acceptance, and responsiveness. Categories associated with the second theme are listed in Appendix E but include topics such as diversity, differences, accommodations, and cultural representation. These codes and categories came from the second journal entry. Here, participants described their experiences in the Tribal School and how it was much different than the other schools they were placed in for the semester. One participant even described the difference as, “a culture shock from the teachings,” meaning that the differences between their cooperating teacher (CT) from the public school and their CT from the Tribal School were extreme.

Participants also talked about how their CT was thoughtful with the content being taught in the classroom and included various supplemental resources from Indigenous scholars and authors. “Teachings are not only presented in subject matters but as well as introductions into the school or small things, such as phrases of the week in their native language.” This allowed their Tribal School CT to create a more meaningful relationship with their students because of the effort they showed to include culture in the daily lessons and classroom environment. Participants’ Tribal School CT also offered their students accommodations typically not found in public schools. One participant described these accommodations as being “able to adapt the reading to a more appropriate lexile reading for students that way they can still gain the understanding of the material but more focused to their grade level of reading.” This participant goes on to explain how this form of accommodation allowed students to still feel confident about the material they

were learning. These examples of accommodations and adaptations led to the assertion for theme 2 regarding the differences between the Tribal School and the public school these students were placed in for this data collection process.

Assertion for Theme 2: The students described their experiences in Tribal Schools as significantly different than their experiences in other schools.

Theme 3: “Connecting with the kids”: Comfortability, relationship building, and student acceptance.

The second major theme that was present throughout the data analysis focused on connections and the importance of creating relationships, ensuring students’ comfort, and accepting students for who they are. Theme 3 was “Connecting with the kids”: Comfortability, relationship building, and student acceptance. One major factor contributing to the disconnection between Indigenous students and the education system is the lack of a welcoming environment and feelings of comfortability. During the innovation and data collection process, one theme that was evident was how important connections were to create a welcoming environment that made Indigenous students feel comfortable enough to engage with the content being delivered through the curriculum. Creating a welcoming environment doesn’t necessarily mean that the teacher must have in-depth knowledge of the students’ cultural backgrounds or know their traditional beliefs, but it does mean that the classroom teacher should be open to learning about the cultures being represented in their classrooms. One participant made this distinction through their third journal entry by stating, “After participating in the IRTP workshop, it

made me realize that it's okay to now know about the culture if you are willing and open to learn about it.”

By sharing appropriate stories and beliefs in class, the teacher is developing a more meaningful relationship with students by allowing them to know more than just the surface-level aspects of who they are. One research participant acknowledged the importance of this relationship building by saying, “Another thing is to share things about your life with them as well, so they feel comfortable sharing their life with you.” This was one of the main components of IRTP - create a safe space to have meaningful dialogue with students about the things in their culture that they are passionate about and give students the time in the classroom to teach the teacher about these different cultural aspects. This distinction of having dialogue is important because it creates an active discussion where both the classroom teacher and the students are free to share their cultural backgrounds. This dialogue and open sharing help cultivate a welcoming environment for students because they are allowed to know more about their teacher than just what they know about them from the classroom. This portion of the IRTP workshop helped the participants understand the importance of creating relationships with students. Although this was explicitly mentioned in the IRTP workshop, participants implemented this idea into their lesson plans to facilitate their second cycle of field experiences.

Another participant expressed the importance of learning from their students and being open with them by stating in their third journal response, “I would also like to include in my classroom being open and willing to learn from my students, I find it will build my relationship with the students.” The excitement the participants had about building relationships with their future students was helpful to see as the researcher

because it reinforced the idea behind why IRTP is different from Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP). While CRT, CRP, and CSP acknowledge the different cultural backgrounds being represented in the classroom and work to sustain them, they fail to interact with Indigenous backgrounds and the cultural knowledge that students bring.

Assertion for Theme 3: The students expressed the importance of connections and relationship building as being vital to bridging the gap between Indigenous students and educators.

While the first three themes focused on answering the first research question, the last two themes aimed at answering the second research question. In this section of the study findings, the research question focuses on understanding how IRTP informs prospective preservice teachers.

RQ2: How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices?

During the IRTP workshop, curriculum changes, inclusive pedagogy, and overall cultural representation within the classroom were the main talking points. Knowing and understanding when the resources provided to teachers for curriculum development and lesson planning were problematic for Indigenous communities was vital information for the research participants. The fourth theme that was present throughout the data analysis addressed inclusive pedagogy and representation. Inclusive pedagogy and cultural representation create better connections with Indigenous students. The data mainly came from participants' third and fourth journal entries. This is where they discussed being

back in the classroom at the Tribal School and how IRTP helped them understand the significance of having inclusivity in the curriculum. One of the most significant categories for this theme and assertion was having a better overall understanding of students and making connections with students. One participant stated that they kept the IRTP training in mind when they went back into the classroom and, “tried to be welcoming and understanding while I was back in the classroom.” They went on to explain how trust was important for them to establish with the students they worked with to ensure a stronger relationship. They noted that the participant told the students about themselves so that they, “weren’t just another stranger trying to teach them something.” This was significant to the overall data because it highlighted the growth these potential preservice teachers had from participating in the IRTP workshop.

One research participant described their experience being back in the classroom as them (both the students and the participant) feeling more comfortable with each other. The participant made an active effort to connect with students by sharing Anishinaabe stories they grew up with and how it was similar to and different from the stories the Dakota students had heard. “I had shared the story to them using Anishinaabemowin (Anishinaabe language) to try and share a piece of my native culture with them and they seemed to be pretty engaged despite Anishinaabe not being the language they are learning.” This code was especially significant because it highlighted both cultural differences and connection and relationship building among the students and the potential preservice teacher. This participant made an active effort and had a positive experience with the students - even though the students were not accustomed to the Anishinaabe language. This allowed the participant to share their knowledge with the students and

truly highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing rather than teaching. The distinction between sharing knowledge and teaching is important to note too because it takes away the authoritarian aspect of teaching so many people stress and allows a meaningful interaction to take place between the teacher and the student, creating an even richer learning environment.

These ideas and accounts of sharing personal parts of their lives such as traditional stories from their culture stemmed from the idea of IRTP's Cultural Inclusion section. Although CRP, CRT, and CSP include information, cultural inclusion, and anti-oppressive teaching practices, they fail to use the specific Indigenous languages, Indigenous stories, and Indigenous ideologies that are being represented in the classroom. These running themes of connections and differences led to the assertion for theme four about combining the IRTP workshop and the Tribal School experience and how it helped the participants understand and connect with their Indigenous students.

Assertion for Theme 4: The combination of the IRTP workshop and the Tribal School experience contributed to their understanding of and ability to relate to the students.

Curriculum and inclusive pedagogies were not the only common theme that answered RQ2. Research participants also discussed the CT's ability to create a welcoming environment and how this included their teaching methods.

Theme 5: Creating a welcoming and open environment for Indigenous students by changing teaching methods.

Some of the common categories for this theme centered around experiences, a welcoming environment, and teaching methods. Most of the data for this theme and its

assertion came from their fourth and fifth journal entries where participants discussed being back at their field experience Tribal School. Participants also were asked to reflect on the entire IRTP data collection process. These helped the participants to envision how they want their classrooms to run and what changes they plan on implementing to help their Indigenous students create a home within the classroom.

Participants noted how the IRTP workshop helped them in their second field experience throughout their 5th journal entry. Since they were asked to reflect on their entire experience, the participants compared their initial field experience to their field experience following the IRTP workshop. One student expressed how the experience, “even had me changing my own lesson plan format and materials in order to better adapt to the diverse classroom,” that they experienced at the Tribal School. This participant felt that participating in the IRTP workshop helped them understand how to better serve Indigenous students and create lesson plans that were both relevant and rigorous for Indigenous students. The changes they made to their lesson included Indigenous resources and more discussion about students’ home lives and how their home lives connect to the classroom content. After expressing this, the participant also noted how they were more excited about their future in education. “The whole teaching experience has proven to be beneficial to me personally so far outside of the classroom and it makes me wonder how much this is all going to positively impact my future teachings as an educator.” This data showed the importance of the IRTP workshop because it allowed the participants to envision how their classroom would look by incorporating the IRTP framework. It generated positive outlooks on their future classrooms and created

excitement within the participants because they felt capable of helping Indigenous students feel comfortable within the classroom.

A recurring theme throughout the entire data analysis process was the idea of creating a welcoming environment. This theme was present for all journal entry responses, but it was especially present in the fifth journal entry responses. This is where participants were thoughtful of their futures as teachers and how they hope to manage their future classrooms. One participant acknowledged how students often feel unwelcome in classrooms because their cultural backgrounds are not highlighted or showcased within the classroom, or the content being taught. They went on to discuss that in their classroom, “I want all students to feel welcome and safe and open to talking to me no matter what the circumstances are - especially with my Native students, I want them to feel comfortable with opening up to me.” This need to ensure Indigenous students feel welcome in a classroom was one of the main components of the IRTP workshop. Participants really connected with this idea because of their backgrounds in the education system. Since all the participants were self-identifying Indigenous students themselves who often felt out of place or singled out in the classroom, they understood the importance and why it was important. One participant discussed how they wish to be a source of stability for their students. “I will always make sure that all of the children in my classroom feel welcome and listened to, regardless of cultural background.” These first-hand experiences and journal entry responses highlight the significance of something as simple as feeling welcomed and seen within a classroom.

Aside from creating a welcoming environment for students, another category that was present throughout the data analysis was the different teaching methods used by the

teachers at the Tribal School. Participants noted how the teachers spent more time with the students and had different support staff present for those students who struggled with the content. One participant described their CT's teaching methods as having, "a lot of wiggle room for those students who were struggling more so than others, whether their struggle was with home life or schoolwork." By being understanding of the backgrounds Indigenous students come from, the CTs were able to create connections and foster an accepting environment for Indigenous students. By providing additional supports for students who were struggling, the Tribal School is able to see the students as a whole person and not just as a student - which is what the participants described in their journal entry responses. These categories and codes led to the assertion for theme 5 being centered on a welcoming and accepting environment for Indigenous students.

Assertion for Theme 5: The combination of field experience and the IRTP workshop enabled preservice teachers to see how IRTP created a more welcoming and accepting environment for Indigenous students.

By utilizing qualitative data in the form of journal entries, I was able to capture the research participants' thoughts throughout the entire data collection process and understand how they built the information they received from the IRTP workshop into their pre-existing knowledge of what teaching is and could look like for them.

Participants were able to be as honest as they could because of the anonymity provided by having a codename for their journal entry responses. Each of the participants brought unique experiences to this research and their experiences were valuable beyond measure. Although the participants had various levels of Indigeneity, their perspectives on the content of the IRTP framework allowed for fruitful conversations surrounding the IRTP

workshop. Each participant was able to learn more about their learning style and the learning styles of students and how teaching methods should cater to those learning styles present in the classroom. Participants were also able to offer their insights on the differences between their public school CTs and the Tribal School CTs they were paired with and see just how different interacting with a classroom full of Indigenous students. This was important because it showed how Indigenous students need a more targeted approach to education because of their historical relationships with the more formal, Western education systems.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Teacher preparation programs typically do not adequately address the unique barriers, experiences, and histories Indigenous students face in an educational setting. The original purpose of this qualitative study was to better prepare non-Native teachers to teach Indigenous students, through the development and testing of a new Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy (IRTP) framework and workshop. An action research approach was used to address two research questions: (a) How do prospective preservice teachers describe their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and IRTP workshop? and (b) How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices? The primary sources of data for the study were participant journal entries that were written over the duration of the workshop and field experience. Data were analyzed using three different types of coding and was coded multiple times using methods Saldana (2021) outlines. Unexpectedly, all the participants in this study self-identified as Indigenous, though they all expressed a need to be better prepared to work with Indigenous student populations. This chapter includes a summary of the findings, a discussion of theories and previous research, individual lessons learned, limitations, implications for practices, and implications for future research.

Summary of Findings

Throughout the implementation of the Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy (IRTP) framework, I have learned that most potential pre-service teachers

share the same concerns. Their concerns center around being able to connect with Indigenous students due to feeling like they do not have adequate information and understanding of Indigenous students and their culture. To help teachers feel more comfortable with teaching and working with Indigenous students directly, the IRTP framework compares Culturally Responsive Teaching, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies to aspects of IRTP that are specific to Indigenous communities and schools with high populations of Indigenous students.

The findings of this study add to the limited research surrounding Indigenous-specific educational frameworks. The first research question was: How do prospective preservice teachers describe their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and IRTP workshop? The second research question was: How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices? Relevant findings are discussed below by research question.

Research Question 1

The first research question centered on how prospective preservice teachers described their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and the IRTP workshop. The first topic that was addressed in the IRTP implementation process was stereotypes and preconceived notions of Indigenous students and how these shape teacher belief systems regarding Indigenous students. Indigenous students are often labeled as problem students before they are given a chance to prove otherwise. Such beliefs, in turn, shape how a teacher approaches Indigenous students. This is known as deficit thinking and as an

educator, having a deficit mindset is one of the most difficult barriers to success experienced by students of color (Davis, 2021) Since these stereotypes were addressed at the very beginning of the intervention, participants were able to understand how these misconceptions shaped their own experiences as students in the K-12 education setting and increased their desire to create more positive experiences for their students at the Tribal School within this study. Participants discussed how they were motivated to help their Indigenous students feel welcomed in the classroom due to their experiences with teachers who held these beliefs. These findings are summarized in Theme 1: “Stereotypes of Indigenous students are not true”: Disconnections and differences between prior beliefs, stereotypes, and training”; and Theme 2: “Education “looks a lot more brown””: Differences between Tribal Schools and other schools regarding flexibility, standards, acceptance, and responsiveness.”

The second topic that was instrumental to the implementation of IRTP was the use of culturally relevant, accurate information in teachers’ lesson plans. Indigenous students are the minority within the current United States’ K-12 education system, so it is not surprising that Indigenous students are often overlooked in discussions of culturally responsive and culturally relevant pedagogies. In addition, previous studies of Indigenous-specific culturally relevant teacher training (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Masta & Rosa, 2019; Penner, 2016) indicated limited impact on teachers’ actual pedagogical practices or lesson content. Even when culturally accurate information is part of the curriculum, teachers may feel ill-prepared to present this information, thus leaving it out of the lesson entirely. The participants in this study initially expressed their lack of knowledge and understanding of their students’ cultural backgrounds. Participants

demonstrated this by initially shying away from implementing culturally specific information or even asking students to share their knowledge of their culture simply because they had little to no knowledge of their beliefs and knowledge. After participating in the IRTP workshop, participants were comfortable with implementing culturally accurate information because they felt as though they were better equipped to discuss this information with their students. The theme related to this second topic that I identified in participant journals was Theme 3: “Connecting with the kids”: Comfortability, relationship building, and student acceptance.

The importance of connections was highlighted throughout the data that helped answer this first research question. Participants wanted their students to feel comfortable with them and discussed ways their Cooperating Teachers (CTs) created these connections. Feelings of comfort among students were created by both topics addressed above. Since the participants knew about the stereotypes and the importance of not having a deficit mindset when going into the classroom, they were able to create connections with students by simply being supportive and believing in their students. Although participants were initially intimidated by including culturally relevant information in their lessons, once they did implement this information into their lessons, the engagement with students increased and they were able to foster rich discussions among their students. This led to an overall improvement in the level of comfort felt by both students and participants. This knowledge gained by the participants was used to create the first three themes used to answer the first research questions presented in this study.

Research Question 2

The second research question was: How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices? After an introduction to the IRTP framework through the workshop, participants returned to the Tribal School and were able to conduct a lesson with the students. Many of the participants made changes to their lesson plans to incorporate ideologies from the IRTP workshop. These changes ranged from including content from the cultural background being represented in the Tribal School to asking students to create connections with other culturally relevant information. One participant asked their students to compare their cultural knowledge with what was being taught in the classroom. They specifically looked at Anishinaabe creation stories and compared these stories to the creation stories that students learned from their families. This was a great example of creating connections with students through cultural sharing. Although this participant expressed concerns about their ability to create connections with students, the lessons they taught and the engagement they received from their students were textbook examples of how IRTP can inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs and teaching practices of Indigenous students.

Another participant talked about their shyness going into the classroom initially but after participating in the IRTP workshop, they expressed how they turned their feelings of shyness into excitement to engage students. This participant described how their shyness stemmed from their lack of knowledge about their students' cultural backgrounds and how they knew little to nothing about the culture in which the students were immersed in their home lives. By participating in the IRTP workshop, this student

was encouraged to show their students that they are open to learning about their cultural beliefs. After hearing this, this participant went into their second cycle of field experience with an open mind, which speaks to their change from feeling shy to be more excited in the classroom.

Overall, the participants' feelings changed from being nervous and having doubts about their abilities to teach and connect with students from the Tribal School to being excited and having great student engagement. Their participation in the IRTP workshop allowed them to gain information about teaching Indigenous students in a way that is respectful of the cultural backgrounds of students while simultaneously teaching students relevant and required information. These participant experiences are reflected in the fourth and fifth themes that address Research Question Two, including Theme 4: Inclusive pedagogy and cultural representation creates better connections with Indigenous students, and Theme 5: Creating a welcoming and open environment for Indigenous students by changing teaching methods.

Discussion of Results in Relation to the Extant Literature or Theories

The purpose of this study was to determine how an Indigenous-specific educational framework would assist potential preservice teachers in their efforts to create a welcoming environment and create meaningful connections with Indigenous students in a classroom setting. As an Indigenous educator, I understood the importance of connections with students and how these connections would help my students connect with the content I was teaching and to be excited to come to class, thus fostering a positive learning environment. In previous cycles of this research, I focused on defining

culture and understanding how teachers made connections with their students. Most of these teachers were employed at public schools with little to no cultural or ethnic diversity so I understood that the way they created connections with their students would differ largely from how teachers at Tribal Schools or schools with higher populations of Indigenous students would create connections.

Literature and research show that although there are existing curricula that include Indigenous perspectives, the implementation of these curricula typically is problematic due to the teachers' lack of knowledge of Indigenous cultures and their variations (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Masta & Rosa, 2019; Penner, 2016). A key challenge is helping teachers gain a more concrete and nuanced understanding of the cultural backgrounds of the Indigenous students present in the classroom and incorporate knowledge from them and their communities. The cyclical nature of this study allowed me to utilize reflective journaling and round-table discussions to assist potential preservice teachers in understanding the importance of creating connections and welcoming environments within their future classrooms. As a result of this study, the participants gained an understanding of how to connect with Indigenous students. Although the participants were Indigenous themselves, they were still timid when it came to working with students from different cultural backgrounds. They expressed feelings of nervousness, shyness, and overall hesitancy to participating in the classrooms they were placed in. These feelings shifted as they participated in the IRTP workshop process. By the end of the IRTP process, the participants were eager to return to their Tribal School classrooms to lead their lesson plans and connect with the students at the Tribal School. The participants also discussed that they felt more willing and able to implement

Indigenous specific ideologies and knowledge into their lesson plans because they knew how to connect with the students from the Tribal School. These findings contribute to the overall literature and research surrounding Indigenous education and further explains the need for Indigenous-specific educational frameworks to be implemented in teacher preparation programs to assist potential preservice teachers in their preparation to teach in schools with higher populations of Indigenous students.

Personal Lessons Learned

At the beginning of this study and this entire program, I was a very young teacher who wanted to make a change in the lives of Indigenous students because of the experiences I had as an Indigenous student and teacher. Understanding that lack of representation is directly related to lack of engagement and therefore lack of success for Indigenous students hit close to home for me. I initially wanted to create a culturally inclusive curriculum that highlighted Indigenous perspectives for social studies content in the state of South Dakota. This goal was quickly written off as unattainable because I realized that to successfully implement a culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum, teachers must understand how to both teach the content and connect with the Indigenous students in their classrooms. The literature cited in Chapter 2 reflected the difficulty of implementing a culturally inclusive curriculum, most notably in research by Brayboy and Castagno (2009). In developing my innovation, I focused on the connections between the educator and the students in the classroom. This allowed me to understand just how difficult it can be for people who are considered outsiders to a community to make meaningful connections with students. Without these connections and feelings of

comfort, students are less likely to fully participate in class and interact with the content being taught.

Other personal lessons that were learned centered around personal and professional growth. Personally, I have learned a lot about my personal goals for teaching and my teaching style. Since the beginning of this study, my professional background has changed and evolved to include teaching at the college level. This was a big change from the middle school background I originally started in. My goals have also changed and evolved to include training teachers to be more receptive to Indigenous students and creating a program that helps my home community gain teachers who are culturally competent and ready to assist Indigenous students and communities to be successful. Although this may seem selfish, it is a way to give back to a community that has given so much to me time and time again.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. The most significant limitation of this study was the number of participants who volunteered. The class size was 16 students and of those 16, only 4 chose to participate. This was likely due to outside factors such as course load, obligations outside of the classroom, and an overall lack of time to participate. Since the target population was from one specific course, it limited the potential number of participants to a small pool. The small number of participants made it difficult to maintain anonymity when participants discussed their experiences in the classroom. To mitigate this limitation, I advised participants to not discuss identifying information that would be specific enough to disclose who they were or which CT they

were assigned to. This was difficult for participants since they discussed their lesson plans and the lessons they led at the Tribal School. While I have tried to avoid disclosing too much information about participants in the dissertation, I was able to infer their identity from their journal entries; however, I took care to limit my analyses to information in these entries.

Another limitation of this study was my role and proximity to both the participants and the setting of the study. I have connections with the host site and the field experience site as a current and former employee. This made it difficult to remain unbiased in the data analysis. To mitigate this limitation, I used investigator triangulation. Investigator triangulation is the process of using two or more researchers to compare evidence in support of findings (Franklin & Ballan, 2011). A colleague was recruited to review and code the journal responses, to establish the dependability of the coding scheme, as well as to generate additional codes I might have missed. The outside observer also reviewed the themes to establish confirmability and dependability concerning the codes.

One final limitation of the study was the background of the participants. This study originally was intended for non-Native potential pre-service teachers. Each of the participants self-identified as Indigenous. This study still holds relevance, however. Each participant came from a different Indigenous cultural background than the cultural background of the students at the Tribal School. Participants still expressed their concerns about their potential inability to connect to students due to these cultural differences. Each of the participants described their struggle to feel comfortable engaging with students and the classroom environment due to not knowing about the students'

cultures. This limitation mitigated itself because although each participant self-identified as Indigenous, they still had the same hesitations and concerns I anticipated non-Native potential pre-service teachers would have. Although the participants were Indigenous, there was still growth and insights gained throughout the entire IRTP process.

Implications for Practice

Although this study was only the beginning of much-needed research into educational frameworks specifically designed for Indigenous students' needs, there were strengths associated with the innovation that have implications for future implementations of IRTP. The first strength was the field experience host site. At the Tribal School, participants were exposed to concrete examples of how cultural knowledge and beliefs can be used in the classroom and contribute to student learning. They also had positive interactions with Indigenous students from a different cultural background. Participants' journals of their field experiences were most helpful for my understanding of where students needed the most support in implementing ideas and practices from the IRTP workshop.

Another strength of the framework is its adaptability. Adapting the overall IRTP framework to address the needs of other Indigenous communities would not be a difficult task. Although the field experience in this study took place in a Tribal School associated with Dakota culture, the broad elements of the framework are inclusive of any other Indigenous culture.

There are many potential ways to further strengthen the IRTP framework and ensure its successful implementation in the future. A first step would be to expand the duration and content of the innovation. This study took place during a single semester,

within a limited amount of time and a rather strict schedule. For great impact, future implementations could take place over a longer period of time, ranging from an academic year to the duration of an entire teacher preparation program. This would give participants many more opportunities to experiment with relevant teaching strategies and become more familiar with diverse student backgrounds, as well as to gain deeper insights into the historical, social, and cultural contexts of Indigenous communities. More diverse groups of preservice teachers could also be beneficial to the overall learning experience associated with this framework. Although I do not think the identities of my participants were a detrimental limitation, I do think that the entire learning experience would have been enhanced had there been more diversity among the participants. This diversity could include race, gender, age, experience level, and so forth.

Implications for Future Research

A future action research cycle for this research is already being planned at my university. I and my colleagues are integrating IRTP into the required Introduction to Education course as a portion of the overall tutor-aid field experience requirement. Ideally, this integration would further help students understand how to respectfully and appropriately interact with Indigenous communities. This goal is particularly important in my current program specifically since the state has a significant population of Indigenous people. Integrating IRTP into a required, full semester-long course will give future participants a longer experience with both the IRTP framework and the Tribal School. I will be able to address questions such as: “Will the additional time allow participants to develop meaningful connections with the students from the Tribal School?” and “How

might participants change their understanding of differences between IRTP and frameworks such as Culturally Responsive Teaching, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy?” Requiring participation in future cycles would also increase the diversity of the participants, further mitigating one of the main limitations of this study. All students who would like to apply for the education program at this institution are required to take this Introduction to Education course, regardless of their experience in education or any other education program.

Another positive impact of this next cycle is that all students interested in the field of education would be exposed to cultural diversity earlier on in their teacher preparation courses. Since students in the teacher preparation program currently only have one course in their senior year that intentionally exposes them to culturally diverse classrooms, this would benefit both the program and the potential preservice teachers who are looking to complete the teacher education program.

Conclusion

Overall, the IRTP educational framework bridges the gap between what prospective preservice teachers are learning in their teacher education programs and what is important to know about teaching Indigenous students. Since CRT, CRP, and CST each address different practices for teaching culturally diverse groups of students, IRTP was created to address specific issues within the Indigenous communities. As an Indigenous educator, I understood the importance of representation within the curriculum and how powerful it was for my students to see direct connections between the content they were learning and their home communities. Whether these connections were

familial, figurative, historical, or connections about beliefs, students were always excited to learn about something they could connect to their personal experiences. As an Indigenous educator, it was important for me to share content with my students that allowed them to not only master the content but also understand the deeper connections to the school curriculum. Since I was Indigenous and from the same community, teaching in my home Tribal Schools was natural for me. I created connections with students that went well beyond the classroom. This made it easier for me to teach the students in my classroom. They had a deeper sense of respect for me because of the connections I had with them.

I realized that the lack of representation and lack of connections between non-Indigenous teachers and their Indigenous students creates an environment where Indigenous students suffer and are not able to succeed in an educational setting. Creating this educational framework that helps teachers who are seen as outsiders understand how to make connections with Indigenous students and Indigenous communities was a way for me to create a meaningful change for Indigenous students - both in my home community and hopefully nationally. This educational framework aims to not only address the differences between other Culturally Responsive/ Relevant/Sustaining frameworks but also address and stress the importance of creating meaningful connections with Indigenous students. It also stresses the importance of creating a welcoming environment where cultural knowledge is celebrated and is useful for the lessons students learn. This educational framework also discusses the importance of using accurate information within your lessons and using cultural knowledge as supplemental information to help

bridge the gap between the Western academic world and their cultural knowledge and beliefs.

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APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS FOR INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION

Syllabus for Introduction to Education and Tutor-Aide Practicum

APPENDIX B
JOURNAL PROMPTS

RQ1: How do prospective preservice teachers describe their experiences in the Tribal School classroom and IRTP workshop?

RQ2: How does participation in the IRTP innovation inform prospective preservice teachers' beliefs about Indigenous students and appropriate teaching practices?

5 journal entries total - 1 before their trip, 1 right after, 1 after the IRTP, 1 after this second trip, and their final one to summarize the entire experience. Word limit/page count: 300-1000 words (1-3 pages double-spaced)

1. How do you think that teaching at a Tribal School will be similar to or different from teaching at other schools?
2. Compare your personal experience to what you've been learning in your Introduction to Education course. How does this connect with what you've observed in the classroom? How was it different? How was it the same? What lesson did you facilitate during your classroom experience and how do you feel it went? (Keeping participation, engagement, and overall academic performance of the students in mind)
3. How did the Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy training impact you and your ideas on Indigenous education? How do you plan on implementing what you learned into your next class session?
4. Compare your most recent classroom experience at the Tribal School to your initial classroom experience at the Tribal School. How was it different? How was it the same? What lesson did you facilitate during your classroom experience and

how do you feel it went using what you've learned from the IRTP workshop?
(Keeping participation, engagement, and overall academic performance of the students in mind)

5. Overall, how did this experience inform your teaching philosophy towards Indigenous students? How do you plan on implementing IRTP in both future lessons with Indigenous students? How do you plan on implementing IRTP with the overall curriculum in your teacher education courses?

APPENDIX C
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were some specific examples of when you used Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy and what impact do you think it had on your students?
2. Thinking retrospectively, what information from Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy would have been beneficial to you prior to your initial experience at Tiospa Zina Tribal School?
3. Now that you have completed this entire research experience and have had time to reflect, how do you feel about your confidence level potentially going into a classroom with Indigenous students?
4. Now that you have had this experience, what would you change for the next time you are in a classroom with Indigenous students?
5. In your experience with the Indigenous Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy workshop, how was this framework different from the frameworks of Culturally Responsive, Culturally Relevant, or Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies?