Nuweetanuhkôs8ânuhshômun nuwshkus8eenune8unônak 'We are working together for our young ones': Securing educational success for Mashpee Wampanoag youth through community collaboration

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'WE ARE WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUR YOUTH':

SECURING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS FOR MASHPEE WAMPANOAG YOUTH THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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'We are working together for our youth':

Securing Educational Success for Mashpee Wampanoag Youth Through Community Collaboration

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Abstract

The participatory project described here is framed by the theories of Tribal Critical Race Theory and Red Pedagogy and describes a series of focus groups that included six Mashpee Wampanoag community members who used cultural values that they identified themselves to outline the educational needs of their Tribal youth in order to contribute to the process of developing a culturally-based strategic plan to serve Tribal students. The project was an act of self-determination for the participants who chose to commit to the work of making positive changes for the future of their community in a way that only they could as insiders in their community. Participants compiled a list of skills they felt were necessary to the health and success of their young people, separated into categories of "life skills," "academic skills" and "traditional skills." Also discussed are issues of insider research in Tribal communities, Indigenous connections land, Tribal identity, and aboriginal rights.

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CHAPTER 1

Contextualizing Wampanoag Education

In the study reported on here, Mashpee Wampanoag community members drove the process of developing an educational plan that will serve Tribal students, and which meets their academic and cultural needs. In the first part of this chapter, I will describe the reasons why this work is important through a chronology of the oppressive educational experiences that American Indians have faced for the past 400 years of interactions with European American people. In the next section I will review the literature surrounding the subject of culturally based education in programs serving Native students, as well as the subject of complementary types of knowledge. The final section will discuss the theoretical framework guiding this study and design of the proposed research.

The Problem

The educational experiences of Native people throughout the history of the United States have been traumatic. Like so many other children from other American Indian Nations, the children of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe have been victimized by the educational system for generations. The education of American Indians began as early as the 1600s with the Christianization of Native people by missionaries from England and France. The overt goal of religious conversion accomplished, through education, the covert objective of cultural assimilation (Cesarini, 2008; Lomawaima, 1999; Salisbury, 1985; Van Lonkhuyzen, 1990).

Over time, through religious conversion as well as physical genocide, slavery, and the elimination of resources to name a few other tactics, cultural extinction became the overt purpose of education for Native children. The mission to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man" (Bruchac and Smelcer, 2014) was employed in boarding schools across the country beginning in the 1800s. Students were taken forcibly from their homes, were disallowed speaking their language and practicing their traditions and were abused and often killed while in attendance. Forbidding children from speaking their own language made it impossible for them to fully communicate their knowledge. Worldview, which is inherently embedded within language, becomes lost when the use of Native languages is eliminated. For example, in Wôpanâôt8âôk, words that describe water and land are marked in a way that means that they are inseparable from humans when they are talked about in terms of possession. It means that the person whose land or water it is cannot be separated from it, nor it from them. In English, for example, this marker does not exist. This basic understanding that the earth and land are truly part of one's physical person because they cannot even be spoken about without talking about them in that way, easily disappeared for Wampanoag children who were forced to speak only English. In turn, the children and grand children of these young people have also been robbed of the birthright that is their language and access to their cultural knowledge. Over time as generations pass, the ways of any people can be forgotten when their languages are lost. In the cases of many children, the mission and boarding schools that Native students attended were successful in accomplishing their goal of eliminating Native cultures, continuing these practices into the 1950s (DeJong, 1993; Haig-Brown, 1988; Lomawaima, 1999; Reyhner and Eder, 2004; Szasz, 1983).

From the first attempts by missionaries during the colonial period in New England in the 1600s, to the 1950s and now, as the United States government continues to remove children from their homes to send them off to Indian boarding schools to destroy cultures and force assimilation, for generations, schooling for Native people has been designed to eradicate any traces of children's Indian-ness. Both colonial-era religious conversion education and boarding schools succeeded in instilling in Indigenous children a negative association with formal education due to the historical trauma that has been passed down through the generations (Robbins, Colmant, Dorton, Schultz, Colmant, Ciali, 2006) as well as a sense of shame regarding their culture.

The shame felt by students of these educational institutions resulted from the indoctrination they received that their culture was bad and inferior to that of the European culture, whether they were forced to repeat statements about their lack of personhood as an Indian, or to adopt practices such as clothing and hairstyles. Shame also came as a result of returning home to the community after being away in residential schools and forgetting the ways Indigenous ways. Not being able to easily return to their old ways or to be able to remember their language was also a source of humiliation for so many children indoctrinated in these formal educational institutions.

This deep-seeded personal shame gives way to a loss of self-worth. The distrust for formal education leads to a lack of success in the system. Both of these ends mean a struggle to survive in a society that values the notion of meritocracy, where hard work and educational accomplishment are highly valued characteristics.

The fallout from these historical circumstances have found their way into the lives of the current generation of Mashpee Wampanoag and other Native youth, resulting in

dire consequences both in and outside of school. American Indian children continue to fall behind in their education, carrying on a centuries-long tradition of miseducation and trauma. Mashpee Wampanoag students as a whole continue to suffer. In recent generations of Native students, these historical experiences manifest themselves in higher dropout rates and lower achievement scores and higher education acceptance, attendance and retention than any other racial or ethnic group in Mashpee and in the United States.

This miseducation, for so many Wampanoag youth, has been internalized and has produced in many, a double consciousness (DuBois, 1903) where Native people, similarly to black Americans, feel a struggle between their traditional cultural identity and the identity put upon them by outsiders. For American Indians, this outside identification is filled with negative stereotypes of a "savage" and "uncivilized" heathen who must change his or her ways to survive. Between their own perceptions and the perceptions of others, Native people struggle to be able to understand their own identity in a clear way. The desire for self-identification as well as acceptance by the broader American population creates a tension because the perceptions from the two sides are in conflict. While Wampanoag children see one thing about themselves, the rest of American society sees another. This has caused Wampanoag and other Native youth to question whether or not they are cut out for success in formal education or even more devastatingly, to believe that they are inferior to their non-Native peers who are able to more easily achieve normative academic success. "Lack of achievement" by governmentally imposed standards and "inability" to conform to the typical educational prescription leave Native students to be seen by others as well as themselves, as "damaged" (Tuck, 2009) by their teachers, administrators and society at large. When

students continually feel and hear this negative evaluation of their ability and worth, the internal struggle between their self-identity and outside perception is heightened.

Colonial Education

As early as 1611, French Jesuit missionaries had begun to open mission schools for Native students. Spanish and English missionaries followed shortly after. By the middle of the 1700s, Harvard University (in 1636), the College of William and Mary (in 1693) and Dartmouth College (in 1769) had opened their doors with a goal of Christianizing the Native people of the area as part of their original charters (Grande, 2004).

Prior to King Philip's War, which began in 1675, and for centuries into the future, Wampanoag and other of New England's Indigenous people found themselves in an impossible situation. With a dramatically increasing number of English people in their territory (approximately 20,000 within twenty years of the Pilgrims' arrival in 1620, (Salisbury, 1985) a number larger than that of the Wampanoag people at that same time (Cesarini, 2008)), the Wampanoag life that the people had known for more than 10,000 years had become impossible. With numbers already drastically reduced in the previous half of a century due to disease brought from English, Dutch and French traders and settlers, families were forced from their homes, children were removed and sold, property was stolen and resources became scarce. These conditions forced Wampanoag people to make changes in the way they lived, and to succumb to pressures placed upon them by the colonizers. The result of these pressures was to live, not a Wampanoag life, but a life as close as possible to that of the English.

One of the ways that the colonizers forced the Wampanoag into an English lifestyle was through education. Lomawaima (1999) describes four tenets of "Indian education" that she believes were shared by all colonizers of the Americas:

1 & 2: Civilization and Christian conversion: these two were so inextricably linked. To properly educate within the English ideal meant to be civilized, which necessarily meant conversion.

3: Creation of new model communities: in the Wampanoag example, the establishment of praying towns and relocation of children into boarding schools.

4: Appropriate pedagogical methods: This meant for New England Native people, uniformity and discipline, and in particular a lack of emotion.

In order to live a "civilized life, the Wampanoag ways from the time prior to contact were to no longer be practiced. The old ways meant a matrilineal family structure where the husband and children were a part of the family of the mother. It included a seasonal migration from the water in the spring, summer and fall to the woods in the winter. Traditional Wampanoag work included maintaining a garden, hunting and fishing for food, preparing the non-edible parts of the animals that were caught for other purposes such as tools and clothing. Before European invasion, Wampanoag life was conducted in a way that was the result of thousands of years of technology and adaptation to the specific environment. Houses were built in a way that was practical for harsh winters and for the Nor'easters and hurricanes that southeastern New England experiences, and were made from materials that were strong and lasting in the local climate. Knowledge of the uses for the plants and animals in the area was extensive and

was employed in a way that was neither self-indulgent nor wasteful. Resources were not over-harvested.

People were able to enjoy their lives. Work was efficiently done such that most of the day was free for socializing. Children were not expected to work, but were allowed to take up chores and responsibilities when they were developmentally ready. Children learned by observing, story and experience. Spirituality was a part of all actions, and was present in all parts of creation.

The understanding that I've come to have about the history of my Tribe and family has come in a number of ways. In part it is the result of being raised by a traditionalist father who continues to live in a largely self-sufficient and sustainable way as he was taught. As a child I grew up hunting and fishing and watching and sometimes helping while my dad smoked fish, cleaned animals, and planted his garden at certain times of year. Over time, reasons behind these practices came to light either through explanations or stumbling upon them. My father's knowledge likewise came to him in a similar way, from his parents and grandparents. These teachings originate from our ancestors who were researchers themselves, living on our land for thousands of years, coming to be experts, increasing their understanding of it over time (B. Leonard, personal communication, April 23, 2013). Much of my knowledge also comes from having worked at Plimoth Plantation for some years. The story told there in the Wampanoag home-site is the result of years of research conducted by many Wampanoag historians and others, pouring through primary sources of personal correspondences, and written accounts of environments and events. Like mine, some of their knowledge has come from their own families and the research done generations before as well. Collectively,

thousands of generations of Wampanoag people have contributed to the knowledge I have about my culture, my people and the place we come from. It's through this process of relaying the results of the research and my observations of its implications that I'm able to retell these stories of our early experiences with colonizers and other parts of our history.

These stories tell of a life that was to be eradicated as the primary mission of the role of the colonial project. An entirely English lifestyle was to be adopted. Wampanoag people were expected to learn the English language, dress and act like their colonizers, including cutting their hair and living in English-style, square houses. They were expected to restructure their families in a way that placed the man as the ultimate head of the household and the sole family member with any power. They were forced to change their religion, and leave behind their self-sustainable life to learn the trades of the English.

Beginning in the middle of the 17th century, missionaries coerced Wampanoag people into "praying town" communities where they had forced upon them an education that mandated the acceptance of Christianity and English ways for all the resident Wampanoag families, (Salisbury, 1992). John Eliot, a Massachusetts Bay Colony minister, spent much of his life establishing and maintaining these "praying town" communities in order to gather a group of Native people for easier conversion. Among these numerous praying towns was Mashpee, whose first converts gathered to form a church congregation in 1666, which was officially established in 1670 (Cesarini, 2008). The residents of Mashpee and the rest of these towns were subject to the Massachusetts government and thus were required to obey the law of the colony and were prohibited

from practicing their Wampanoag ways. The father and son team of John Mayhew Sr. and John Mayhew Jr. also were successful in creating a community for religious conversion on the island of Martha's Vineyard. None of these towns however, integrated Wampanoag and English Christians, but rather kept them segregated. These towns of Wampanoag Christians were not considered to be equal to their English counterparts despite their "civilized" and Christianized new lives, but rather the Wampanoag towns were viewed as subordinate.

Initially, the Wampanoag language was employed to achieve this task. Rather than to teach all the Wampanoag people English in order to accomplish the goal of religious conversion, the Bible was translated into Wôpanâôt8âôk by John Eliot and some Native speakers whom he commissioned for the task. The first printing of the King James Bible in North America was completed in Wôpanâôt8âôk in 1663. At this time there were at least as many Wampanoag people literate in their language as there were English literate in theirs. Having this text in the language that the people understood made quicker work of converting them. Once the people became Christians, the work of convincing them that the way they lived – and the language they spoke – was inferior, more distanced from God, was an easier task (Wynter, 2003).

After King Philip's War ended in 1676, most praying towns were demolished, their residents having been removed and killed, or exiled to places like Deer Island (Lomawaima, 1999). Four such towns remained, however. One of these remaining towns was Mashpee.

At the end of King Philip's War, Wampanoag people were dependent on the English for survival. Mashpee remained as a place where Wampanoag people would live

in one location and could have some land, and where Christian missionaries would be able to continue to preach to them. From this point on, Wampanoag people no longer were able to learn what was important to them, nor were they able to learn it in ways that made sense to their worldview. Eventually, having successfully been indoctrinated by the teachings of the Bible, they were also prohibited from speaking their language. This dependency led to a confused identity for Wampanoag people. The struggle to negotiate the double consciousness as Wampanoag people the way they were taught by their families, and Wampanoag people the way they were seen by their colonizers began at this time and has been carried through generations that followed.

Boarding Schools

In the late 1800s, following the Indian Removal Act of 1830 which forced Native people to leave their homelands so that the land would be available to white American citizens and heir slaves, and moved the Natives to foreign land west of the Mississippi River (The Indian Removal Act, 1830), the boarding school era was introduced. Once removed from their lands, the government oversaw an effort to educate Native people for their lives outside of their homelands (Grande, 2004).

Many other boarding schools were established initially by churches as "manual labor schools" where students were expected to do hard labor under the guise of "civilizing" them by allowing them to learn a trade (Reyhner and Eder, 1992). When these schools were no longer in operation, the federal government took up the charge and established, using this and the original boarding school model, its own Indian education system. Using a day school model was dismissed as allowing its students too much

access to their families and homes and was "deemed detrimental to the overall project of deculturization" (Grande, 2004, citing Noriega, p. 13).

These schools placed a heavy emphasis of conformity and subservience, using as its model not an educational one used in other school environments at the time, but rather methods based on military regimentation and discipline, including the requirement that children wear government-issued military uniforms. These military tactics were used to treat what was viewed as deficiencies in the Native students, who spoke a language other than English, who were brought to these schools under force, and who experienced extreme emotional and physical abuse at the hands of their "educators" (Lomawaima, 1999). These schools also emphasized an industrious work ethic. In 1881, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Hiram Price, believed that previous attempts to civilize Indigenous people had failed because the educations they received lacked the "necessity of labor" (Grande, 2004, citing Spring, p. 14).

Wampanoag and other Native children throughout the country were taken from their homes and brought to these boarding schools which were established by the United States government where the intention was to eliminate Native culture and assimilate children into mainstream society. These government-run Indian boarding schools maintained by the United States Department of War, made it impossible for students to speak their language and practice their culture, seeing to it that any student caught doing so would be severely punished, physically, emotionally or both, and in many cases, by death.

For some students, boarding schools accomplished what they set out to do: to completely eliminate the Native culture. Some children were so scarred by their

experiences in boarding school that they were ashamed to be who they were before their experience began. So indoctrinated by the institutionalized racism they experienced at the boarding schools, many Native people who survived the schools removed themselves from their homes and made their lives the best way they were able to outside of their culture in mainstream society, leaving behind them their former identities as Indigenous people. Some left their culture behind because they could not face their families and communities after the humiliation they experienced at the hands of the institution. Some people felt resentment for those who were not forced to go to these schools, or for their families for not stopping them from going in the first place, or for not coming to bring them home. Other people bought into the inculcation set forth at the boarding schools, choosing capitalism and Christianity over their own cultures and chose to remain separated from their communities as a result. Others still were set up for failure in an unfamiliar world. Commissioner Price advocated for Native people receiving allotments that they would have to cultivate, care for, and pay taxes on (Grande, 2004). As taxation was a previously unknown concept to a great many Natives at that time, they were enticed by the promise of owning their own land from which they would not be removed, only to lose it for money owed in taxes. This assimilation effort continued into the middle of the 20th century (Lomawaima, 1999; UMN, 2010).

Many Wampanoag children were removed from their communities as well, and brought to Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Students who lived through their experiences at these schools with as much of their culture and identity intact as possible, came away with a fear and distrust of the educational system. This distrust has

been passed down from parents and grandparents to children, and still exists in many Native youth today.

Historical Trauma

As Grande (2004) explains, "the miseducation of American Indians precedes the 'birth' of this nation" (p. 11). The tenets of colonial era and continued government education throughout the centuries are deeply rooted as truths into the minds of Americans today (Lomawaima, 1999). The characteristics of education from centuries past include teachers having the final word in their classrooms without the ability for students to question them, students being punished for not conforming strictly to teachers' expectations, and students being disallowed from bringing into the classroom their own experiences and differences for the sake of ease of moving the class through the colonially-framed material quickly and without imagination. Creativity and curiosity are still not desirable qualities of a mainstream education in this country and therefore American classrooms are indeed often still structured in these ways.

Settler colonialism is the result of an influx of people from another land who come to stay (Wolfe, 1991). Settler colonialism is a structure that persists in societies where people have come to stay in a new place, at the expense of the Indigenous people of that land. This process is ongoing and includes three interlocking components: ownership of the land, removal of the Indigenous population, and the importation of slave labor. In doing so, ownership of the land is the first priority for the colonizing group. In order to accomplish this, the second piece comes into play: the people who live on that land must be removed. In the case of American Indians, this has happened and continues

to happen by murder, enslavement, removal of resources, disease, assimilationist practices or the institution of blood quantum to name a few. The third part of settler colonialism requires slave labor to be brought in to work the land. In the United States, the slave labor came primarily from Africa but also from the Native communities that the colonizers displaced. The practice of chattel slavery was justified by the claim that African people were biologically inferior and therefore a form of property (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2010). Settler colonialism is a structure that is not bound by time but in fact continues, still, to deny the existence of Indigenous people and the lingering impacts of slavery, and it supports white supremacy as a way to justify the displacement and ownership of others.

In accord with the settler-colonial project of removing the Indigenous people from the land that was theirs, this previously described educational model remains to this day, one that is by and large in competition with a Wampanoag worldview. In a Wampanoag way of being, people learn by observation and by practice as opposed to being told information, and people believe in a socialist societal organization for the collective success of the group rather than a competitive, meritocratic, capitalist structure. This mismatch between the traditional Wampanoag teachings and the preferred teachings in modern American society marginalizes Wampanoag people, further removing them from control of their own lives in their own homeland. In order to compete with one another in a way that will win them academic success and acceptance from the non-Native mainstream group, success has meant finding a way to conform to the prescription set by the colonizer. This often means leaving behind some pieces of one's Indigenous identity: a win for the settler colonial project because the colonized mind has a harder time

protesting theft of its rightful resources (Fanon, 1967). The negative consequences experienced by young Wampanoag people in the 1600s continue to be felt by the young Wampanoag people of today, in part because the practices have not drastically changed, but also because the miseducation experienced by the ancestors of today's Native youth is still felt within them contemporarily, as a form of historical trauma. Historical trauma is one way that settler colonialism continues to affect the lives of Indigenous people to this day as an ongoing structure rather than a single event.

According to Michaels (2010), historical trauma is defined by Dr. Brave Heart as "a constellation of characteristics associated with massive cumulative group trauma across generations." She goes on to explain that "the traumatic event is shared by a collective group of people who experience the consequences of the event, as well as the fact that the impact of the trauma is held personally and can be transmitted over generations," (2010). In this case, generations of Native people being forced into praying towns and boarding schools, being disallowed their language and their traditions, and forced to live within the America's "whitestream" society – a term which Sandy Grande (2004) uses to describe a society where the norm is based on a white, European experience – have caused the historical trauma in education.

Because of these educational acts of cultural genocide, Native people nationwide, Wampanoag included, have grown to be cautious of the American education system imposed on their children. As a result of generations of Wampanoag people who have been exposed to a system that devalues their traditional cultural norms, punishes the use of their language and forces a way of life that has felt unnatural and difficult, many Tribal citizens have come to view the education system as the enemy. Based on these

experiences, the understanding of formal education as a form of oppression has been handed down from generation to generation and continues to manifest itself as a contributor to the historical cultural traumas felt by Wampanoag people.

In *Indian Nations as Risk*, Demmert and Bell (1991) described the discouraging truths of Indian students' educational experiences:

- Native students have limited opportunities to develop their basic skills such as language through preschool education;
- Family barriers (which result from the historical traumas previously described, at the hands of the formal education that generations of Native people have experienced, as well as social and political factors, such as institutionalized racism and government-sanctioned violence toward Tribal people) such as poverty, single-parent homes, substance abuse, violence, suicide, and physical or psychological inability inhibit students' achievement;
- Schools do not provide culturally sensitive education. They teach about Native people as if they are relics of the past when in fact there are students of those still-existing communities sitting in their classrooms. This lack of sensitivity and acknowledgement do not allow opportunities for Indigenous students' spiritual growth. Students are unable to maintain proper language and cultural knowledge in school. Teachers lack the ability to effectively teach Native students;
- Curriculum is presented through a settler-colonial perspective;
- Students experience racism in their school environments;

- Low expectations are placed upon Native students resulting in poor academic achievement;
- As much as 35% of Native students drop out of school (In some places this number is as high as 50-60%);
- Native students score lower on SAT and ACT exams making them less prepared for college than other minority groups;
- Funding at all levels of schooling is insufficient for Native students.

The statistics support the claim that repercussions of this trauma continue to be experienced in myriad formal educational settings by young Native people still. In 1990, in a survey of American Indians over the age of 25, 66% had completed high school as compared to 75% of the total US population; 9% had a bachelors degree compared to 20% of the US population; and 3% of American Indians held graduate or professional degrees compared to 7% of the total US population (UMN, 2010). In 2011, according to the Massachusetts Department of Education, 3.4% of Native students in the state did not finish high school, as compared with 1.7% of their white classmates (Massachusetts DOE, 2011).

In the early nineties when these data were recorded, I was a student at the middle school in Mashpee, where the majority of Mashpee Wampanoag students have attended school since it opened. During my education in Mashpee, I observed a disproportionate number of Native students who were retained between kindergarten and eighth grade as compared with white students. Of eleven Wampanoag students in my class that I can remember, I recall 3 who had repeated a grade. Only one of us went directly to four-year college after high school. One other went to a post-graduate fifth year program before

starting at a four-year college. Two others have some post-secondary education or training. Most Wampanoag students in my class have had no college experience, and two that I recall dropped out of high school entirely. One died of a drug overdose in 2008 at the age of 27.

Since the beginning of the American Indian Movement in the late 1960s, in spite of these traumas felt in Native communities throughout the United States, Native people have begun the process of self-determination through language and culture, self-governance and self-education (Anuik, Battiste, George, and George, 2010; Lomawaima, 1999). While significant strides have been made for many Tribal communities in many of these areas, one facet of Indian life that still remains far behind is the education of American Indian students. Tribal sovereignty in the form of federal recognition is necessary for Indigenous people to access the means to fully self-determine their lives. While self-identification comes solely from within, the ability to self-educate, because of state and federal law, must be sanctioned by the federal government. The topic of Tribal sovereignty and federal recognition will be further taken up later in this section.

Not only as a former student, but also as a substitute teacher, tutor and enrichment teacher in Mashpee schools, my experiences with the schools within the district have been many-faceted. Through my work with Wampanoag students in Massachusetts schools, I have witnessed and heard stories of students being treated unfairly by their teachers and administrators. Many students and families have experienced both covert and clear acts of racism in some schools as well. Few schools attended by Wampanoag students have any Tribal members in the faculty. In the1980s and 90s, while I was a student in the Mashpee school district where the largest number of Wampanoag students

attends, the only Wampanoag faculty or staff was a secretary in the guidance office, one art teacher and one janitor, all of whom worked in the middle school. (I do not recall any Wampanoag faculty or staff in the elementary school. There was no high school in Mashpee at that time as it opened in 2000.) There was also one substitute teacher who was Wampanoag.

Since my time in the Mashpee school district, the schools have been restructured many times. Currently there is one school that houses Headstart and Pre-K through grade 2, one school that houses grades 3 through 6, and a school which houses both Mashpee Middle School (grades seven and eight) and Mashpee High School. At this time there are no Wampanoag faculty members in any school. That last one, a sixth grade English teacher, retired in 2013. There are at least 2 cafeteria workers, one in the middle and high school building and one in the third-sixth grade building, and at least one janitor in the early elementary school.

In my various experiences working in the schools I frequently heard the almost entirely white faculty of Mashpee teachers discuss Wampanoag students in negative ways. Rarely did I hear of students being mentioned positively, with few exceptions, and when I did, it tended to be the same kids repeatedly. Generally teachers talked about the bad attitudes and poor skills they believe their Wampanoag students have. Teachers and counselors had very low expectations as well. One student in particular was told to apply to "easier" colleges because her counselor didn't think she would get in to the places on her list. This was an honor roll student who was also an athlete, tutored younger students in the elementary school, and held various leadership roles in the school. Although there is much research on the motivation and attitudes of marginalized students, the students

I've known have complained that teachers, rather than the students, are the ones who have negative attitudes, and that they don't listen when students attempt to express their needs. Several Wampanoag high school students are suspended multiple times per year and advocates provided by the Tribal Council are needed in meetings with the school's administration on a regular basis.

Based on my observations, in this district, it is clear to me that this mismatch between the Wampanoag students and their educators adds to the high number of Native students who do not finish high school. Lack of trust in their education, low expectations by teachers and cultural misunderstandings, among other contributors keep the Mashpee Wampanoag students in the school system from succeeding in a measurable way either socially or by state academic standards. In my estimation, the number of Wampanoag youth who do not finish high school is undoubtedly higher than the statewide percentage of 3.4. In my graduating class alone, with at least two of the students not finishing school, the number equaled at least 18 percent. The Education Director as well as a former teacher both believe the dropout rate to be an astonishing and completely unacceptable 50% in recent years (R. Lopes-Pocknett, personal communication, January, 2013; M. Perry, personal communication, May, 2013).

Over the past years, several academic programs have been implemented to mitigate the problems experienced by Mashpee Wampanoag youth in the schools they attend, particularly the Mashpee district schools. Some of these programs include academic counseling and advocacy provided by the Tribe, and the Title VII Indian Education program, which provides some superficial cultural education such as singing and craft-making during the school day to all students during their music and art classes,

and tutoring to Native students after school, both of which are run by the school district and staffed by mostly Tribal members. These programs however, have not been able to offer a holistic approach to the educational issues that Mashpee Wampanoag children face. As has been the case for nearly 400 years, the solutions have come from outside the community and have been put upon the Tribal community from those who do not know it best, and have been not only unsuccessful, but often times detrimental to Wampanoag children, reducing their culture to token song taught to an elementary music class.

The necessary actions to improve Wampanoag school experiences must both address the many contributors to Wampanoag children's educational issues as well as do so under the guidance and action of the Wampanoag community itself.

In the past, even when interventions that have been implemented were at times culturally relevant, they have addressed specific issues without looking at the whole picture and applying a wrap-around intervention that is culturally appropriate. In his keynote address at the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Alumni of Color Conference, John Jackson (2012) explains this by describing how the entire schooling system is designed to meet the needs of white, upper-middle class students. For them, formal education is a constant intervention: a full-time center for wrap-around services. This is not the case for students from other backgrounds – other ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, etc. Students who are not a part of the majority cannot fully benefit from these services, and therefore their educational experience is less comprehensive, less effective.

For example, if a social problem is addressed in a culturally relevant manner, but the emotional, physical, academic issues continue to be handled by the mainstream

systems in a Euro-centric way, then little real help is actually being given to the child. This is not an issue for the students who come from the culture for which the schools are designed. All programs in the school are culturally appropriate for a culturally American student. A wrap-around approach to education is exactly that, comprehensive and constant, for an upper-middle class, white student. Wampanoag children also need services that address all of their needs in a culturally appropriate way, consistent across language, culture, curriculum and assessment, if they are to be expected to be able to survive the mainstream education systems where they currently attend. For this type of holistic and culturally based education to be brought to fruition, it must be designed and implemented by the Native community members themselves.

Because for the past nearly four hundred years, government policies aimed at the education of American Indian students have largely failed, Tribes and advocacy organizations have begun to take it upon themselves to develop and implement their own schools and programs for the education of their youth, and to lobby for government policy changes that will benefit Native students in ways that their Tribal communities deem appropriate (Charleston, 1994; McCarty, Borgoiakova, Lomawaima, and Romero, 2008; McKinley and Nimnicht, 1970; Szasz, 1977; Tippeconnic, 1999).

Shifting Toward Self-Determined Education

Mashpee, the largest Wampanoag community, which has approximately 2,000 members, gained federal recognition in 2007. Tribal sovereignty gives the authority to Indigenous Tribes in the United States to govern themselves, to define their own

membership, manage their own property, and regulate its own domestic relations. This includes the right to determine the kind of education that is appropriate for their children. Thus, federal recognition also provides funding and provides Tribes with the right to educate their own people. Many Tribes across the country have taken this opportunity to establish culturally based schools for their communities. These schools have taken many forms, from reservation schools to public charters and private schools on non-Native owned land.

Many of the schools that are run by Tribal communities are taught in ways that reinforce the ways of knowing and epistemologies of the Tribes in which they serve. Students are taught through their language of heritage and learn traditional teachings as well as the content of typical American schools. Swisher discusses the notion that "the voices of Indian people have echoed consistent rhetoric, some of it going back as far as fifty years ago: Indian people want the opportunity to determine all aspects of their children's education" (as cited in Deyhle, Swisher, Stevens and Galván, 2008, p. 330). Tribal schools across the country have had varying degrees of success but the ability to choose what information is important for a government's own people and the maintenance of cultural practices and knowledge keep the desire to design culturally appropriate education alive (Hermes, 2010).

The Coolangatta Statement discusses the rights held by Indigenous people who desire to educate their own people. Some of these rights are as follows:

- to establish schools and other learning facilities that recognize, respect and promote Indigenous values, philosophies, and ideologies;
- to develop and implement culturally inclusive curricula;

- to utilize the essential wisdom of Indigenous elders in the education process;
- to promote the use of Indigenous language in education;
- to establish the parameters and ethics within which Indigenous education research should be conducted; to choose the nature and scope of education without prejudice, (as cited in Deyhle, Swisher, Stevens and Galván, 2008, p. 330).

In step with the trend toward self-education throughout Indian Country and worldwide in the past few decades, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe has also began to attempt to reverse the years of cultural suppression in education by founding programs and schools that are taught with Native values in mind. As a member of the Tribe's Education Committee for five years, I've been a part of discussions including many members of the Tribal community that we are also looking to provide a more culturally appropriate setting for Tribal youth. Wampanoag students in Mashpee schools are not ignored as a cultural population, but their needs often are. The common expectation held by teachers and school administrators seems to be that the Tribe will deal with the cultural practices their way, and the school will handle the education in the same ways they handle it for everyone else. The school does not consider that a marriage of culture and education would foster success for its Native youth. Today, public education continues to subdue cultures, marginalizing them by using a westernized, euro-centric style of instruction. The cultural practices of racially and culturally minoritized students are not found in many schools and students who are marginalized in classrooms are left to struggle trying to learn the necessary course material in a style that often directly contradicts the methods and values used and taught to them at home. This is certainly the case as I have observed it in the Mashpee public schools. With a complete absence of

faculty and so few staff members possessing any Wampanoag cultural competency, providing culturally sensitive instruction is impossible. Even on the rare occasion when Wampanoag educators come into the school, the incredible task of providing an appropriate education to Tribal children is much too burdensome to make any real impact. The teacher who retired in 2013 did so with mixed emotions. Excited for retirement and relief to leave a place of work that was often emotionally draining, she felt a responsibility to leave her students with at minimum, no less than they had with her there, and tries so far unsuccessfully to encourage younger Tribal members to become teachers in the district. As her tenure in the school came to an end, the encouragement has become more desperate. Leaving her job meant leaving the students behind with no one whom they can look to in a position of authority in their school, and without anyone to look after them in a contentious, and sometimes downright hostile environment (M. Perry, personal communication, May, 2013).

Although the educational goals of the Tribal community for Wampanoag children include academic success as measured by achievement tests in schools and college acceptance, Wampanoag knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a member of the Tribal community, and pride in this knowledge and understanding are the primary concerns. Wampanoag community elders express sadness over the lack of understanding of our Tribal history and a loss of some of the attributes that define us as a people. Elders talk about how we have been known for generations for our hospitality, or knowledge of the water around our homeland and how to use the resources we were given in the place we come from. Teaching our history through our stories, so that future generations understand why we do the things we do, so that when pine bows are placed into a burial,

or the heart of an animal is eaten on the day it was killed, children do not have to question why. When a grandmother sends her grandson to get some herring for dinner, they know where to go and what they will need to bring with them to get it, how to clean it and how to prepare it to eat it. These teachings and others are what are endangered when they are not supported in school as well as home.

Working toward these goals means understanding a Wampanoag way of life, both historically and contemporarily: what are the traditional Wampanoag values and practices and how do they inform the way we, as a Tribe of people, act and interact today? How did our grandparents fish for that herring? How is it different from how we do it now? From there, understanding of the broader global community and how they interact can be incorporated: how are our practices similar or different to those of other Tribes, backgrounds or countries?

Currently, Wampanoag children largely attend public school, both in Mashpee and elsewhere, with little or no attention paid to reinforcing their culture or the values upheld in their Tribal community. In some instances, the Tribe acts as an advocate in the schools when they can, attending disciplinary or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, and has some money to pay for services such as tutoring and supplies. There has been some conversation by the Education Department and the Tribal Council since the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe received its federal recognition decision nearly seven years ago, about chartering an independent school for the youth, and the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project (wlrp.org), which has been working to reclaim the previously dormant Wôpanâak language for more than twenty years, is currently submitting an application to the state and creating culture and language immersion

curriculum for a public charter. Critical to the success of this endeavor or any other drastic improvements in the educational situation for Native youth is community involvement from the beginning.

The purpose of this study is to gather elders and other culturally knowledgeable and committed community members who are culture keepers and who are raising the children affected by ineffective educational practices, to assist in the formation of a vision for students' health and success in their education through our own versions of our own stories for our own purposes (Smith, 1999). Leona Okakok, an Iñupiaq woman from the North Slope in Alaska, believes that educating a child means giving them the tools they will need to succeed in the world in which they live. She believes that education is more than just book learning, but value-learning as well (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Okakok).

To come to an agreement on what that means for Wampanoag children, the following questions, modeled after those asked of Iñupiaq elders by the Iliññiagnikun Apqusiuqtit (Pederson, Harcharek, Okakok, Peetook, Aiken, Riley, et al., 2010) were posed to the participating Mashpee Wampanoag community members:

- What are the values that we as Mashpee Wampanoag people expect each other to uphold?
- What knowledge is necessary to live as a healthy, successful Mashpee Wampanoag person in 2013?

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The literature for this study is separated into two sections: Culturally Based Education in Indian Country and Complementary Types of Knowledge. A culturally based education is the ultimate goal for Wampanoag students. This goal includes providing students with a combination of both traditional and contemporary Wampanoag cultural teachings as well as academic achievement.

Culturally Based Education in Indian Country

What I have referred to as culturally based education is called by a number of different names by various scholars in the field. Some of these names are culturally responsive, culturally relevant, culture-based, and multicultural education. In their respective discussions of this topic, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) use the term "culturally responsive schooling" and Ladson Billings (1995) uses "culturally relevant pedagogy." For this project, I have used the term "culturally based education." The National Indian Education Association defines this term as follows:

> Culturally based education (CBE) grounds high quality instructional practices in culturally and linguistically relevant contexts. CBE is more than teaching language and culture as special projects, it is a systematic approach fully incorporating and integrating specific cultural ways of thinking, learning, and problem-solving into educational practice.
>
> For Native students, these approaches include recognizing and utilizing Native languages as a first or second language, pedagogy that incorporates traditional cultural characteristics and involves teaching strategies that are harmonious with Native culture knowledge and contemporary ways of knowing and learning. (niea.org)

I feel as though this is the more appropriate term for this particular research because (1) this project was not focused on only teaching, or exclusively on the education that

happens within the structure of the school. It was concerned with the whole picture of children's education, and so it used nomenclature that reflects that; and (2) to use the phrase "culturally based" is to say that the education which we are talking about is rooted in the Wampanoag culture, that the focus is on these children with their needs and wants in consideration before we even begin to talk about education. This is in contrast to using the terms "responsive" or "relevant" where the implication is to use the current education and adapt it to accommodate and "respond to" the Native population whom it seeks to educate. For these reasons, this research project used the term culturally based education, to encompass the many facets of children's education that this project included, whether within the confines of the classroom and the academic schedule, or beyond, in the familial, Tribal, community, or other social environments where they find themselves every day.

The aim of culturally based education is to use the cultural practices and norms of the students in the classroom to inform the educational environment and pedagogical practices. Culturally based practices in the school can manifest in the physical environment of the school or the daily interactions including language and etiquette both in and out of the classroom. It can also be present in the classroom embedded within the curriculum content and in the teaching methods (Brown-Jeffy and Cooper, 2011; Hyland, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

This literature review begins by summarizing the relevant parts of this work. Heavily cited throughout this literature review is the work of Castagno and Brayboy (2008). Their synthesis of the research on culturally responsive education speaks directly to the topic addressed here. Making connections to their research throughout this

literature review was a natural fit and to not bring their work into this project would be not only a false claim on my part to this work as entirely original, but also would not allow for such explicit connection across different Indigenous contexts. Because much of the literature around culturally based, culturally relevant, or culturally responsive education is focused around institutionalized education, their comprehensive synthesis of the literature is an apt place to begin. However, because this research is concerned with the many facets of Indigenous students' education and not only that which is contained inside of the classroom, the second part of this review will fill in the gaps left by focusing only on formal education. Because of the broader scope of the research project proposed here, this synthesis goes on to include a section focused on the body of work regarding culturally based education outside of school settings as well.

Historical Overview

The Meriam Report (Meriam et al, 1928) is cited as the first call for cultural education, citing education for Indigenous youth as among the "most deficient" (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, p. 945), resulting in dire consequences among Native communities. The report expressed the need for more Native teachers, early childhood programming, and Indigenous languages being taught in schools. The Meriam Report is considered to be among the first calls for cultural education for American Indian students.

In the 1960s and 70s, Tribal organizations began to pressure the federal government to give control of Native education over to Tribes themselves. The pressure led to federal legislation toward this end, in particular, including the Tribal languages in schools attended by Indigenous children. In 1969, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy*

– *A National Challenge* was issued by the senate. In 1970 The Havighurst Report provided some insight to the current state of Indian Education, highlighting academic performance and the curriculum that didn't support the incorporation of Indigenous languages in schools. The Indian Education Act of 1972 created funding opportunities to include culture and language programs in school systems and hiring more Native teachers. Finally, in 1975, the Indian Self-Determination Act allowed for the inclusion of Tribally controlled cultural programs in school districts that serve Indigenous students (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008).

In the 1980s, culturally based education moved into the mainstream conversation in multicultural education. Sociology, anthropology, psychology, applied linguistics all added to the conversation about the challenges faced in schools by culturally minoritized others (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). In Mashpee at this time, the Title VII Indian Education program was instituted in the public school system.

The 1990s resulted in more legislation as a result of the increased recognition of culturally based education provided in the previous decade. In particular, the Native American Languages Act of 1990 and 1992 made way for the protection and revitalization of Indigenous languages (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). In 1991, *Indian Nations at Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action Final Report* was issued by the Department of Education (Demmert and Bell, 1991) and followed up by the White House Conference and another final report. In 1998, President Bill Clinton issued an executive order regarding American Indian and Alaska Native education recognizing

> …the "special, historic responsibility for the education of American Indian and Alaska Native students," a commitment to "improving the academic performance and reducing the dropout rate" of Indigenous students, and a nationwide effort among tribal leaders and Indian education scholars to

> develop a "research agenda" guided by the goals of self-determination and the preservation of tribal cultures and languages. (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing American Indian and Alaska Native Education, 1998)

This executive order included evaluating teaching strategies used with Native students, the role of language and culture in developing these strategies, and helping Tribal governments to meet their children's educational needs, including specifically, language and culture.

In 2004, a new executive order signed by President George W. Bush did not include the final goal of aiding Tribal governments in meeting the needs of their youth members. Instead, it focused on Native students meeting the requirements set forth by No Child Left Behind. This moved the direction of education for Indigenous students away from its prior course toward language and culture in the classroom and back to a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008).

Rationale

The first reason Castagno and Brayboy (2008) provide for why educators ought to work to provide culturally responsive education is that Native students have different learning styles than their non-Native peers which disadvantages them in mainstream educational institutions that are geared toward a specific style of learning that is different than theirs. Although much of the research on the topic of brain dominance the authors describe as racist and sexist, one of their arguments to this claim of varied learning styles is that a majority of Indigenous people are dominantly right-brained, which means that they are more comfortable with "holistic perspectives, instinct, dance, music, special orientation, and feminine qualities" (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Ross, 1982,

1989). The authors however, do caution that claims such as this that generalize an entire community of Indigenous people in this way are to be viewed critically.

More generally, the literature on learning styles claims that all people have a commonly used style, which dominates in learning environments. In the work that surrounds culturally responsive schooling, scholars assert that Native children would be more appropriately served if the education they received more closely matched the style in which they were most comfortable, which would require an integration of Indigenous epistemologies in the classroom. Gilliland (1995, cited by Castagno and Brayboy, 2008) argues that children from the same cultural backgrounds will likely have similar learning styles, and More (1989, cited by Castagno and Brayboy, 2008) agrees, asserting that learning styles are acquired over a lifetime of experiences and a common culture would sensibly account for common learning styles.

More also found in his review on the topic, that in each of five different dimensions of learning styles (global/analytic, verbal/imaginal, concrete/abstract, trial, error, feedback/reflective and modality) American Indian students employed styles that were opposite of those dominant in their non-Native peers. Castagno and Brayboy also cite several scholars who agree with the claim, noting that learning styles of Indigenous students predominantly include "visual, hands-on, connecting to real-life, direct experience, participating in real-world activities, global, seeing the overall picture before the details, creative, holistic, reflective, collaborative, circular, imaginal, concrete, simultaneous processing, observation preceded performance, and naturalistic" (Brayboy, 2008). Although the learning-style literature is more acceptable than the brain dominant literature which is widely considered racist and sexist, the authors nonetheless caution

against over-generalizations that come with classifying entire cultures of students as behaving in a similar manner and they note that Lomawaima and McCarty (2006, cited by Castagno and Brayboy, 2008) add that all students exhibit a number of different learning styles in varied times and contexts and that we must recognize that there is also difference within groups, just as there is difference between them. Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) explore this idea as well, arguing that in a learning styles model, singular teaching methods could be used to teach entire groups of who come from a similar cultural background without taking into consideration the experiences, practices and contexts of the individual, therefore potentially limiting the educational experience and attempting to teach material using unfamiliar methods.

This notion leads to a discussion on cultural differences between different Tribes, specifically the varied meanings behind certain behaviors. Highlighted are the multiple ways that different cultures show they are paying attention and respect, the meaning behind passivity, use of influence over others, linguistic and social interaction, and the use of silence. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) discuss the meaning of silence as a theme in much of the literature on culturally responsive schooling. Much research has been done on the topic and the conclusion is that teachers in whitestream schools often misconstrue their Native students' silence as shyness, disrespect or immaturity (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Hornett, 1990; Kasten, 1992; Murdoch, 1988; Plank, 1994). Another common theme in the literature is the concept that American Indian students learn by observation and through interaction with their peers and their community as opposed to through the typical classroom. Common in their synthesized literature was the idea that Native students prefer collaboration as opposed to competition, and that

Indigenous students come from cultures where they are expected to "act competently or not at all" (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, p. 955) an example which reinforces the notion of learning by example (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Cleary and Peacock, 1998; Deloria and Wildcat, 2001; Demmert, 2001; Gilliland, 1995; Grant and Gillespie, 1993; Hilberg and Tharp, 2002; Jacobs and Reyhner, 2002; Swisher and Deyhle, 1998). One of my Wampanoag language students represents a clear example of this. When asked to answer a direct question she consistently takes more time to answer than her peers, but excels when she is the given time she needs to practice and mull over the information before being asked to produce speech or recall grammar functions.

These theories of the learning styles of Native students are important for teachers to understand in order to effectively teach this population. More broadly, understanding cultural differences in general, and not only as they manifest in classroom learning, can give teachers a better lens through which to view their students and will aid in the process of co-constructing knowledge and transferring information from teacher to student. The authors do caution, however, against teaching about cultural and linguistic differences in a superficial way as opposed to using an understating of those differences to inform their pedagogy. Castagno and Brayboy (2008, citing Hermes, 2005, 2007) look to Hermes, who discusses how inserting cultural content into curricular materials does not alter the culture of the school. It causes children to have to choose between being academically successful and being Ojibwe when culture and language is taught as a topic within a mainstream school as opposed to informing the way the academic content is taught to the students. Along with Castagno and Brayboy, I deeply share her concern. I feel that much of the literature on culturally responsive schooling reflects this misinterpretation of

the intention of culturally responsive schooling, and it is for this reason that I prefer the term culturally based education, a topic that will be explored explicitly later on in this chapter.

Anticipated Outcomes

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) begin this section of their literature review by first discussing what happens when Native children experience an education that does not practice a culturally responsive methodology. Belgarde et al (2002, cited by Castagno and Brayboy, 2008) found that mainstream education causes Indigenous youth to be forced to assimilate into dominant culture, to experience cultural discontinuity, to have poor self-esteem, and to suffer academically. Others discussed the damage that is done to a children's cultural pride, stating that mainstream education causes children to believe that their cultural knowledge and academic knowledge are separate and that cultural teachings are inappropriate in an academic context (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Skinner, 1999; Deloria and Wildcat, 2001). Even schools like Mashpee, that have a high attendance rate of Native children fail to provide a "compelling, relevant, inspiring and meaningful education" (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Schools attended by poor Native children, they posit, comply most closely with high stakes federal mandates, which impede the ability to provide any form of culturally relevant education.

Alternatively, when the school's cultural norms and expectations match those of the students, children are able to succeed in their academic environments. Cognitive theory indicates that learning is more natural when it connects new information to prior knowledge. The authors point out that several scholars agree that formal education

should be connected to the knowledge, culture and lived experiences of the students in the classroom (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). Describing the overall literature as "vague" (p. 958), the authors agree that generally speaking, the literature

> "…collectively provides strong evidence that Native language and cultural programs – and student identification with such programs – are associated with improved academic performance, decreased dropout rates, improved school attendance rates, decreased clinical symptoms, and improved personal behavior. (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, p. 958, citing Demmert, 2001)

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) discuss two different approaches to the integration of language and culture in schools. One perspective is that language and culture ought to pervade throughout the entire curriculum in every aspect of the educational experience, serving as a framework from which academic content is taught. This perspective is most commonly held by schools that serve a primarily Native student body in areas with large populations of Native people. In Mashpee, this is not the case and the Wampanoag Language Department has been trying for at least two years to gain access to the public schools to teach the language as part of the second language requirement. A second perspective believes that schools must respect the cultures of its Indigenous students and allow all their students to learn about Native languages and cultures. This goal of this perspective is to teach all students to respect cultural differences (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing US Department of Education, 2001). In a study of teachers of Indigenous youth conducted by Cleary and Babcock (1998, cited by Castagno and Brayboy, 2008), all teachers believed it is important to teach culture in conjunction with academics, but Native teachers viewed it as an essential component to the school environment.

Ultimately, the most elemental goal of culturally responsive schooling is for children to become bicultural or multicultural. Castagno and Brayboy make the point

that schools that educate students in a culturally appropriate way, through an educational process that is closely connected to their home culture and community, the results will be students who are "academically prepared, connected to and active members of their tribal communities, and knowledgeable about both the dominant and their home cultures" (p. 961). These desired outcomes are echoed by the Wampanoag community who also want their children's education to support their home culture as well as successfully teach them academic skills.

Strategies and Characteristics

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) divided their findings on pedagogy into five topics. These topics are the main practices that teachers can employ to provide their students with a culturally responsive learning environment. The first is that teachers ought to facilitate cooperative learning. This practice eliminates the usually individualistic and competitive nature of school and allows students to be more engaged. Gilliland (1995, cited by Castagno and Brayboy, 2008) points out that cooperative learning cannot be defined by a single method, but rather incorporates numerous, including attitudes towards students, concepts of learning, and a way of life both in the classroom and entire school. At Mashpee High School, Wampanoag students often escape their mainstream classrooms to the Indian Education classroom where there is less individual work and tutoring and homework help are provided in a group setting with more opportunity for collaboration. Second on Castagno and Brayboy's list is the creation of a visual learning environment, which incorporates the use of paper, markers, video, etc, in order to complement the use of oral teaching. This facilitates engagement by students with

different learning styles. Third, teachers must learn to connect the content of their lessons with the everyday lived experiences of their students. This practice causes students to be more engaged with their schooling because it is more interesting for them when they can readily make connections between the knowledge that they bring with them and what they learn in school. This means more than the current events section of a civics class taught at Mashpee High School where students are currently asked to bring in recent newspaper clippings for class discussion. While this teacher's goal may be to connect their classroom learning to their lived experiences, for Wampanoag students, they find themselves only represented in the newspaper in negative or controversial ways because the local paper tends toward writing about the Tribe most often when we are in conflict with the town or state, or individual citizens. Instead of finding current events from only whitestream knowledge systems such as a newspaper, the teacher might better serve the Native students by allowing students to use varied sources for their assignment. Fourth, teachers would best serve their students by increasing the time allowed between asking a question and expecting a response, and the amount of time they provide for students to process new information. As previously discussed, a cultural expectation of many Native communities is to act competently or not at all, as well as not rushing to speak, which allows others space to talk. Extending the amount of time given to students so that they can be confident in their understanding and ability before expecting to respond is a more culturally appropriate method than the teacher setting a pace that suits her or his own expectations. Finally, teachers must allow students an opportunity to develop their own strategies for interacting with their world. Students who feel

empowered within their schools and communities receive a more meaningful educational experience.

In addition to these practices, the literature on the topic expressed the need for teachers to be warm and caring, to give up authority, and to show respect for their students and their cultures. Teachers must also have high standards for their students and expect the same level of performance that they would of any student of any background. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) look to the Alaska Native Knowledge Network who describe five necessary traits for teachers who engage in culturally responsive schooling paraphrased in the following list:

- Culturally responsive educators incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work.
- Culturally responsive educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of students.
- Culturally responsive educators participate in community events and activities in an appropriate and supportive way.
- Culturally responsive educators work closely with parents to achieve a high level of complementary educational expectations between home and school.
- Culturally responsive educators recognize the full potential of each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential.

Apart from the obvious concern that when students are not exposed to a culturally responsive curriculum their performance suffers, other issues in the literature specific to Indigenous youth are that curricula that are taught in mainstream schools often trivialize stereotypes of Native people and cultures, that Native children are met with lowered expectations and are often given remedial materials, and that textbooks which highlight the experiences of Indigenous peoples are rarely used (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). A prime example of a curriculum that combats these issues is found in the work of the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (1998, cited by Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). This network has established a set of cultural standards that are used in conjunction with the state and federal standards required in the schools:

- A culturally-responsive curriculum reinforces the integrity of the cultural knowledge that students bring with them,
- A culturally-responsive curriculum recognizes cultural knowledge as part of a living and constantly adapting system that is grounded in the past, but continues to grow through the present and into the future.
- A culturally-responsive curriculum uses the local language and cultural knowledge as a foundation for the rest of the curriculum.
- A culturally-responsive curriculum fosters a complementary relationship across knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems.
- A culturally-responsive curriculum situates local knowledge and actions in a global context. (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998)

The synthesis goes on to describe methods that can be used in different subject areas in order to ensure a more culturally appropriate education for Indigenous children. The resulting conclusion is that teachers must actively work to make their classrooms more culturally responsive environments by reviewing the materials and texts from which they teach with an eye toward "accuracy, inclusivity, bias, stereotyping, and omission" (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, p. 968). The authors point to the work of Manitoba Indian Brotherhood who describe ten common biases the presented in mainstream curricular materials:

1. Bias by omission – selecting information that reflects credit on only one group, frequently the writer's r speaker's group.
2. Bias by defamation – calling attention to the Native person's faults rather than virtues and misrepresenting the nature of Native people.
3. Bias by disparagement – denying or belittling the contribution of Native people to mainstream culture.
4. Bias by cumulative implication – constantly creating the impression that only one group is responsible for positive development.
5. Bias by (lack of) validity – failing to ensure that information about issues is accurate and unambiguous.
6. Bias by inertia – perpetuation of legends and half-truths by failure to keep abreast of historical scholarship.

7. Bias by obliteration – ignoring significant aspects of Native history.
8. Bias by disembodiment – referring in a casual and depersonalized way to a group of people.
9. Bias by (lack of) concreteness – dealing with a race of group in generalizations that apply shortcomings, or positive characteristics, of one individual to the group. To be concrete, the material must be factual, objective and realistic.
10. Bias by (lack of) comprehensiveness and balance – failure to mention all relevant facts that may help form the opinion of the students. (Castagno and Brayboy, citing Grant and Gillespie, 1993, p. 968)

I agree wholeheartedly with the authors who note that the themes described in this section must necessarily be conceived through Indigenous epistemologies in order to more effectively provide appropriate education for Indigenous students. Likewise, they discuss two other elements that ought to be linked to the conception of culturally responsive schooling in the development of curricula: sovereignty and self-determination, and racism.

"Culturally Based" Education

Castagno and Brayboy (2008, citing Skinner, 1999) discuss the role of Indigenous values that many communities share that could serve as a basis for classroom learning. Among these values are generosity and cooperation, independence and freedom, respect

for elders and wisdom, connectedness and love, courage and responsibility, indirect communication and noninterference, and silence, reflection and spirit" (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, p. 956, citing Skinner, 1999). Although it was by no means ignored in their literature review, the notion of values is, in my opinion, one of the underlying difference between what many scholars refer to as culturally responsive or culturally relevant schooling, and the culturally based education that is intended by this proposed research project. Tippeconnic and Fox (2012) assert that to address the multifaceted issue of Indian education, focusing on values as guiding principles is a worthwhile and appropriate starting point.

Also inextricably linked to the concept of culturally based education and an expression of values are the kind and extent of community involvement. Without a community of people who hold the necessary knowledge, it is impossible to create an education that is truly rooted in the values of the people. To be "culturally based," an educational plan must be "community based" – it must be conceived of by the people who understand what it means to be of that community. Boyer (2006) discussed the necessity for Native communities to become partners in the reform of school systems that poorly serve Indigenous students, and to take a leadership role. This challenge has been taken up by many communities, including Iñupiaq and Diné. In Alaska, community members came together to develop an Iñupiaq curriculum that would serve as a framework for the public school district on the North Slope (Pederson, Harcharek, Okakok, Peetook, Aiken and Riley, et al., 2010) and the Navajo Nation has created an education code and Diné standards for both language and culture (Arviso, Welle, Todacheene, Chee, Hale-Schwalter, Waterhouse and John, 2012).

In Wisconsin, two schools in particular are based in the values of the Indigenous children they serve. These two schools, the Oneida Nation School in Oneida, and the Indian Community School in Milwaukee, both considered Indian controlled schools, are grounded in the values central to their cultural identities. For the Oneida Nation School, they elevate the importance of language, culture, the value of reason, relationship between a healthy body and mind, the concept of peace, the principle of righteousness, and the concept of power, and for the Indian Community School, the focus is on bravery, humility, love, loyalty, respect, truth, and wisdom (Tippeconnic and Fox, 2012). Rogers and Jaime (2010) conducted their work with community members and teachers of Native students to create a more cultural environment for the Indigenous children. The first goal of the Native community in the beginning of this project was to bring to the teachers an understating of the values held by the community. Throughout the research, the community guided the content, allowing the teachers to learn from them. Community members touched on topics of content, attitudes toward students, children's cultural pride, knowledge and self-identity.

In addition to the lessons taught within the academic setting, community-driven frameworks that are based in Tribal values are central to the development of educational programming for Native youth. A group of Diné educators designing a health curriculum for middle school students found a conversation about Diné conceptions of value to be helpful in their construction of a necessary lesson for students in their lives outside of their academic environment. The curriculum that resulted included within its framework Diné values of duality and respect. Also important in their process was the unique understating of their community, an understating that only the members themselves could

truly have. Participants in this project integrated traditional stories into the curriculum. In this same vein, a group of women scholars with ties to the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe reservation came together to strategize teaching Ojibwe language in urban areas (Hermes, Bang and Marin, 2012). The authors describe the use of their culturally based methodology as both accountable to and in service of the community (p. 384).

Mainstream educational institutions in the United States have been effective in their implementation of these practices for their European-descendant students. American schools are designed to accommodate the learning styles and the cultural knowledge and norms of their culturally American students. While this method has been largely successful for those children in those schools, it has not been successful for those who are not part of the whitestream culture. For these students, "culturally relevant" means something different than what is usually practiced in schools.

In a culturally based educational program, children's academic achievement as well as their self-concept will be improved when they are educated in an environment that reflects and values the cultural practices of their home environments (Hyland, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, Schmeichel, 2011). Currently, while schools may be culturally based for the mainstream students whose culture is reflected and supported in the school environment – upper middle class, white students – it is rarely the case for students from other backgrounds.

Limitations of the Literature

Examples of educational programs that were conceived and produced as a result of the work of Tribal community members are scarce. Few articles looked explicitly at

this facet of cultural education. In most cases, what I consider to be truly culturally based education is merely culturally responsive or culturally relevant under a different name. This gap in the literature indicates a lack of Native voice in the education of Native students in public schools. It would seem that the only real venue for true culturally based education in a formal setting is in Tribally controlled schools, whether they are Bureau of Indian Education schools, or privately run.

Extremely limited within the literature were examples of programs that dealt with education separate from the school setting. Cultural programming and other informal or enrichment activities were essentially non-existent in the literature reviewed for this research.

Complementary Types of Knowledge

An education that is culturally based includes not only cultural or traditional knowledge from the community that the educational program serves, but also mainstream and academic knowledge (Medicine, 2001). These two kinds of knowledge do not have to come at the expense of one another. To say that they are contradictory presents a false dichotomy between the sacrificing of Native identity and having only Native knowledge, a split of identity and cognition that is part of neocolonialism (Asher, 2009). The traditional knowledge represents that which the students must know to be successful members of the communities to which they belong. On the other hand, mainstream and academic knowledge are important to the students' understanding of the world outside their community and represents what they must know if they are to be successful in the world outside their home community. To create a holistic educational program for

Native children, scholars agree that a culturally based education must necessarily include the cultural knowledge of the children it serves, as well as western knowledge (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; Barnhardt and Kawagley, 1999; Brayboy, 2006; Medicine, 2001; Harrison and Papa, 2005). In fact, although it's often assumed that Indigenous knowledge and western knowledge cannot share the same space, Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) believe that in fact they can work together complementarily.

Some examples where teaching necessary knowledge has not dichotomized Indigenous identity and the ability to navigate whitestream knowledge include the following: (1) Harrison and Papa (2005) describe a learning environment at the New Zealand school Rakaumanga where Indigenous and western knowledges are so entangled that that are truly inseparable; (2) Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005, 1999) explain a method for teaching science to Alaska Native students in a way that focuses on the intersection between Indigenous and western knowledge. Teaching western science content in a culturally based learning environment can be effectively done by using the common ground between the two. Specifically, they point to the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI), which had as its goal, integrating local Indigenous knowledges of the many Tribal communities throughout Alaska into the many facets of the education system in the entire state. A large piece of this project focused on science curriculum where it was determined that the most appropriate method of teaching both Indigenous and western knowledge was to zero in on the areas of commonality between the two bodies of knowledge. Using these shared ideas as a starting point, curriculum was designed that was able to teach students content from both sides.

The two "sides" are represented by a common metaphor used by many Native people who describe their different cultural identities and the knowledges that go along with them. Henze and Vanett (1993) dissect this "walking in two worlds" metaphor and argue that the two worlds are so drastically different and far removed from each other that the metaphor is extremely insufficient. They believe that the negotiation between western and Indigenous ways is more like walking with one foot on either side of a river with turbulent water moving between. The divide is great and the balance is not easy. Finding a way to bring the two closer is a desirable but complicated task. These authors might argue that there is little common ground between the two sides and that therefore there are no points of commonality from which to teach.

Bryan Brayboy (2006) addressed this concept by dividing the knowledge that he believes children must acquire into not two types, but three: cultural knowledge, academic knowledge and knowledge of survival. Cultural knowledge and academic knowledge are complementary to one another, combining to create a knowledge of survival, an understanding of how to navigate as an Indigenous person in a largely whitestream society. In his discussion of culture, Brayboy likens culture to an anchor. He describes it as being tied to a group of people in a particular place, but like an anchor in the ocean, it shifts and changes in different contexts and situations, for different people, and for different reasons. I believe that this description of culture helps to support this notion of knowledge of survival. Because culture is not static, because it must be fluid in order to survive in changing times, academic knowledge or western knowledge is also necessary, and together, one begins to accumulate a knowledge of survival. In order to live in 2013, this knowledge of survival is what any person requires.

In order to live a healthy and successful life as a Wampanoag person, a knowledge of survival is important, made up of western academic knowledge and Wampanoag cultural knowledge.

Learning from Existing Programming and Previous Self-Determination Projects

Presently, because most Mashpee Wampanoag students who live in Mashpee attend the district's public schools, the effort to provide a holistic and Wampanoag-based education has been impossible. Efforts are made to provide cultural education outside of the school day at a culture class provided by Tribal members, and extra curricular activities are organized such as youth basketball tournaments, and cheerleading teams. Wampanoag Pride Day events, summer camps aimed at language and local environmental science take place in the summers and adult Tribal members make efforts to care for and mentor young people in whatever ways they can. While all of these examples are good on their own and provide positive and culturally appropriate ways for children to spend their time, they are short-term projects. Culture class happens once per week during the school year as instructors are available. Basketball tournaments and summer camps, although annual, run for a few weeks and then are finished for the year. There is no program that is provided by the Tribal community in a culturally appropriate way that is accessible and consistent. Also troubling is that each of these programs is provided by different entities within the Tribe with different agendas. The Tribal Natural Resources Department provides a summer camp to teach students about the environment of their homeland; the Language Project implements a summer camp to teach Wôpanâak

language; a group of basketball fans organize an all-Native tournament for young boys, etc.

These are all wonderful ideas and all provide something positive for Wampanoag children, but they all operate independently. They often do not communicate with each other when designing and implementing their programming. For example, last summer the science and language camps overlapped so that it was impossible to attend both. More importantly though, each of these programs is not coming from a common conception of what it means to properly educate our youth. Each program offers something from its own perspective using grant money that must be used for a particular purpose, or that targets a specific population of kids. No activity gives something to all children from a commonly agreed upon Wampanoag perspective. The project outlined here attempts to fill this gap.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In collaboration with the Mashpee Wampanoag community and the Tribe's Education Department, the Education Director and I conducted a series of focus groups that included community participants to address the two research questions: "what are the values that we as Mashpee Wampanoag people expect each other to uphold?" and "what knowledge is necessary to live as a healthy, successful Mashpee Wampanoag person in 2013?" Through methods drawing initially on participatory research, and resulting in an auto-ethnography of sorts, this community based project which relied on the sharing of stories and personal narratives. Focus group discussions were designed to explore the values and knowledge that make us a Tribal community in contemporary times. Guided by Bryan Brayboy's Tribal Critical Race Theory (2006) and Sandy Grande's theory of Red Pedagogy (2004), the goals of the focus groups were to define our collective expectations for our Tribal youth, and to strategize how we as a Tribal community can help them to meet those expectations. The specific course of action and final outcome were determined by the group members themselves and the analysis was made based on the way the community went about coming together and accomplishing their goals. Contrary to the usual research agenda where a researcher enters a community to conduct a study from the perspective of an outsider, this project was an effort of the community itself: community members were the primary designers of the project and they determined the course of action.

This methods chapter includes both how the project was framed and how it took shape, in terms of activities. Although briefly discussed in this chapter, participants will

be discussed more thoroughly in the findings chapter, as their specific knowledges were central to the values and priorities that were discussed. In fact, in keeping with community-based and participatory approaches to research, the results and findings are always inextricably bound up in who has been part of the work. In this chapter, though, an overview of the methodology (auto-ethnography and theory-making through story and practice) and the methods as they were used in the project are described.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this research comes from Lumbee scholar, Bryan Brayboy's Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (2006). This theory, which expands upon Critical Race Theory to specifically include American Indians, posits that "colonization is endemic to society" (p. 429). In all places and in aspects of life in the United States, we live within a society where the normal, common, standard of behavior is a European, white, Christian one. The culture of this country's colonizers permeates into the culture of all others. European, whitestream thought, knowledge and power structures infiltrate every aspect of modern society in the United States. It is the perspective of the elite class, the descendants of the colonizers, that is the standard (Grande, 2004). Other ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of doing are compared to those of the ones who hold power and are seen as less important and less relevant. Indigenous ways in particular are dismissed as outdated and as not being innovative enough for the world of today. They are considered "uncivilized." Lomawaima and McCarty (2002) say that the goal of "civilization" means the complete replacement of Native ways of being with European ways of being. This process of colonization has

been so successful that many Native people do not even recognize the ways that the whitestream has infiltrated every part of our lives. European-American thought, knowledge and power structures are dominant in American society and even today, the goal of American culture continues to be to "civilize" Native people so that they will be more like those who hold the power. This goal is talked about as closing the "achievement gap" when in fact the gap attempting to be closed is a cultural one. By whitening the Native students, they can be more successfully taught in the schools that are set up to support white students' knowledge and culture. Recognizing these ways in which we continue to be colonized in modern times must necessarily be the first step in deconstructing that colonization. Only from that point, can Native people impart to future generations the ways to challenge society's ideas about American Indian identity, behavior and knowledge, and truly strive to live as self-determined peoples.

While education provided by the state continues to assimilate Native students into the dominant culture by teaching a curriculum that values whitestream ideals, and guides students toward desiring the cultural goal of the American dream, Indigenous nations, Tribes and organizations have attempted to resist, creating their own schools for purposes of self-education and therefore self-determination, to create a new generation of Tribal children who are proud of their own cultural identity and knowledgeable about what makes it unique and distinct from the American norm. They are working toward a reclamation of their own knowledge, language, doings and identity in order that they may exercise their sovereignty and create a more positive future for their children and youth.

Tribal governments and families can build this future for their young ones by merging culture and education in a way that values both and allows each one to have a

prominent place in the daily life of their children. The reclamation of these cultural practices within a Wampanoag child's formal education will result in healthy and successful lives for future generations. Brayboy describes this education that Native people want for their children as combining different kinds of knowledge in a way that is rarely taught in mainstream schools. These include cultural knowledge: that of traditions, language and the stories and histories of their people; knowledge of survival: understanding how to live in today's society while maintaining a cultural, Tribal self-identity, and the ability to adapt and change based on the circumstances and time; and academic knowledge: the academic content that meets the state and nation's standards or the requirements for college entrance. Brayboy believes that these three kinds of knowledge do not have to be opposed to each other, but can coexist to allow students a more complete education that specifically meets their needs. Often Native students have what are usually considered competing identities as both Tribal citizens and American citizens. A curriculum that can combine these different types of knowledge will help to give value to all facets of Native children's identity.

Tribal Critical Race Theory

TribalCrit takes into account the nuanced epistemologies across time, place, Tribe and individual that are specific to different Native people. While myriad other Tribal communities have designed their own educational plans, no single example can be used as a model for Wampanoag students. The recognition of Native communities' differences across geographical location, language, religion, social structure, or any other defining characteristic sets this theory apart from others that make generic assumption

about the sameness of all Native communities. Any two Native populations will differ from one another with respect to place and traditions and values. Even though many Tribal communities have made their way, to varying degrees, through this process of self-determination in education, no process or program can be exactly copied in Mashpee. Thus it is important to gather the people of the community in order to ascertain the best practices for teaching our youth in order to co-create a vision and plan for the future that is decolonized. Allowing outsiders to do this work for us would allow the pattern of educational oppression, erasure of Indigeneity, and colonialism to continue. Regardless of what successes other Tribes have had taking on similar endeavors, their experience can only be taken so far in terms of its generalizability. Although it is important to begin by analyzing the methods others have used and seeing what can be modified to fit at home, further research must be undertaken to fully understand the best and most appropriate course of action for a particular community. Folks who know the youth and who have taken part in raising them and who have imparted to them their values and given them what knowledge they have already, will be the best suited to determine what the children need to know and what is the best way to teach it to them. These people will also most closely understand the context from which Mashpee Wampanoag children come, and will therefore be able to make the most informed decisions about the best course of action.

According to Tribal Critical Race Theory, theory is synonymous with personal narrative, lived experiences, and community story. It is important to point out the discrepancy in the way these terms are usually used in order to give value to knowledge. The words *story* and *narrative* do not carry weight in academia like the word *theory*, but they are in fact exactly that. Theory comes from the people's lived experiences; theory is

based on community stories and personal narratives. Brayboy describes theory as "not simply an abstract thought or idea that explains overarching structures of societies and communities; theories, through stories and other media, are roadmaps for our communities and reminders of our individual responsibilities to the survival of our communities" (p. 427). As it relates to the proposed research, understanding the history of the community and the personal accounts of community members as theories allow us to take their suggestions for Wampanoag education as the application of that theory into practice.

The final tenet of TribalCrit, and also deeply relevant to the research project described here, maintains that research conducted in Tribal communities must necessarily be driven by the needs and wants of the community itself, rather than a project put upon them by an outsider. This belief is echoed in Sandy Grande's theory of Red Pedagogy (2004), which asserts that a theoretical framework that is not grounded in Indigenous knowledge is insufficient for any Indigenous educational project. For a project to be conceived in an academic, university setting, without the deep involvement of the community makes it impossible to fully serve the goal of self-determination.

> Red pedagogy is based in hope that trusts the beliefs and understandings of our ancestors as well as the power of traditional knowledge. A Red pedagogy is, thus, as much about belief and acquiescence as it is about questioning and empowerment, about respecting the space of tradition as it intersects with the linear time frames of the (post)modern world. Most of all, it is a hope that believes in the strength and resiliency of indigenous peoples and communities, recognizing that their struggles are not about inclusion and enfranchisement to the 'new world order' but, rather, are a part of the indigenous project of sovereignty and indigenization. (Grande, 2004, p. 28-29)

Paulo Freire asserted as well, writing that "[o]ne cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the

world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding" (Freire, 2009, p. 95). In no other space than one that values and makes primary the culture and knowledge of a student can that child get the proper and liberating education that they deserve.

Freire (2009) talked about how that which is given by the oppressor for the supposed liberation of the oppressed can never really be liberating. This is also reflected in the critiques that Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012, 2014) have made about critical, anti-racist, and decolonizing rhetoric that problematically makes invisible Indigenous people and Indigenous worldviews. In order to truly educate our people in a way that will allow us to fully live and learn as we were intended to by our creator, we have to design and implement no less than the curriculum that we as the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends of the next generation deem most appropriate.

Teaching from our Own Knowledge

This project served to help address the problem described previously that no activities provided to Wampanoag children take a holistic approach to meeting their needs, nor are many programs community-driven. Coming together to offer each of these perspectives on Wampanoag ways to develop a framework for Wampanoag education benefits all of these programs as well as others that will be implemented in the future. If as a community we want future generations of children who are culturally knowledgeable and who are united as a Tribal community, it is important that we impart to them a consistent history, a consistent set of values, and a consistent set of expectations about how they are to conduct themselves as Wampanoag Tribal citizens.

The project described here allowed the community to set forth the values and plans as the result of a group effort. It was not determined by me alone as the "researcher" for this project, or by the Tribal Education Director or even the Education Committee. It was a group effort born inside the community with the voices of those who contributed represented. For my part, as a community member and as a doctoral candidate, I participated in these focus groups as a facilitator, and documented the process, both for future use by the Tribe, and for the purpose of my dissertation.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe received federal recognition in 2007. In these past seven years, the Tribal governing body has made progress toward self-governance. One of the ways in which the Tribal body expects to exercise its sovereignty is through self-education of Wampanoag children. Tippeconnic (1999) however, distinguishes between what has thus far been referred to as "Tribal control" and "Indian control." Tribal control, he says, is when "schools are sanctioned or chartered by tribal governments," (p. 30). Indian control on the other hand, occurs when "school curriculum reflects the culture, language, teachings and values of the tribe," (p. 30). It is this notion of Indian control that the Wampanoag community must begin to focus on. The aim of this project was to make progress in that direction.

Community-based Story

As Grande (2004) asserts, a project that is the sole creation of a university scholarly agenda cannot serve the goal of self-determination within the Tribal community. As discussed at length in the first chapter, formal education has been used for centuries to oppress Native peoples. Paulo Freire (2009) describes his pedagogy of

the oppressed as a pedagogy that is developed by those who are oppressed. He explains that any project that comes from the oppressor cannot be emancipatory. Therefore, in order for this project to serve the self-determination of Wampanoag people and to be emancipatory, it was important to use an approach that centered the lived expertise of participants and their priorities based on their personal experiences and worldviews (Wilson, 2008). Participatory approaches provided a starting point of the overall structure of the project, while the actual scope and reach of this project more closely aligned with auto-ethnography as community historical storywork (Archibald, 2008; Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011; Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang, 2010). Both of these approaches, as discussed in academic disciplines, matched the need to assure that the methods and results of this research were a direct reflection of the needs and wants of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

McTaggert (1989) describes sixteen tenets of participatory action research. PAR:

- Is an approach to improving social practice by changing it.
- Is contingent on authentic participation.
- Is collaborative.
- Establishes self-critical communities.
- Is a systematic learning process.
- Involves people in theorizing about their practices.
- Requires that people put their practices, ideas and assumptions about institutions to the test.
- Involves keeping records.
- Requires participants to objectify their own experiences.

- Is a political process.
- Involves making critical analyses.
- Starts small.
- Starts with small cycles.
- Starts with small groups.
- Allows and requires participants to build records.
- Allows and requires participants to give a reasoned justification of their social (educational) work to others.

Although the scope of the report of this project does not include an action component, four of McTaggert's tenets were particularly important to the process that this project hoped to engage in. They included authentic participation, collaboration, the developing self-critical communities, and involving people to theorize about their practice.

Authentic participation was a primary concern of this project. Without the inclusion of community members and their commitment to discussion, reflection, and planning for our children's education and its improvement through this process, the project would not have existed at all. Similarly, this project would not have existed without collaboration. All voices that came to the table had to be prepared to help each other to help our youth in a genuine and respectful way.

The establishment of self-critical communities and the involvement of people in theorizing about their practice were also closely linked in their application to this education project. When coming to the table to talk through the desired educational model for our youth, we all had to be candid about our strengths and our weaknesses, our past experiences, and the ways in which our actions speak for us in terms of how we

engage in educating our children. This was be a learning process for all of our participants, but nonetheless a key ability to hone if we were to determine the best course of action in educating Wampanoag children in the best and most culturally appropriate way. That being said, it required introspection about the ways we have been a part of our children's education so far: how we have supported them and how we have been complicit with the current system's goals. Doing this required all of the members of the group to theorize/build narratives together about how things have come to be the way they are, what educational, cultural and other social factors have contributed, and what educational, cultural and social factors will help to make change.

While the initial expectation for his project was that it would employ a participatory methodology, this introspection about our past experiences both individually and as a community led us to take on the unexpected process of creating an auto-ethnography. In reviewing the work undertaken by the focus group participants, along with the help of my dissertation committee members, we came to the conclusion together that what has happened as a result of the focus groups was not purely participatory action research, but rather an auto-ethnographical process that was inspired by participatory research and drew from the PAR tenets as previously described, in order to frame the process and act with our community in our minds as we discussed and planned.

The focus group meetings were generally conducted in accord with the structure of an auto-ethnography. Each participant contributed their stories whether from their own experience, or that of their families. As a group we came together to create a shared story of Wampanoag knowledge and experience. In doing this, each person engaged in

an analysis of their/our experience as it compared with other Tribal members, other Native people, and people of other backgrounds. We discussed our experiences as they relate to others' both presently and across time, and how they are influenced by colonial processes with or without our knowing. These kinds of analyses were especially prevalent in conversations about experiences and knowledge across generations and the ways children are raised now as compared to how children were raised in previous generations.

Auto-ethnography is defined as an approach that seeks to "describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011, p. 1). As such, it "challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others (Spry 2011 as quoted in Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011) and "treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011, p. 1), tenets that are in concert with a goal of this project to challenge dominant knowledge systems. Auto-ethnography is a common methodology for research conducted in Indigenous communities, in particular where people participate in focus group meetings to make meaning of their own lived experiences (Sykes, 2014; Guillory and Williams, 2014; Pierson, 2013). In cases where focus groups are used to discuss and analyze the experiences of a collective group, a community auto-ethnography takes shape. Different from a traditional auto-ethnography, which describes and analyzes the experience of an individual, community auto-ethnography takes the methodology and applies it to a group to make a collective meaning of all the lived experiences, taking into consideration variables such as time and place.

Auto-ethnography traditionally is defined as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe systematically analyze (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*)" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011). Thus the end result of this project is something of a hybrid. The methodology for this project drew from both of the tradition of auto-ethnography as well as participatory research. While the influences from participatory research were conscious, the resulting auto-ethnographical methods were incidental. However, both research methodologies are widely used across Indian country and in the case of this project, made for a richer and more effective outcome.

Longer than any social science tradition including both participatory research and auto-ethnography, though, is the tradition, particularly in Indigenous knowledge systems, of knowing one's own location to any desired path or outcome (Wilson, 2008). While the Wampanoag community has made significant strides in the community's goal of self-determination/identity through the language reclamation project (wlrp.org), the current outcome for the language project is not education as understood by a mainstream definition of pedagogy and curriculum to be carried out in schools. Community education through the Wampanoag language occurs in many settings, but not regularly in traditional school settings. The education of Wampanoag children youth, then, has yet to be infused with Wampanoag culture and knowledge, as determined by Wampanoag people themselves. This project was designed to set the stage for what can drive that form of self-determination in culturally responsive education. To do this we infused auto-ethnography methods into our original participatory research-inspired project. This project is both in keeping with, and an example of the 9th and final tenet of TribalCrit,

that Native knowledge and research is incomplete without action. "TribalCrit must be praxis as its best. Praxis involves researchers who utilize theory to make an active change in the situation and context being examined" (Brayboy, 2006, p. 440). As praxis that both honors stories and sees stories as theoretical connections to the past and present, this project uses the experiences and stories of its participants to decide on an appropriate path (direction) for the community's education. This tradition is found in many existing studies that have been published in academic circles, many of whom share some tenets with participatory approaches, value the narratives found in communities, and posit that all knowledge is a matter of perspective (Kawagley, 1990; Littlebear, 2000; Pederson, Harcharek, Okakok, Peetook, Aiken, and Riley, et al., 2010; Sykes, 2014).

When looking to Indian country for other research that has been aimed at self-determination in education, it's clear that culturally based work in educational settings is being done in many communities. In Alaska, math curriculum has been developed to reflect Yupik culture (Lipka, Sharp, Adams and Sharp, 2007; Kawagley, 1990), and a committee of community members came together on the north slope to determine an appropriate public school curriculum for the largely Iñupiaq student population there (Pederson, Harcharek, Okakok, Peetook, Aiken and Riley, et al., 2010). Examples of Tribal communities who are in control over the curriculum in their local schools and districts include their Native languages in the teaching of their students are present in the literature (Littlebear, 2000; Hermes, 2005; Holm, Silentman and Wallace, 2003, Fort Peck, 1998).

Of this small sample of culturally based education for Tribal children, only the Iñupiaq project speaks specifically to the process of coming together as a community for

the purpose of developing a self-determined, culturally based education for the children of the north slope of Alaska (Pederson, Harcharek, Okakok, Peetook, Aiken and Riley, et al., 2010).

Outside of this project, I've identified only one participatory project that focuses on developing a culturally based, self-determined education plan for the youth of a community. Mary Hermes, Megan Bang and Ananda Marin's (2012) work on Ojibwe language revitalization serves as an example of this. These women collaborated for the purpose of considering "the possibilities of language revitalization in urban Indian contexts where certain constraints (e.g., few fluent speakers, many languages, decentralized community), as well as potential assets (e.g., technological fluency and access), would necessarily alter current revitalization configurations and theory" (Hermes, Bang and Marin, 2012, p. 382). All other research reviewed here has examined programs after they have been implemented. Given the nature of decision-making in many Native communities, I think that it is quite likely that many of the pedagogies and strategies outlined in these articles were developed using partiicpatory or community-based practices. I believe that the practices that are touted as successful and culturally appropriate are that way because they are the result of a process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (McTaggert, 1989) that makes them effective both in formal and informal environments where children learn.

Outside of the Iñupiaq work, which inspired this Wampanoag project, this research adds something new to the field. Despite the places where the projects are alike, they also differ in purpose, and in method. Regardless, as Cheryl Crazy Bull puts it, "…I

like to use the term "cutting-edge" because it serves as a reminder that we are each doing new and unique work that cannot readily be duplicated" (Crazy Bull, 2012, p. 1).

Role of the Researcher at the Onset

As a Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal member, a parent, a member of the Tribe's education committee, teacher and student of Wôpanâôt8âôk (Wampanoag language), Curriculum Specialist for the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, and finally, as a doctoral student and researcher, I looked at this issue through several lenses. Foremost, however, I am a Tribal member, wanting the best possible life for the future of my Tribe and family. As such, I know that I am not alone in that. Other people who have not been as actively involved in the process want the same thing. We all want to see Wampanoag youth fully realize their purpose in the Tribe and in world (Tirado, 2001). What I also understand is that we have the ability, as a community, to determine together what our desired outcomes are for our kids, and what it will take to shape that outcome. As a person who found herself not only with hands in the various entities attempting to restructure Wampanoag education, but also as an insider in the Tribal community as well as the academy, I was uniquely positioned to initiate this work. I also felt a strong sense of responsibility (Hermes, 1998) to do so. That responsibility is similar to what Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson discusses as relational validity (2008).

Relational Validity

In the project and this dissertation, while transparency of reporting the path to findings is important, equally important, if not more, is the concept of relational validity.

Generally, validity is understood to be the extent to which research is well founded in data and relates to peoples' experiences. Data, particularly in qualitative research, has become all but synonymous with words, more specifically, written words on transcripts (St. Pierre, 2009). Traditionally, this transcribed data is parsed and understood as parts; however, this presents a conflict with Indigenous knowledge systems that prioritizes relationship in understanding holistically. Shawn Wilson writes,

> The idea of linear logic in dominant system research is helpful in most of the sciences. By using this way of thinking to gather research data, the researcher looks at the topic by looking at smaller more manageable portions. Each piece of a topic is examined in minute detail. The researcher then attempts to put it all back together in a logical order, you know, hoping to discover any rules or laws that may be applied to the whole. The process must be very systematic in order for accurate results to be obtained.
>
> So analysis from a western perspective breaks everything down to look at it. So you're breaking it down into its smallest pieces and then looking at those small pieces. And if we are saying that indigenous methodology includes all of these relationships, if you're breaking things down into their smallest pieces, you are destroying all of the relationships around it. So an indigenous style of analysis has to look at all those relations as a whole instead of breaking it down, cause it just won't work (p. 119)

Maintaining integrity to the whole means grounding the project and work in relationships, so that validity in this project and other community-based work in Indigenous communities values relational validity. Relational validity is defined through the ways that the researcher is uniquely positioned and positions herself to build stronger relationships with those most affected by research (Wilson, 2008). Relationship to self, others, and the land is paramount in Indigenous knowledge systems, often relying on intuitive sense of what is healthy and right for all dynamic aspects.

Despite these various associations and positions that I held, I was in most ways no more qualified than any other Tribal member to design an educational vision for our

youth. Those who were needed to take part in this process are the people raising children who have watched them struggle or excel in school and have helped them get through it. This work required the Tribal elders who have traditional knowledge and who continue to practice the old ways, and who remember a time when education in Mashpee was provided by Wampanoag teachers in the one-room schoolhouse, and when the community was involved in their schooling and the value that it had for the students. It required the ideas and stories of the current and recent students who are closest to the system as it currently operates, and who know most intimately what it is like to be a product of the typical 2013 education. It required the Tribal Council administration to hear the people's voices and implement their ideas. It is for this reason that a community-based project was most appropriate, because despite the fact that this was my PhD and my dissertation, these are all of our children and I had no right to decide by myself what is best for us all as a Tribe, a family and a community.

This is why I chose a community-based history approach for this research. (In many ways, there could be no other way to do it; in many ways it was that only 'choice') As this was a dissertation project, however, it was difficult to negotiate between allowing the community to decide the path and the outcome, and having something to propose and defend to a committee, a process of formal schooling that is colonial in legacy rather than Indigenous. This negotiation brought me to the conclusion that while I would propose questions to get us started, the direction that the project took would be the will of the entire group. Determinations such as these were how I navigated what Joanne Archibald (2008) discusses as both having to and being able to look through the slightly mismatched eyes of being university-educated and being a Native person.

What would make up much of my results and analysis was the way in which the group comes together to work through this process. Rather than deciding the course of action, I paid attention to what the participants viewed as important and what information and stories they shared, and how they used them to reach the outcome that they desired. This analysis is a central purpose of this dissertation. However, as this was a community-based project and involved active participation from community members, what was done with the results were up to the group. What course they chose to take, whether it be to take action on their ideas and implement an educational program, or to publish based on their experience with this project, or any other course, was and remains up to them. For my part, the goal of this dissertation was to allow other Tribal communities engaged in similar work, a look at what we are doing so that they might gain some insight into other projects and conduct their work accordingly, whether they choose to use our project as a model for good practice, or as an example of what not to do. To accomplish this as part of my dissertation, I saw my role as a sort of a medium between Wampanoag and other Tribal communities to whom I am responsible, and the academy to whom I am submitting a piece of research.

Because I am a Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal member, throughout this dissertation I used the first person as opposed to the third person in discussing Tribal things. I used phrases like "as *we* determine *our* children's education" not only because two of the children are mine, or because it is my Tribe that was the focus for the research, but because this is a collaborative and cooperative process in which I am a participant and co-researcher. Sometimes, however, when the analysis is mine alone, I use "I" and

"him," "her" or "them" when discussing what I observe, hear or think about what happens during the study.

As a member of this community I have personal relationships with many of the potential participants, and so I have access to information and background knowledge that an outside researcher would not have, making my analysis more informed. This same benefit, however, had the potential to work against me in that the exact nature of my role in the eyes of the other study participants may be blurry. A challenge of this Tribal Member and researcher position is the insecurity felt when taking on the researcher role in a community setting. Although I have known most, if not all of the participants all or most of my life, I know them in the familiar, casual setting of our home. I was unsure how I would be viewed in this setting as a person there in part because of my advanced formal education, the level of which exceeded that of any other person in the group. I was concerned that in this focus group environment, the same distrust of the educational system that some of my participants feel, would be transferred to me as a representation of that institution. As described by Smith (1999), I feared that this setting would highlight a divide that I sometimes feel (although possibly of my own imagination) exists between some community members and myself. Thus finding the balance between being a relative or friend and a doctoral student produced some anxiety for me, a theme I return to in the findings. In thinking about how these focus groups should be conducted and what my role ought to be during the sessions, I attempted to create a casual and familiar approach that I thought would be more appropriate. The degree to which I included my perspective in the focus group conversations depended on

the level of comfort of the other participants and the level of need to keep the conversation moving.

Participants

Because this work was intended to benefit the future generations of Mashpee Wampanoag children, the participants in this work necessarily were members of the Mashpee Wampanoag community. This did not mean, however, that the participants necessarily needed to be Tribal members. The Mashpee Wampanoag community includes those beyond just the individuals who do have Mashpee Wampanoag blood, or who have been adopted into Mashpee Wampanoag families. Community members are those who have invested in the Tribe and who share the common goal of raising and educating future generations of healthy, successful, self-determined youth. In addition to those who have Mashpee Wampanoag ancestry, community members also include spouses, parents, siblings and friends of Tribal members. In line with the community research guidelines for participation that Smith (1999) describes, this community research project adopted a broader definition of community that allows the community itself to define who belongs and who does not without limiting the definition to that of Tribal membership or town citizenship or another outside determination.

While the project described here was open to any Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal member and to community members, to say that all members of the Tribe and community are equally qualified to make decisions about the educational future of our youth would be untrue. There are many Mashpee Wampanoag people who, although enrolled with the Tribe, are not knowledgeable about our traditions, or who do not live nearby, or who do

not have a close relationship to our home and our people for any number if reasons. These people, although not likely to participate because of lack of interest, would not have been our ideal group member even if they did express interest. On the other hand, there are community members who may not be Wampanoag by blood, who have lived with us, who have come to care about our community and our Tribe and who have over time become a part of us. By marriage, or raising children, or growing up with Tribal families, there are some non-Mashpee Wampanoag people to whom the fight for a quality and appropriate education is equally as important. These people were as welcome to be a part of our project as any Tribal member would be. Precedent for this practice of non-members being included in the leadership of Tribal affairs has been established by a number of committees sanctioned by the Tribal government. Many social services are guided by committees composed of the Wampanoag community at large. The language project is also an example of this (wlrp.org). Wôpanâak language classes are open to members of Wampanoag households. The reason behind this is that they are a part of our community and the future of our language and its maintenance and continued strength depends on the support of our entire community. If a single person attends classes and tries to learn, they will only be able to get so far if there is no one to practice with and speak to when they go home. This research project operated with a similar understanding. If we are to create an educational vision for our youth, then the whole community must be on board, understanding our ideas and plans, and prepared to help support and maintain them for everyone's betterment. Therefore, it is not only blood that qualified a person to participate in our project, but a true respect for and knowledge of our ways that has been demonstrated over time that made a person a helpful contributor

to this project. Because there was little personal incentive to participate in this project, it was believed that those who showed interest would most likely fit this description.

Demographics of the Focus Groups

In addition the Education Department Director, Lucille, and myself, this project also recruited and included community members, all of whom were encouraged to be present for all or most of the group meetings. The recruited group was comprised of people who were chosen using a purposive sample in order to include a variety of perspectives from within the community.

Within the intended group of ten, four slots were held for elders and two were held for youth under the age of twenty-five. This was to ensure that we had a strong presence within the group of people who are extremely knowledgeable about Wampanoag ways and who have experienced a variety of educational models in their lifetime, both personally and second-hand. It was also meant to ensure that those who best understand the educational system the way it currently operates because of their recent graduations were represented as well.

Among these and other spaces in the group, we hoped that at least four people in the overall group of participants would be men. Often, men are underrepresented in the Tribe's educational efforts. The Education Committee is made up of nine participants, including Lucille and the Tribal Council Liaison, but only two are men. One of these men continues to show up to support our youth in many ways. However, it's a rare occasion that other Tribal men are a part of the effort to improve Tribal kids' education. In contrast to the seven women who sit on the committee, there is a small portion of men

who frequently are at the table to work on education projects. It was important that we had a more mixed representation working on this project because traditionally, there is different knowledge that is important to men and boys than the knowledge that is important to women and girls. In order to provide a comprehensive picture of the education that we want for our Tribal youth, we needed to have a full representation of the knowledge we wanted to impart in this process. Therefore, more than the usual male participants was key to this project. In the event that we did not fill all of the spaces for the focus groups, it was important to us that at minimum, no less than one third of the total people involved, including Lucille and myself, were men.

Other spaces were to be filled with anyone who was interested on a first come first serve basis, provided that those who participate were representative of many Mashpee families. This was meant to ensure that knowledge was well distributed and well represented. Within the Mashpee community, different families are known for expertise in different realms of Wampanoag life, and so we considered that a mixture of these families was important. The Education Director and I brainstormed people who we thought would offer a unique or otherwise unrepresented perspective. If, in the end, we were in need of participants, we planned to solicit individuals for their participation. These individuals were to be chosen based on where we saw gaps in the group. When certain ages, genders or families were underrepresented, we attempted to bring the number of participants up to ten by inviting people to participate who would round out the group in the ways previously described.

Participants could be from anywhere provided they fit the previously defined criteria of being a Mashpee Wampanoag community member. However, the likelihood

of participants coming from far away was slim, in part due to traveling so frequently to attend meetings, but also, we expected, due to interest. Most Mashpee Tribal community members who share the same struggles and hopes for the education of our Tribal kids were likely to be those who lived within a relatively short distance of Mashpee. Those who grew up in Mashpee and experienced personally, or second-hand, the consequences of the education system from the perspective of an ethnically and culturally Mashpee Wampanoag person, were likely to be most interested in this project. Those who lived farther, although they may have experienced their own educational challenges, were less likely to have a deep understanding of the collective experience of those who have remained geographically close in the past thirty or forty years. People who are geographically connected were also more likely to understand the specific challenges faced by Mashpee kids living in and around Mashpee, and therefore the project would be able to keep a more narrow focus without being distracted by outliers and examples of experiences that range outside that which is shared.

In cases where people were interested in joining this project and lived far away, we planned to make our best effort to allow everyone to be involved, giving financial help where necessary. For example, if students were away at college and wanted to come home to attend the focus groups, we would do our best to provide those participants with bus fare or gas money if we could make it available.

The interest of Tribal members who do not live within a close proximity of Mashpee, however, was not expected. College students living away from home temporarily were likely participants, but other non-local people were not expected to show much interest. While nearly all Tribal members have a keen understanding of the

effects of the historical trauma handed down by those who experienced the colonial and boarding school-era educational policies, only those who have remained in our ancestral land have personally felt the effects of race relations in the town of Mashpee since the 1970s.

Mashpee Wampanoag Land Suit

In 1976, the Mashpee Wampanoag entered federal court in Boston to fight for the return of our land that was illegally taken under the Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts of 1790 and 1834, which prohibited the purchase of Indian land without the permission of the federal government. This trial, which eventually resulted in a verdict that said the land would not be returned to the people because the Mashpee people no longer constituted a Tribe, created a rift between the Mashpee Wampanoag people and many who had recently come to the area, purchasing land and building large homes that they considered to be legally theirs having invested their money into them (Campisi, 1993). As newcomers began to develop the area in and around Mashpee, we attempted to stop it and, hopefully, to reverse it.

When the trial was over, the relations between the town of Mashpee's Tribal and non-Tribal citizens remained hostile. Public statements documenting this hostility were published in newspapers and books. One non-Tribal town citizen said, "I won't lie to you, it's [animosity] there, the two most important things to a person are his family and his home. You threaten either one, and you're going to get a very angry person" (Campisi, 1993, p. 152, quoting an interview with Kevin O'Connell in the Boston Globe, January 7, 1978).

After the Tribe lost, the Mashpee Wampanoag filed for federal recognition. After thirty-two years of research, paperwork and lobbying to the federal government, as well as maneuvering around efforts from the town and private citizens to thwart our progress and sabotage our petition, we proved that we have culturally, politically, geographically and linguistically remained who we have always been, and we were granted a positive finding in 2007. During the petition process and in the seven years since this decision, although the overt intensity of the racial strains has waned some, there has nevertheless remained tension between the two parties which manifests itself in clear ways at town meetings and in neighborhoods and the schools, in addition to the unspoken negative feelings that Tribal citizens and other Mashpee residents still hold toward each other. Non-Tribal Mashpee residents remain on edge, nervous that they could lose the property that they consider to be theirs. Tribal citizens resent being displaced from the land that belonged to our families and not having access to our homeland, which was taken from us in the first place.

Just as feelings toward the government-imposed educational systems have left a sour taste in the mouths of Indigenous people that they have handed down to their children and grandchildren, so have the children and grandchildren of those involved in the land suit trial of the 1970s and the federal recognition process been passed down the ill feelings toward those with whom they share the stolen town. Such feelings find their way into the schools, through the teachers and administrators and the students alike. They contribute as one of the many factors that make Mashpee Wampanoag students' collective educational experience a negative one. In and around Mashpee, this is the experience that the Tribal community brings with them to the table to talk about

education. Their schooling in Mashpee has been one with people who believe their lives and the lives of their friends and neighbors would be easier if they did not exist. And despite this, Wampanoag children and their families are expected to move through the school system without resistance, graduate, and become someone else's problem. Instead, our students are resisting and dream of a way to graduate with a solid academic foundation for their futures as well as a wealth of Wampanoag knowledge, and their cultural pride and self-esteem in tact.

This historical context has led to a difference in the Mashpee Tribal members who were raised and live far from our homeland, and those who have grown up and remain there. The Mashpee Wampanoag land suit created a context that has shaped the lives of those who have been most closely affected by it in terms of personal interactions with others in and around their town. Because it has affected Mashpee citizens on both sides of the case, the repercussions have made their way into the school system thereby affecting the education that children receive in Mashpee. Community members who do not live in or around Mashpee cannot relate to that reality.

Method

The community member participants co-developed a guide in the form of a compilation of shared values and necessary knowledges for the education of Wampanoag students both in and out of the school system through a series of focus groups that made up the research process and content. The shape that this guide took was one the group determined themselves. While there was no specific expected result, the meetings yielded a set of shared values and necessary skills that could inform future programming

for Mashpee Wampanoag youth, whether in the existing school systems or extracurricular activities, or for use in the design of new programs. The course that the group took was for them to decide and so was not predetermined or predicted before they came together. These groups were held to provide a forum for the process of giving voice to the Tribal community members and to ensure that the community members' vision for their children was understood and transferred into some sort of action plan for students' health and success.

In order to advertise the project, an initial announcement went out in the April issue of the Nashauonk Mittark, the monthly newspaper for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. The Mittark is a widespread means of communicating with the Tribal body because it is sent out through the mail, as well as electronically. This announcement briefly described the project, gave a tentative schedule, and alerted people to be on the lookout for more information forthcoming. It also gave phone numbers and email addresses for the Education Director and myself incase people had questions, as well as office locations where either of us might be found to meet in person. These three different avenues for communication were important because not everyone has access to all kinds of communication tools. For example, to include only email would eliminate the possibility of most elders contacting us for information. (See Appendix A for a copy of the submission for the April issue of the Mittark.)

A second announcement was planned for the May issue of the Mittark. However, having received no calls of interest based on the first announcement, we decided to proceed sooner than expected with the purposive sampling.

At this point, Lucille, the Tribe's Education Director moved into a leadership role in this project. Her commitment was clear in the beginning stages of this research project in conceptualizing its purpose and design. Lucille is a member of the Assonet Band of Wampanoag and is married to a Mashpee Wampanoag man and has Mashpee Wampanoag children. She lives in Mashpee with her husband, two of her four children and her two grand children. She has been in the position of Education Director since it was created in 2011 and since has implemented a number of programs for Tribal youth including a Native Tribal Scholars program for high school students, a summer environmental science camp for middle school students, a scholarship fund and other financial assistance programs to support higher education, and a graduation celebration for high school, college, and graduate school graduates, to name a few. In order to improve the services that are currently provided and to continue to create new services, Lucille enthusiastically became involved with this project. For her, the benefit to the Tribe came from the Education Department having access to the opinions of Tribal members beyond the reach of the Education Committee, which has not changed much in its membership in many years.

As the group of committed participants trickled in, Lucille and I brainstormed a list of twenty community members who represented the demographics we were looking for and Lucille began to call them to invite them to an information meeting where they could hear about the project and enjoy a good dinner with friends and family. She also mentioned that they should bring with them any community member who they thought might also be interested who was not called by us.

Based on the attendance of the first meeting, a second meeting was scheduled for the following week to allow those who expressed interest but were not available on the first scheduled day, a second chance to attend.

These two meetings went over the same information. We discussed how the project came to be designed and the dissertation requirements, as well as the role of the community and how they were able to shape it into what they felt was necessary for the sake of Wampanoag children. We also discussed the time commitment of eight 2-hour meetings and two 4-hour meetings and gave tentative dates and times for the meetings. It was also mentioned that there would be a small monetary stipend that at that time, had not been determined. At that point the Education Department was still sorting out their budget for the fiscal year.

Once we received verbal commitments from people, we notified them all of the confirmed dates, times and location, and thanked them for their commitment to the project. They were also made aware of the other participants. They were also asked to bring to our first meeting a tangible representation of what it means to be a Mashpee Wampanoag person, or the spouse, parent, friend, relative, etc. of a Mashpee person. This item could be a photo, a piece of the environment such as sand, leaves or water from the ocean or ponds. It could also have been a story of some kind: a creation story about how we, or the environment came to be, or a memory. It could have been a food item, a piece of clothing or a tool, or any other item that symbolized for them, a connection to their Mashpeeness.

The group meetings took place over a four-month period, approximately every two weeks. Eight of them were held on a Monday evenings for two hours, and two of

them were held on Saturdays, 4 hours each. At the end of each meeting, the date and time for each meeting was confirmed and on the day before each meeting, the Education Department Administrative Assistant sent an email or text message to each of the participants to remind them of the meeting on the following days. Throughout the first weeks of the group meetings, Lucille and I continued to brainstorm additional group members, as participation ended up being lower than we had anticipated as a result of the information meetings.

Once group meetings began, all prepared activities were presented to the group as guidelines and they were able to make alterations to any activity, or to eliminate or replace it completely if they chose to. All activities only took place with the consent and willing participation of the members of the group, and so whatever activity was proposed, we went forward with our project with the understanding that at any point, plans could change and we might choose to take a different course of action related to the topic of self-determined education for our Mashpee Wampanoag youth. Only one preplanned activity, a discussion of group expectations was modified from its original design. This will be discussed further later on.

When the two research questions had begun to be addressed they served to provide a framework from which we moved forward to strategize how, as a community, we could go about identifying and then realizing our goals for our Tribal children. Given the participatory nature of these focus groups, the earlier meetings determined the content and direction of the subsequent focus groups. However, the general theme of the following meetings used the values we identified, and addressed the broad question of how we could strategize to reach the goals we have for our youth. This goal was

purposefully broad, allowing the group to manipulate the meaning and make it into a guiding question that they felt fit their needs. The final result of the meetings was determined by the group. The results they produced were of their own making. How they chose to share them with the community was up to all of them.

The overall agenda for the six weeks was tentatively laid out as follows:

- Preparation activity: Bring to the first meeting a tangible representation of what it means to be Mashpee Wampanoag community member (Tribal member, family member, friend, etc.)
- Activity 1: Introductions – names, contribution to the group, personal educational experiences
- Activity 2: Your representation of Mashpee – describe a tangible item that you think represents our community in some way
- Activity 3: Set group expectations – as a group decide on rules and expectations for conduct in the group
- Activity 4: Address the question "What are the values that we as Wampanoag people expect each other to uphold?"
- Activity 5: Use the answer to the previous question to answer a second question: "What knowledge is necessary to live as a healthy and successful Wampanoag person in 2013?"
- Activity 6: Determine a course of action. Using the completed work (whether a result of the outlined guide or not), decide how to proceed and work toward that end.

In the event that the group became stuck and unable to progress at any point in the process, Lucille and I were prepared to provide them with one or more prompts in order to move forward. Some of these prompts were in the form of questions designed to inspire the group members to think about where and how they would like to see improvement or change in their children's education. (See Appendix B for question prompts.)

Our methods did not include individual interviews, as the intention of this project was to focus on a collective meaning making by all the participants, rather than to focus on the separate desires of individual people. Each focus group was audio recorded to capture this collaborative process.

Following each meeting, Lucille and I separately listened to the conversation from the audio recording and reviewed our own notes and summarized the themes discussed at each session. Within a week, Lucille and I met sometimes briefly, sometimes at length, to discuss the previous meeting. The length varied depending on our schedules and other commitments. During these meetings, she and I shared what we felt were the key points made during the group meeting. Upon sharing our ideas based on the recording and our notes, we made a more inclusive list. We discussed some of the common themes that arose in the previous meeting, and/or some of the longer conversations and decide if they were something we needed to revisit. For example, we decided to talk about values in more than one focus group meeting because there weren't as many people in the first meeting when values were discussed and the identification of Mashpee Wampanoag values was central to the project. At the following meeting, there were two additional people, so we felt that this was a better discussion, informed by more people.

We tended to have common agreement on what was said during the meetings, and from that base, we developed four criteria to determine which themes should be included in the takeaways for education priorities and values: those that were the lengthiest, the conversations that had contributions from the most participants, those that had the most resonance with the group, and those that were a priority to Lucille in her role as Tribal Education Director. In some instances, a topic that came up briefly but was not discussed at length still was important for inclusion, based on Lucille's discernment and her own experiences in the community. For example, financial planning was mentioned by Brad but was not discussed at length. From Lucille's perspective, in deciding upon future direction and actions to take, this was a priority for her.

At the beginning of the following meeting, we reviewed our summaries, both to allow participants a chance to edit our notes and clarify their meaning if we were inaccurate. It also gave them a chance to think back to the previous group meeting and refresh their memories in order to move forward.

In doing this collaborative work, the community was able to help further the goals of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's Education Department to improve the educational future for Tribal youth. For the purposes of this study, attention was paid to how the focus group participants negotiate this process and use their own knowledge and experiences to develop goals and strategies for the benefit of future generations of Tribal members. This part of the analysis was based on the content of the focus group meetings as well as my observations of the groups and the discussions in the meetings between the Education Director and myself. Also incorporated into the analysis was the background

information that I already have about the community and the context from which the participants entered this discussion to the extent that I knew it.

Analysis of the focus group data was made based on the following points: how the community responded to the proposed research questions and whether they chose to answer them as they were asked, or to modify, change, or eliminate them all together; the way they interacted with the "research" process and their willingness to work with the institutionalized university expectations and requirements; how they tackled the issues of prioritizing goals; how they negotiated participants' inevitably varied perspectives; and, how they integrated the state's educational standards into the Tribal communities educational goals for the children. Each of these points was helpful to future work of Tribal people in their work of self-determination.

Similar to the challenge of integrating traditional knowledge, academic knowledge, and knowledge of survival with Wampanoag educational goals, was the challenge of accomplishing what is necessary for the writing of this dissertation. Not only the question of what educational qualities are important to the community for the futures of their children, but what is required of this academic exercise is also helpful to readers engaged in a similar process of conducting and participating in community driven research that aims to be decolonizing and liberating for the researchers.

The process of auto-ethnography with influences from participatory research to guide a dissertation or any research is also a topic of analysis of the dissertation itself. This part of the analysis is based on my role as a participant, community member and researcher, a role that situated me as both insider and outsider in the Wampanoag community (Smith, 1999).

CHAPTER 4

Results and Analysis

In this chapter, I will address the content of the focus groups. The process as it unfolded will be described, participants will be discussed in greater detail, and their responses to the two research questions – "What are the values that we as Mashpee Wampanoag people expect each other to uphold?" and "What knowledge is necessary to live as a healthy, successful Mashpee Wampanoag person in 2013?" – will be outlined and analyzed. Throughout the discussion of themes and topics, such as relationship to land, topics will appear more than once, as they illuminated the values and priorities in many ways. To tell the story of the focus groups, then, means holding in place the integrity of the whole conversation. To lead into the content, I first discuss the process that was used to debrief focus group sessions.

This findings chapter largely presents, with some readings and interpretation based on CBE and TribalCrit, the content of these distillations with Lucille. Interpretations of the participants' stories were read alongside the stories presented about knowledge through CBE and TribalCrit. Rather than traditional forms of scientifically based data, the data and the analysis here honors the 8th tenet of TribalCrit, which "honors stories and oral knowledge as real and legitimate forms of data and ways of being. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory" (Brayboy, 2006, p. 439). In what follows, this project underscored this tenet that theories are both stories and practices of how people live.

Participants

As a result of the Mittark announcements and the personal phone calls from Lucille to potential participants, six people attended the initial informational meeting, including Lucille and myself. The four other people included two men, one in his mid-forties and another in his mid-twenties, and two women, one in her late fifties and one in her early sixties. This was a somewhat disappointing result compared to the nine people who had verbally committed to attending the meeting but understandable considering the demands on their time.

Considering the difficulty in recruiting ten participants with our first meeting, we decided to hold another informational meeting for those who were unable to attend the first session and Lucille made more calls encouraging people to come, offering food. Two weeks later at the following meeting, both of the men attended again, and as well as two other women, both thirty-two years old. Still, the two women from the previous meeting and three other people who had said they would come, did not.

However, all six of the people who attended one or more of the informational meetings were excited and inspired by the project and committed to attending bi-monthly meetings to talk and strategize for Wampanoag children's education. Two other people who did not attend any meetings also committed to participating once we began. These included a woman in her fifties and a woman in her seventies.

Once the actual focus group meetings began, over ten meetings, four people attended, plus Lucille and me. These people included Steve (45), Allison (32), Elaine (early 60s) and Brad, (18). While Lucille and I both attended all ten group meetings, Steve attended nine, Allison attended eight, Brad attended five (he was one of Lucille's

later recruits and so he missed the first two meetings. He also had some health complications toward the end that landed him in the hospital for some time.), and Elaine attended one.

The participation was in the end, smaller than we initially envisioned. We simply did not have as many people as Lucille and I had hoped to have. This, like all research however, is partial and incomplete and the discussion of value and priorities of knowledge will continue as we work toward establishing a self-determined educational vision and strategy both with these same participants and with others as we move forward with the goal of improving our children's education. Context and participants will change and what once was relevant will become outdated, making way for new voices with different experiences to share their insights.

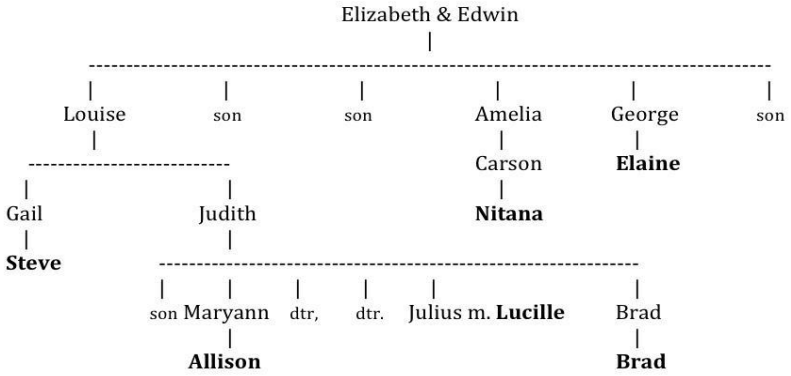
As focus groups began, those who committed early on remained in the loop promising to make the next meeting for several weeks until we eventually came to the conclusion that they were unlikely to participate then and so we stopped asking. Others gave initial reasons for not being able to attend such as other commitments on the same nights, too many commitments in the evenings, childcare issues, or the difficulty of making a commitment to a meeting during the summertime. The lack of participation did not seem to be from lack of interest or belief in our purpose, but the inability to make a personal commitment to be a part of the work at that time. Capitalist commodification of time disallowed people from investing it in this way (Marx, Engels, Harvey and Moore, 2008). Throughout subsequent discussions about Wampanoag values during group meetings, we talked at length about the idea that spending time together is important and as community members, we must make sure to carve out time to do that. While we did

all believe in the project's importance, in this particular instance I think that other responsibilities got in the way of making time. Making a commitment to the project was simply not something that many people felt they could give right then for whatever their reason. This challenge will likely be something that continues as future development of Tribally-informed culturally based education is designed and brought about in Mashpee.

Including Lucille and myself, the six community members who were a part of the process were fairly well distributed by age (18, 32, 32, 45, early 50s and early 60s). The gender distribution was close to our initial expectation of 40% men. The variation among Wampanoag families presented depth in some areas discussed, and absences of knowledge in other areas, which become more apparent as participants shared values from their overlapping life experiences. Although it is true that all Mashpee Wampanoag people are in fact related by blood, there are still distinct families within the Tribe who represent different clans and who are well-known for certain skills or interests. For example, certain families, as previously mentioned, are more politically involved, others are known for their artistic ability, others for their knowledge of ceremony, others for their knowledge of the land, etc. The participants of this group however, all come from the same family and all share a common set of grandparents as shown in Figure 4.1. In the next section, I describe the network of relationships and how those shaped the experiences and worldviews that were voiced in the focus groups.

Cain Experiences and Worldviews: Land, Food, and Relations

Figure 4.1



The late Elizabeth and Edwin Cain had six children: two daughters and four sons. Of these children, their two daughters were Louise and Amelia and one of their sons (still living) is George. Louise had many children, and among them were Gail, who passed away several years ago, and Judith. Gail's son is Steve. Judith has three sons and three daughters. Her oldest daughter, Maryann, is the mother of Allison. Her middle son, Julius, is married to Lucille, and her youngest son, Brad Sr. is the father of Brad, Jr. Amelia had 2 daughters and five sons. Her middle son is Carson, my father. And finally, one of George's five children is Elaine.

While the group of six individuals were different in many ways due to their gender and age variation, the perspectives they offered were in many ways quite similar because of their common family ties and the common upbringing and worldviews that these family members shared (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). These worldviews were voiced by people in the room, which often echoed the voices of past generations and

other family members. For example, Judith is a very outspoken woman who has regularly been involved in the raising of her children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren. She is a forceful woman who has undoubtedly made her mark not only in her family, but also in the entire community. Traces of her voice are ever present in both Allison and Brad, as well as her daughter-in-law Lucille in terms of how they make themselves heard and understood when they have something important to say. Her voice came through them during our focus group meetings and it was clear that she had had a hand in raising all the three of them to some degree. Allison began statements more than once with "As Gram would say…" and Lucille, at different points even called both her and Brad "little [Judith]." Throughout conversations and input from people present bodily and through memory, common values emerged quickly and clearly.

A common family trait that goes back generations to Elizabeth and Edwin, is a family tradition of catching and preparing one's own food. Many Cain family members are known for their skillful hunting, fishing, gardening and cooking. Edwin knew his homeland intimately and as a result was a talented hunter and fisherman. He gave fishing tours for years to Cape Cod tourists and many photographs depict him with his catch. Elizabeth was a noted cook and passed this skill on to all of her children who further passed it on as well. Their youngest son, Stuart, owned a popular restaurant, which employed many family members during its more than thirty-years next to Mashpee Pond. Louise was the dessert chef there for many years until she eventually passed the job to her oldest daughter who took over until the restaurant closed nearly a decade ago. Another of Louise' daughters had a number of children, many of whom had chef responsibilities over time there, as head chefs, sous chefs, fry cooks, and prep cooks.

Stuart published a cookbook including many restaurant favorites, many of which came directly from his mother's kitchen, and with the recipes told stories of the way she would prepare certain foods, or how and where the ingredients would be caught (Mills and Breen, 2001).

In addition to Uncle Stuart, a number of other family members have made their living in restaurants or through catering with a mix of traditional and contemporary and gourmet foods, including Lucille's husband Julius, who provided the delicious fish and venison dishes for our focus group dinners and lunches. He, among others, also is commonly found in the woods, at the water or in the garden catching and cultivating their own food. A number of Cain family men are skilled hunters, including Steve and his son, Lucille's husband, Elaine's father and brothers and my father and brother. Both men and women in the family fish and garden, and a number of them do this not only for their families, but also for sale to local fish markets and farm stands to make a living.

This family legacy not only represents a skill common among Cain family members, but the connection to food, especially traditional foods, and the land from which they come. It also represents a mindset common among many family members that the central characteristic that makes us Wampanoag people is a connection to this specific land that we are part of and is part of us, just as Wôpanâak language indicates in its grammar with the inalienable marker on the words *ahkee* and *nupee* ('land' and 'water'), signifying that it is inseparable from our bodies. This legacy, which is in line with the activism of the Idle No More movement, which began in 2012 (wagingnonviolence.org). Idle No More began as a response to Canadian federal policies that would have violated both Tribal rights and natural resources, and continues to fight

to protect and stop the exploitation of land and water not only in Canada, but throughout North America (Altemus-Williams, 2013). This movement is in sharp contrast to mainstream culture where contact with nature is very limited as a result of living our lives largely indoors (Grande, 2004) and where land is primarily something to own (Wolfe, 2006).

So many members of the Cain family grew up in the woods and on the water from a very young age, whether with their mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Because of this, the ability to hunt and fish are at the core of who this family is, and weigh heavily on how we view ourselves as Wampanoag people. Members of this family feel a strong connection to our ancestral homeland, and the way we are able to live from it and care for it. As focus group members, because of our common lineage and therefore similar upbringings, this understanding was natural for each of us. While it made for comfortable conversations and the ability to understand one another easily, it sometimes did not allow for a great breadth of experiences, something to be considered for ongoing larger work of educational self-determination.

What it Means to be Wampanoag

The concept of Indigeneity is multi-faceted, and although I describe this family – my family – as being particularly connected to our land and the resources on it, other families are more knowledgeable in other aspects like singing, dancing, craftwork, ceremonial doings, and building and maintaining political relationships with state and federal governments, either as Tribal council members and officers, or as government employees. The differences however, are tied together through our blood and our

common ancestry. But neither cultural knowledge nor ancestry is enough on its own to completely define a Wampanoag person; both are essential. Understanding of cultural traditions is likely impossible without biological ancestral ties, but it is not a given because of them. For Mashpee Wampanoag people, much of our connection to our heritage is a connection to place. Our identity is about maintaining our home and remaining in our home. Some connect to our heritage by using the land for sustenance; others use it to practice ceremony; others use knowledge of it to understand language and culture; others fight to preserve it through political alliances or land conservation. Some people do many or all of these things. In the eyes of many of those who do these things, those who don't, even if related by blood, are not truly Mashpee. They are not Indigenous to our land. The people who do not share this connection with our ancestral land are seen as part of the whitestream society, and as practicing settler colonialism, using any land, but specifically our homeland, as a commodity for personal advancement without understanding its true importance to our cultural being (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

This connection to land is one way in which we self-identify and identify each other as Wampanoag people, two of the three measurements of identity (the other is external identification) outlined by Hilary Weaver (2001). The participants of this project are all strong believers in a necessary connection to the physical place that we come from in order to be a Tribal member. Every participant directly made mention of their connection to Mashpee and its importance to them. For example, Allison did this when she discussed her item that represented Mashpee to her, which was water. "For me it's water. I grew up at the water. The pond mostly, but any water. I couldn't be far from the pond."

One of the requirements to gain official membership as a Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal citizen is to have an immediate family member (mother, father, sister or brother) who has lived in or inside of 20 miles from Mashpee within the past 20 years. This is to help ensure that people who apply for enrollment are still connected to our place. If a person has immediate family in an area, it is assumed that they themselves visit the area fairly frequently. To be a member of our larger community, the population to whom this group was open, it is necessary to respect these requirements.

Each of the group participants lived within or very close to the borders of Mashpee at the time of the research. Elaine, the oldest member of the group, has lived her whole life in Mashpee. She now owns a house on a street named for her grandmother, Elizabeth Cain, behind the family's original homestead, alongside three of her first cousins and the daughter of another of her cousins. Elaine mentioned this briefly during a conversation about the demographics of our own school experiences and the significance of the place where she was, raised, educated, and now has settled, "I live on a street named after my grandmother. How's that for being right where I belong?" Brad has also lived in town his whole life. Lucille and I have both settled in Mashpee, owning homes in town after completing our degrees and working in other places for different amounts of time. Steve and Allison have lived in both Mashpee and Falmouth, the next town over, and now live, one of them in Mashpee, and one of them in Falmouth. To this group of individuals, loyal to their home, the idea of being far from it for long, or raising their families in a different place is unfathomable. It would be impossible for any of us to live our lives as Mashpee Wampanoag people the way we feel we should, in any

other place. This echoed in the educational values that this group of community members described in the focus group sessions.

Group Dynamics

The six participants, despite being family, have varied personal relationships. Lucille shares close relationships with both Allison and Brad as their aunt, and likewise Allison and Brad, as first cousins are close as well. Lucille and Steve, being close in age, have mutual friends and common experiences. Lucille's husband and Steve are first cousins, and also share many common interests including fishing and hunting, which they do together from time to time. They also both serve on the Tribe's Natural Resources Committee. Lucille and I have a more professional relationship although we've known each other much of my life. Her oldest daughter and I are the same age, although we are only acquaintances. Lucille and I have become close over the years, mostly due to our common involvement with educational and other youth services in the Tribe. Allison and I are the same age and began school together. Although we were never close in school as children, and are not particularly close now, we have known each other for a long time and know a fair bit about each other. Steve and I have only gotten to know each other in the past four years. His children have attended the language camp that I have helped coordinate and teach. His daughter and Allison's oldest daughter are not only cousins, but friends as well. Through this, Steve and Allison have come to know each other fairly well. Brad and I know each other only superficially, and I suspect that Steve and he share a similar relationship.

Elaine was somewhat the outsider. She was less social and tended to keep to her immediate family more than the rest of the group. As my father's first cousin, she and he were close as children but they had grown apart as they grew older. Because of their once close relationship, I knew her rather well considering our age difference. Because she was often less social than the rest, I didn't have a good sense of the relationships she had with anyone else. Like everyone involved in the project, she was generally friendly and casual with each of us, but I didn't know the nature of what her relationship was with any of them beyond their family ties.

Because we all had previous relationships with one another and knew each other to varying degrees, we were all at ease with each other and so the meetings were always polite and friendly and the realization that we were all there with a common positive intention was understood. The only person who ever gave any impression that she was about to get irritated or that she was bothered by the discussion was Elaine. At one point we were discussing the summer camp that the language Department puts on and she was annoyed that for three years in a row her grandchildren hadn't attended because she didn't know when it was or how to sign them up. When she was informed that notices had gone out in the Tribal newsletter and had been posted in the office as well as applications being available at powwow, in the office and online, she relaxed. Because we know her, and know that she has a tendency to challenge others, we knew that we needed only to be calm and not challenge her back or to get defensive in order to quell what was only a simple annoyance. She also only attended one focus group after the informational meetings, so this didn't happen more than once with her and never with anyone else.

The focus groups themselves and the positive group dynamics there were possible because of our relationships with one another. Allowing Elaine to vent and then providing her with more information was an example of how through prior understanding of each other, we could navigate the focus groups respectfully and make progress toward our common goal.

Politics of power plays were almost completely absent from the focus groups and this contributed to the positive and conflict-free group dynamics. As in any small community, there are often grievances between different groups because of different agendas or ideas of what is important and where the community ought to focus its collective energy. More specifically, in this case, none of our participants were Tribal Council members (a conscious decision we made when recruiting participants because of the greater potential for the entry of politics into our discussions and the potential for it impeding our ability to discuss openly, and because we wanted to invite more participation from those who, for whatever reason, are not always included), nor did any of them have immediate family members who were. There were times when policies or the ability for us to create a project that the council would accept and put into action were mentioned and questioned. Passing comments were made about specific people and the likelihood of having their support for our project, or in other instances comments were made about various Council members' relationships with the people in the room. For example, the chairman was mentioned in a discussion about who the people feel are the true Mashpee leaders, and another councilwoman was mentioned as having supported a youth culture program in the past. However, at no point did anyone talk particularly positively or negatively about any specific council member, make any promises to get

any of our work pushed through because of a relative on council, or assume that we would or would not accomplish what we set out to because of the people sitting on the present Tribal council. These conversations or digressions however, were always brief and if anyone disagreed with the common opinion it wasn't voiced.

I believe the group dynamics were positive also because of the considerations Lucille and I made when designing the focus group process. I think participants felt really honored to be asked to attend and contribute to our meetings because they were not usually the ones who had their voices heard when it comes to education for the Tribe. Each of the participants are involved in Tribal matters to varying degrees, serving on committees, or taking part in certain activities, but none of them have been a part of the Education Committee's operation. The Education Committee is comprised of Tribal members mostly specifically involved in education as a career. If not, they are for the most part, well-educated themselves. The members of the committee include Lucille and me, along with the Education Department's Assistant Director, a Professor at a Massachusetts state university, a high school principal, two Tribal council members, a member of the Indian Education Parent Committee at the Mashpee Public School District, the Massachusetts Commissioner of Indian Affairs who is also a graduate of two prestigious universities, and one parent with some college experience. Despite not having these kinds of credentials on their resumes, in particular, Steve and Allison made a really strong effort to attend meetings and gave as much time and energy to our project as they were able. I believe that if not for Brad's health issues at the end, that he would have attended more meetings as well. For a young man, although he was often quiet, his voice was very helpful to rounding out our collective perspective as much as possible.

Knowledge, though, transcends the physical space, to include echoes of past interactions. Others with whom the participants share closer relationships were most definitely brought into the room through the people who were physically present. Relationships like the ones described above, as well as other closer familial relationships and some friendships with other community members were present in the room through stories and experiences described by the group at different times. I thought often about my dad when discussing the way I was taught as a child, and of my sister when considering how a similar experience at home can yield such varied educational experiences. Steve and Allison talked at length about their children's experiences, as much if not more especially in Steve's case, than their own. When talking about reading, they both brought to the conversation their daughters, and when talking about traditional practices, discussed their sons. Lucille spoke about her son and husband when talking about struggles with reading, as well as what she knew to be shared experiences of a few other Mashpee Wampanoag men. When speaking about certain aspects of Wampanoag life that we felt were not voiced in the room, specific people came to mind and we did our best to use the relationships we have with those people to imagine what they might have contributed in the way of information or anecdotes about the topics we discussed.

As mentioned previously, even though we were able to surmise what others who were not present might add to the conversation, the understanding between the members of the group was that we were not a complete representation of our Tribe and that even with familiarity of others, it was impossible for us to completely represent the knowledge they have. Future work beyond this project would do well to compliment what we learned and prioritize gaining the perspectives from elder men, children, other families,

and specific roles and trades like singers, beaders, weavers, healers, and officially recognized leaders, among many others. What we had, though, was both the depth of knowledge about foodways and the physical environment as well as a regard and acknowledgement of the parameters of what this group could speak to. It was critical to think the best we could about how others would represent themselves and their version of what it means to be Wampanoag in order to create a fuller picture of our Tribe and our needs.

The shared experiences within the group made for easy conversation about all of the topics discussed throughout the ten sessions. Our knowledge of each other and a basic understanding of where we each come from aided us in conducting our meetings without a lot of extraneous conversation about why we believe what we do or suggest what we do. Our theories about the current state of Mashpee Wampanoag children's education come from our own lived experiences, our own stories of what is currently going on. Knowing each other previously to different degrees, and at least having some understanding of each other's lives helped us to move forward easily. What it didn't do very often, unfortunately or not, was encourage many contradicting or contrasting opinions. In fact at times, group members made mention of absences in the discussion. For example, Lucille added, "if any of [drum group members] were here they would add ceremony for sure to this list" and "I think dancing should be on there. We're missing dancing". Because of this awareness of our partial knowledge, we were able to discuss at least in part, the topics we wouldn't bring up naturally other than in a conversation where we were purposefully stretching ourselves to think about a whole and well-rounded Wampanoag person. However, continued engagement with other members of the

community will be crucial to the ongoing self-determination of culturally responsive education.

In thinking of other Mashpee Wampanoag community members in these circumstances, we understood that each of us deserves to be understood in terms of their own "complex personhood." Gordon's (1997) concept of complex personhood means that every individual is made up of contradictions and cannot be essentialized down to a single stereotype or characteristic. People and Indigenous communities alike are not in reality definable by an outside notion or stereotyped expectation. As Eve Tuck adds to this discussion, "we can desire to be critically conscious *and* desire the new Jordans, even if those desires are conflicting" (2009, p. 420). This is to say that although being critically conscious might not call to mind an appreciation for a material item like sneakers, we cannot assume that those ideals or interests are mutually exclusive. Every person is the result of the many-faceted influences in their lives as well as the influences of those who came before them and the structures that surround them all, past and present. In this case, each Tribal member is made up of so many different parts, some traditional, some mainstream, influenced by not only the Tribe or the small town where we grew up, but by the world in which we live. We are influenced and molded by the people with whom we grew up, but also our personal interests, where we go to school, who we choose to associate with, what we do for work, etc. In each case, individuals are more than the essentialized stereotype of an Indian. In the focus groups, the way this was acknowledged was in thinking through what others might prioritize but not trying to predict exactly what they might say.

To best think about a single vision for Wampanoag education, we knew we had to think about Mashpee youth as broadly as we could. While our focus group members were largely similar in our perspectives because of how we grew up and the values we hold from the families we were born into, we also had different experiences that made us different, sometimes in subtle ways. As Grande (2004) discusses, there is an impulse to essentialize Native culture and identity, which is not reality. Even in our own community, where on the surface people may seem to have similar experiences, there are so many differences, thus the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, likewise is complex. Allison and I for example, represent this well. We are three months apart in age. We both have small children (although she also has older, school-aged children, also). We both have one Wampanoag parent and one non-Wampanoag parent. We both grew up fishing and going to powwows in the summers. But one of us struggled in school and one of us didn't. One of us takes care of a sick sibling and one of us doesn't. One of us is married and one of us isn't. One of us is taking it upon herself to teach our son to hunt, and one of us is leaving that to our father. One of us knows how to make fish cakes and one of us doesn't. Each of these differences influences our own complex personhoods, just as who raised us with which traditions. There are nuances to the ways we all know what it means to be Wampanoag. Not every member of our community will always agree with our own personal perceptions of what makes a Wampanoag person, but that does not make them less Wampanoag.

In thinking about the research questions which speak to what it means to be a Wampanoag person, having different experiences, however small and subtle they may be, was an integral part of the process. Despite our similarities, we did bring to the group

varied life experiences that helped to round out our definition of a Mashpee Wampanoag person. Especially when it came to the second question of what a Mashpee Wampanoag high school student needs to know by the time they graduate, while we all agreed with each other's suggestions, we all had different instinctual notions of what was necessarily included. Our coming together to create a self-determined design for Wampanoag education that addresses the problems as we understand them based on our own experiences is an example of the culturally based/culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogy that produces successful outcomes for American Indian students (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; niea.org).

This recognized variation in Wampanoag identity is however, not black and white. As stated before, not every person who claims Wampanoag ancestry or even gains membership by the enrollment committee is a recognized member of the community. Any new baby born to a Tribal member is automatically eligible for enrollment. An older person can be enrolled if they meet certain criteria: they have ancestral ties to the community; they or an immediate family member live or have lived within 20 miles of Mashpee in the past 20 years; they are involved in the community; they have never denounced the Tribe. However, if a person meets these criteria, but is otherwise unknown to the community, then the community doesn't accept them as "real" Mashpee despite possibly being granted official membership. "Real Mashpee" is a term that gets thrown around often, especially in recent years, as a Tribally owned casino and the possibility of per-capita payments for Tribal members becomes more of a reality. These people who have come along since we gained federal recognition are also sometimes

referred to often as "fed-Wamps" and many people would likely not readily include them as community members, even by a broad definition of "complex Wampanoag-hood."

Research Shaped by My Own Educational Experience

As stated in chapter three, as both a Tribal member and a graduate student, I had some anxiety approaching this process around how my role would be perceived and what the group members' reactions would be to my position in the group. Here I discuss my relationship to the research project and to the participants, which took shape in part as a result of my education. As a child, I did not spend a lot of time at the same hangouts that many of my peers did. In the summers when many of my cousins were swimming at the pond, I was not allowed to go there unsupervised by my parents, and rarely taken there with them. I didn't have classes with many other Wampanoag children in elementary and middle school and, as a kid and as a result of these situations, most of my friends were white. Aside from a few people who are the children of my father's close friends and relatives that I grew up with, I didn't know a whole lot of Tribal children that well when I was young, and they didn't know me.

In addition to my somewhat separate childhood, within my community, I have often felt uncomfortable having chosen the educational path that I have. Not only am I formally educated, but I've attended some of the most prestigious and exclusive universities in the world and am now pursuing the most advanced degree possible in my field. Many Tribal members do not have college level experience, and it was my perception at the start of this project, that they believe those who do to somehow be "less" Wampanoag than those who do not. Given my education, I was concerned that the

group would not feel that I had enough of the preferred Tribal cultural capital in our community to be coming to the table with the right intentions and a truly Wampanoag perspective. I also worried, where my education was concerned, that other participants would see me as a product of, and therefore a part of, a structure that has sought to oppress and assimilate our community since its inception on this land (Cesarini, 2008; DeJong, 1993; Haig-Brown, 1988; Lomawaima, 1999; Reyhner and Eder, 2004;Salisbury, 1985; Szasz, 1983; Van Lonkhuyzen, 1990). I was worried that my education would associate me with whiteness and therefore outsider-ness, and that my actual membership in the community would mean less (Grande, 2004, quoting Ogbu).

The role of research in Native communities has been controversial at best and at worst consistently damaging (Smith 1999). As a Tribal member I hoped that I could transcend this negative association with research and present myself as simply a community member interested in taking action on a problem that affects our youth and therefore our future. Kaomea (2001) discussed this issue in her own research, describing how she approached the community explaining that her attempt to analyze and critique the colonial influences on Hawaiian culture was meant to help Hawaiian people. In beginning this research project, I attempted to be clear about my own intentions for positive change in Mashpee Wampanoag children's educational experiences by laying out my own interest in increasing educational experiences for our kids. I discussed my experience in school and contrasted it to that of my sister who was expelled from one school in her senior year, required summer school to catch up at the next school, and in the end could not graduate on time. I talked about how we have smart children in our Tribe, and that they should not have to struggle through school, and that as a parent, I

don't want this struggle to continue for my children or any others. The potential to have my intentions challenged was the much less stressful factor for me in moving into this dissertation research with my community, however. The unknown impact of my level of education was far scarier for me.

I soon realized that any anxiety was unfounded as the members of the group were at ease with my fluid role that changed back and forth between participant and facilitator. I believe that the respect given my father and grandparents who have never moved from Mashpee, was transferred to me in this process. Because of my familial connection to respected community members and to the focus group participants themselves, I was not seen as an outsider coming in to fix the damaged, marginalized group, but rather as a person who would be able to see the community's good – the positive characteristics, knowledges and abilities – because I lived some of it, and have shared in it with other Tribal members. This is in contrast to what Eve Tuck (2009) discusses as a default theory of change where the outsider comes in to save the day and how "scientific" research has used methods and tactics like data to tell marginalized communities what is wrong with them (Brayboy, 2006).

This relational understanding that being Indigenous doesn't equate to being damaged, and that our community is full of truly wonderful and positive gifts, was a useful tool for me to keep in mind when interacting with group members and helped to engage with them in a comfortable and respectful way. Rather than accept the theory of change where a person unknown to the community comes in to make what they see as some positive change from the original damaged circumstance (Tuck, 2009), as an insider researcher I had a better sense of what issues in the community are truly problematic,

instead of assuming from a whitestream perspective that all aspects of Wampanoag culture require change and that such change could only be achieved by the outsider/settler's rescue. Having an insider understanding of our culture through knowing our language, growing up in my father's house and being able to speak through both traditional cultural and personal stories rather than the theories of unknown scholars about my own experiences both as a child and as an adult with the influences of him and my grandparents, gave me enough knowledge, and perhaps enough credibility, to be seen wholly as an insider throughout this project (Kaomea, 2001). Rather than separate me from the rest of my community, my education, it seems, instead gave the group confidence in my ability to design a project where we could come together and discuss and strategize the futures of our Mashpee Wampanoag youth, and where necessary, continue to guide and lead the process.

While it's not a characteristic shared by the majority of Tribal members, especially those in older generations, it's clear from the focus group conversations, that becoming educated and earning a degree are in fact desired outcomes and a source of pride for the community. Although I originally thought my education would set me apart, an echo of the colonially created tension between Indian identity and academic knowledge, participants showed me that that is not the case. Education is something that we all agreed was a goal for our youth and a positive thing that is not frowned upon, but celebrated. I do believe I subconsciously knew this to be true, as I've helped to read dozens of scholarship award applications each semester for Tribal students as a member of the Education Committee, and I've witnessed crowds of people at the annual powwow cheer for the year's most recent graduates.

I think there is some internalized inferiority and feelings of embarrassment or low self-esteem for those who are not educated as a result of the colonial project which has institutionalized in this country and handed down through generations (Lomawaima, 1999; Robbins, Colmant, Dorton, Schultz, Colmant, Ciali, 2006), and there continues to be presumptions of incompetence and inferiority for all people of color including Native peoples (Gonzalez and Harris, 2012). However, this institutionalized colonization is not projected in my community as contempt or disdain for those who are educated because they believe they are on some high horse or because they chose to leave their family to become educated. My feeling of a disconnect between myself and the rest of my community was a result of my own internalization of the colonial tension previously described. I think in hindsight, I felt disconnected because of the years I missed in my home. Boarding high school, college, graduate school and living and working away from my community make up nearly 13 years of my life. At only 33, that is a lot of time. However, the conversations we had during the course of the groups always came around to educational success and how striving for cultural knowledge and pride through education could help bolster positive educational experiences and outcomes in the long run.

Content of the Meetings

At the beginning of each meeting I provided an agenda, whether printed, on the board in the office where we held our meetings, or verbally. I would also briefly go over any other logistical matters, such as scheduling meetings, stipends, or other matters pertinent to the group. Finally, I spent some time at the beginning of each meeting

reviewing the conversation from the previous meeting. Generally all of this was done in the first half hour while we ate dinner. Once dinner was finished and cleaned up, I would begin the conversation with a proposed topic for the day, either a continuation of the previous meeting's discussion, or a new conversation based on the research questions, or other questions that I or other group members had that may have gone unanswered up to that point. At times when the group did not have a response to my prompt, Lucille would sometimes begin the conversation with her own opinion or change the prompt in some way to make it more relevant to the group.

Because of my role in leading the meetings and Lucille's role in organizing them ahead of time, the other four participants naturally responded to us directly at first when beginning the conversations. Eventually, at each meeting, as more people joined in and added their opinions, it became more of a conversation than an answering of questions.

Usually, unless I had a specific story to contribute or an opinion that was largely different than the rest of the group, I would be quiet. More often than I, Lucille would fill in gaps in the conversation with other ideas or stories. Because I generally began the meetings and Lucille would usually keep them moving, we worked as co-facilitators. Although we were both coming to this focus group representing official positions besides community members, as the Director of the Education Department and a graduate student-researcher, in practice at our meetings we treated each other and we treated by the group like the friends and family that we are. We began each meeting by sharing a meal together, in most cases dinner, but sometimes breakfast. Usually we held off on our official topic until we were mostly finished so the conversation during the meal was informal, usually gossip or other current events. This practice helped to reinforce our

goal of working for the betterment of our community. By spending time with each other informally before getting to our business kept in mind the purpose and inspiration of this work, the love and devotion to our Tribal community and to the individuals therein: Steve's children, Allison's children, Brad and his brother, Lucille's children and grandchildren, my children, Elaine's grandchildren and the rest of our family members affected by the education in our community. This practice also was an example of the value of spending time with each other and socializing. We do this because we care about each other and making time for each other's personal lives is part of what makes us family and community.

Supporting the Tribe through service is also part of what makes us all part of the community. Despite their lack of participation in organized educational advisory boards as previously discussed, the participants had varied experience serving the Tribe. Steve sat on the Natural Resources Committee for some time; Brad had previously been a member of the Youth Council, but because of his college schedule could no longer attend meetings; Elaine has been an advocate for housing for many years, although unofficially. None of them were actively involved with Tribal education in any way and thus were pleased that we took the time to seek out people whose voices were largely unheard in the context of Tribal education. In contrast, as the Education Director and a member of the Education Committee, Lucille and I were people who were seen and heard often by Council and so, feeling like they were sharing in the responsibility (Hermes, 1997) to educate Wampanoag youth and that their opinions and ideas would probably make it as far as Council through us was perhaps a proud feeling for them. As family members who were viewed as neutral in terms of our political stances, we were both able to facilitate

the focus group meetings in a way that did not cause anyone to feel intimidated or ignored. Because Lucille and I shared this responsibility, neither she nor I were seen as *the* authority figure during the meetings and so the issue I dreaded in the end was moot.

Typically, most decision-making bodies in the Tribal government, both traditional and political, are led by committees and councils. For example, each government department is guided by a volunteer committee, the chief has a council of advisors, and the court has an Elders Judiciary Committee, each of which are meant to ensure that no one has any absolute power, and that the voices and issues of the people are involved in decision-making. The community respects this practice and although there are named leaders who not only ensure that someone is ultimately accountable, but also receive the praise for work done well, the committee and council members are in place for a reason, as representations of the rest of community, their voices equally as important as the named leader, be it department director, Tribal Administrator, etc. For this reason, I believe everyone felt as though they were an important part of the process, and that their opinions were as important as Lucille's or mine. Elaine, Allison and Steve all expressed their appreciation for being invited to participate in what they felt was a meaningful and helpful discussion not only for Tribal youth, but for themselves and their own children as well. Because of the positive feeling about everyone's role and purpose in the group, negotiating the structure and culture of the group meetings was also an easy effort.

Making the Rules

In our second meeting together, the first agenda item was to establish some "ground rules" and "group expectations". I wrote these headings on the board and began

by stating that my expectation for our focus groups was that everyone ought to have the opportunity to talk when they felt compelled to do so. I then asked everyone to include what they thought we should keep in mind as our meetings continued so that we could keep the goal of transforming education for the betterment of Wampanoag children's education at the forefront. What I expected from that activity was a list of things like "allow others to finish their thought before talking" or "don't talk down to anyone" or "every idea is a good idea". This expectation came, I believe from doing this exercise a number of times before in varying contexts, from other work environments and summer camps I've participated in, facilitated, etc. I didn't think about the possibility that the rest of the group may have never done anything like this before and that they would need clarification on what I meant when I asked them to talk about their expectations for the group. In a discussion I had had with Lucille about this agenda item ahead of time, she seemed to think it was a good idea as well, but also did not indicate that she thought participants might need some clarification as to what was meant by that activity.

The discussion that actually took place was not about listing the rules for participation in the focus groups, but rather a list of what everyone expected to gain as a result of the meetings, either personally or for the community. The list they created was as follows:

Group expectations:

- How do we want to operate in this space?
- What do we want to get out of it?
    - Preparation: how do we get kids to be prepared for school so that they can be successful?

- What do kids like about school? How can we support it?
- When do kids do well? How do we make it so that kids can be successful, and what do we do to support them?
- Supplement the education they are already getting?

Steve in particular talked about wanting, as a single parent, to know how to support the education that his kids are receiving already. Lucille discussed what she saw as a need to focus more on improving education in a way that involves the whole community in an authentic participatory way (McTaggert, 1989).

I think that part of the reason why the "group expectations" portion of this meeting was not about listing the rules for participation was because such a discussion was unnecessary rather than participants not understanding the need to lay down ground rules, a typical practice in establishing new groups. The expectation for our participants was well-established before the group ever even came together, over the phone through conversations with Lucille, and so discussing it all together would have been a waste of time.

In the discussion of traditional values, humility and listening were discussed at length. These two characteristics were demonstrated throughout the focus group meetings making it clear that these are in fact values not just theorized by Tribal members, but also practiced in real life. Group members were careful most of the time not to talk over each other, including Elaine who consciously made an effort to check herself a few times when she began to interrupt another person. Each person had time to speak their opinions, and Lucille frequently would specifically ask people for their opinion if they had not had a chance to contribute to a certain topic. Throughout the

meetings, the group worked toward theorizing and creating a real vision for Wampanoag youth's education. We did this through the discussion of our own values, knowledge and teaching. The process was anchored in a theory of change that was driven by our own self-determination rather than the decision of an outsider to come in and fix a perceived problem (Tuck, 2009).

Addressing the Research Questions

Once introductions and other preliminary activities had been completed, the group began to their work of addressing the research question, both of which remained the way they were initially written. This work took up the majority of our group meetings, spanning at least six meetings as the primary topic of conversation.

Defining Values

The first question that this research project sought to answer was "What are the values that we as Mashpee Wampanoag people expect each other to uphold? Our intention in composing this question was that the group would develop a list of values that they believe are important for our people to have and that they would like to see incorporated into their education such that they are surrounded by the same expectations both in and out of their homes.

The time allotted for this discussion was unlimited because Lucille and I expected that there would be some discussion and perhaps debate over what kind of quality constituted a "Wampanoag value" and then what those values actually are. However, in reality, this conversation took little more than one meeting. Those present at the meeting

when we began this discussion were Allison and Steve as well as Lucille and myself. Lucille and I prefaced the conversation by talking about how we wanted to define the values that we as Mashpee Wampanoag people hold that we consider to make us who we are. This prompt seemed easy for the two of them to grasp and there was no confusion or debate over what that meant.

The group decided to make a list of the values that we hold together as a community. Resulting from focus group discussions, the final list included the following:

- respect for elders
- teaching culture, traditional ways
- self-sufficiency
- taking care of each other
- humility
- listening
- knowing ceremony, songs and dances, stories
- socializing

The first four items on this list were those that came from our own personal experiences as individuals. Some participants grew up in multi-generational homes, or were raised by their grandparents, or had very close relationships with elders, and thus respect for elders was paramount. We all believed that this particular value is one that the entire community, if asked, would agree on. This was the first value that we included on our list and within the group and it was easily arrived at unanimously:

Allison: Well number one: respecting elders.

All nodding.

Lucille: Yep, that's the first one.

Respect for elders in the Mashpee community means listening to them when they speak and hearing what they have to say because they have so much more life experience than the rest of us. Respecting elders also means understanding that they don't always have the same ability they once had to take care of themselves, and so it means checking on them to make sure they are safe and that they have everything they need, and that their chores are taken care of. Respecting elders means acknowledging them when we see them and giving them our full attention when we interact with them.

In further considering what respect for elders means, I informally posed a question to my Wampanoag Facebook friends asking them to help me define what it means to respect elders. One respondent answered that "our elders are the backbone of our Tribe" (B. Weeden, personal correspondence, April 3, 2014). This was echoed in the group meetings where there was agreement that respecting elders means realizing that all that we have is the result of work they did in the past and appreciating that work and dedication that they had for the seven generations that would follow them, which included us. Allison said, "we know who we are because of [our elders]. We know our culture cause we learned it from them." In respecting them, we also make a conscious effort to follow their example by making choices that will positively impact the seven generations that will follow us as well. She continued, "we have to keep it going." Brad agreed saying that eventually "students become the teachers" as we all get older and have to pass our traditions on to younger generations.

Our elders are our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and therefore our teachers and keepers of our culture and traditions and so we listen and watch them so that

we know how to be Wampanoag people. The information we gather from each other, by watching and listening, is passed down from one family member to the next, not something we learn from books, or other scholars' research (Tuck and Yang, 2014). Relationships are central to Indigenous knowledge systems and research (Wilson, 2008).

The second value on our list was teaching culture. Lucille and Steve spoke about their own experiences growing up in the 1970s when there was more hands-on teaching from one generation to the next regarding our old ways. Children were taught to sing, do crafts, prepare traditional foods in traditional ways, hunt and fish in group, camp-like settings taught by older, skilled community members. Lucille reminisced,

> there was one summer, [older Tribal member] taught a bunch of us girls how to do pottery. And you know we were learning from the best because you know [her] pottery is Smithsonian quality! And there must have been about eight of us…But that happened a lot. We learned so much down there in the summers.

While Allison and I were able to relate to this to some degree having had some Title VII "Indian Education" programming throughout our school years, it was mostly those from the generation before us who truly remembered a time when children were taught by their whole community and in particular, their elders. This contrasted to the Indian Education program, which was taught by a single individual as long as we could remember as kids, and which more recently, has more of a focus on academic tutoring.

The discussion on self-sufficiency was lengthy, taking up most of the conversation during the meeting where values were discussed and being revisited throughout subsequent meetings. This was something all four of us could relate to strongly. As a hunter, Steve had much to say about learning from his uncles where to go to catch various animals, how to prepare them and cook them. He talked at length about his/our Aboriginal rights and how he was taught as a boy that we as Native people in

Massachusetts have a right to feed our families and that it cannot be taken from us, nor can it be regulated by local or state jurisdictions (Baird, 2014). He teaches this to his son and daughter as well and is active in making sure people understand his/our rights. He explained, "I take my [Tribal] ID and a copy of that law with me everywhere I go. I ain't getting busted for practicing my rights. No way." In Massachusetts, there are laws that restrict fishing and hunting for certain animals at various times of the year, or certain days of the week, including Sundays. Aboriginal rights in Massachusetts do not require Native people of the state to adhere to these restrictions, although, sometimes Tribal members opt to avoid those days and times in order not to be harassed by authorities or other non-informed civilians alike. This is an example of the fourth tenet of TribalCrit that explains the desire of Indigenous people to "obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination and self-identification" (Brayboy, 2006, p. 421).

Steve spoke in particular about his mother's oldest brother, who used to tell him frequently, regarding his own feelings about hunting restrictions and our rights to feed our families, "'you gotta eat on Sundays, don't ya?'" These kinds of stories were echoed by other group members who also grew up in and lived in largely self-sufficient families. Lucille's husband Julius also hunts frequently throughout the year and Lucille and he fish together year round as well for finned and shellfish or eels. There are always animals outside hanging or waiting to be cleaned at their house in the center of town that Julius built, and even if we didn't know this about them, it was clear in the meals Julius prepared for our meeting times: deer stew, fried striped bass, blue fish chowder, roasted rabbit, etc.

I contributed my story of growing up in a very self-sufficient family, also. As a young child my family didn't have a lot of money and we ate whatever my father caught or grew, we wore what my mother made, and we lived in a house that my father built along with the help of his friends and family. As a result, we ate good, organic, whole foods and were healthier then than any of us probably are now. When I was a kid, I regularly had lobster packed in my lunchbox for school – a snack that didn't exactly thrill me at the time, but in hindsight shows just what kind of skills my family had for survival in what an American perspective would consider less prosperous times (Brayboy, 2006).

Allison talked not of hunting and fishing, but of living in a van with her grandmother and sisters for a time during her childhood and going in the summertime to the pond to wash up.

> Allison: When we [lived in my mother's van] we'd have to wash up in the pond.
>
> Lucille: Yup, I remember.
>
> Allison: All of us and my mother, if we couldn't go to Gram's house, we'd be down there.

To do so they used a flower that would create a lather when mixed with water.

> Allison: I don't know the name of it. But it's a bush and it's got little white flowers.
>
> Steve: Did you ever ask [Tribal member] about it? He might know.
>
> Allison: No…
>
> Lucille: Yeah, if anyone would know…
>
> Allison: I should. But it's a bush with little white flowers and I seen some not too long ago. I was over on that dirt road on the left of the parking lot, you know when you pull up to [the] pond.

This was just one example of how as a child experiencing difficult times, her family was able to take advantage of the resources that the land had to offer because of the knowledge that her mother and grandmother had passed on to them by their elders.

Steve's, Allison's and my examples all point to an ability to be self-sufficient and to thrive even in truly difficult times like Allison's experience living in her mother's van. Not only do we each know the land and its gifts, but we are able to put them to use when we need them without eradicating the resources. The knowledge of and the ability to use the earth in this way is directly linked to our self-determination in that it is these types of skills that make us distinct as the people of this area on Cape Cod. We know who we are because we have always been here, practicing our traditions in the best way we could at any given time in history.

Taking care of each other was the final value that we came up with from our own individual experiences. Steve talked about always bringing food to his relatives, his aunts in particular, after he had killed and cleaned it. Lucille talked about how on Saturday afternoons she and Julius often make the rounds to different relatives' houses bringing traditional food and visiting. Likewise, I added that my father also often brings treats to his father and many of his elderly aunts and uncles or sick friends and relatives after a day of fishing, hunting or harvesting. Having been on the receiving end of this tradition many times as a child living with her grandmother, Allison noted that there were often people bringing food to her family, or offering them a place to stay when they didn't have one.

These four values of respect for elders, teaching culture, self-sufficiency and taking care of one another were natural choices for the members of this group. All being

members of the Cain family, certain skills, such as growing, catching and preparing food and showing hospitality are second nature to us and the members of our family. For this reason, it was not a surprise that these values were all in some way traced back to food, whether as a main point or indirectly and part of a larger context. In thinking about values however, we realized that not everyone might agree with all of our choices, and also that there were skills that were not represented by the members of our group, and therefore we were probably missing some for that reason. It was clear that what it meant to be Wampanoag was different at least from family to family, if not from person to person (Brayboy, 2006). At the same time though, a strength of the composition of this focus group, although incomplete as necessary knowledge, is the deeper explanation of our relationship to the land and sustenance.

In thinking about how different families, generations, genders or individuals define Wampanoag values, the conversation briefly turned to the question of identity and comments were made about the difference between people who truly "acted Mashpee" or who were "real Mashpee" and carried themselves as such, and those who did not, based on the opinions of our small group. In general, those who the group felt did not act the way a true Mashpee person should were specific Tribal members, some folks who hold offices in the Tribal government and some members of particular families. (It is worth noting that there were some members of the Cain family that were mentioned in this conversation.) We discussed for some time what the differences were, why we would label some people as not acting as though they held Mashpee values. The group agreed that the differences were humility and listening.

> Nitana: I feel like there's maybe a difference between the ones – the ones whose voice you always hear and the ones you don't. I think a lot of the people you

don't hear from are the real, like, um, the real, true Mashpee leaders: [male Tribal member], [female Tribal member]…

Lucille: Like there's a difference between the ones who are talking – and usually about themselves – and the ones who sit back and watch things unfold.

Allison: Those are the ones who are really in touch.

Nitana: Right. They're paying attention to what's actually going on.

Allison: And not how often they're in the paper.

Lucille: And you know – those are the people who are actually helpful when people are having a problem.

Steve: You think I go to [Tribal chairman] when I have a problem? Yee-ah right!

Lucille: Yeah, no. It's [same male Tribal member], your dad… I used to talk to [Julian's father] a lot. He always made time and he mentored so, many, people. We'd just go out on the boat and talk for the whole afternoon. And since I was a kid. He's the one who told me not to quit school…He said, "little girl, every time I see you you have a book in your hand. So what are you doing out here right now?"

There are people in the community who are natural leaders, and who the people look to for guidance for any number of issues they may be going through. These people do this quietly and in the background in a humble way. They see the problems we face as a community because they are not caught up in their own lives and images, but rather are paying attention to what is happening to the people around them. They are often the ones who the community looks to when it needs to be reunited or refocused in difficult times and through difficult situations.

Then there were others who the group believed are not humble and do not listen the way they should. The group felt that they might be looking to advance their own agendas rather than working for the good of the people. These people were viewed by the participants as being less Mashpee than most others, and the reasons were that they

were not humble and that they did not listen. Therefore, by this logic, the group came to the conclusion that these two qualities were important to have in order to be viewed wholly as a Mashpee Wampanoag person.

We also noted that some people would "act Mashpee" in certain contexts and not in others, a result of varying influences and their own complex personhoods (Gordon, 1997). These people might be considered to act Mashpee in some ways and not in others, and the times when they weren't were believed to be the times when they would seemingly forget our values and be boastful or fail to listen to each other. In this way, not acting Mashpee wouldn't necessarily exclude someone from the group entirely if they didn't act that way all the time.

Finally, we thought about the things that we were not including on our list because of the absences of certain representation in the group. The final two values were the results of this discussion. While many of the things we talked about in this conversation fit under the category of teaching culture and traditional ways, we concluded that what we really meant when we talked about the kinds of traditional, cultural teachings that we felt it was important to pass on could be categorized as chores by a modern definition. Things like cooking and making clothing were survival skills, but knowing ceremony and music and storytelling were different matters. The group believed this was a separate activity, not one that could be learned from the daily life, following around a mother or father, aunt or uncle. Music, stories and ceremony, although a part of most of our lives in some way, whether because we danced at powwows and socials, or because we were careful to give thanks as many times each day as we felt compelled, was different because not everyone had access to a sweat lodge, a

drum, or an elder. These were things, the group discussed, that you would have to go out of your way to learn to do, to seek out someone to practice with. The group agreed that these things did not come naturally. At the time of our conversation, this seemed a natural rationale for making this a separate category from traditional teachings. In hindsight though, I believe it is just as "every day" as any other "survival" knowledge or craft. The reason this felt like a separate category to the group is because for us it was not a part of our skill set. The members of our group are not medicine people, we are not singers or dancers, although Brad does dance sometimes at powwow or other occasions, and I am a member of a dance group, but these are not as ingrained in our family lives like they are for some others. For our participants, this value is a part of being Wampanoag that none of us really embody. Given the participants in the focus groups, we reached a limitation on the values that we could possibly know, and this work as well as future work will need to be understood as all contributing to the seventh tenet of TribalCrit, which states that "Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions and visions for the future central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the difference and adaptability among individuals and groups" (Brayboy, 2006, p. 429).

Finally, the last value that we believed was important to a Mashpee Wampanoag person was that of being social. This came from the discussion on what other people would add to the list because we as a group did not feel we were the type to attend formal social gatherings. It is however, a typical traditional past time, especially in the winter, to gather together with food and music. Although this didn't hit home for most of this group, other means of being social are practiced by each of these participants, even if not

in the way of attending organized functions. As mentioned before, both Steve and Lucille talked about how they make it a point to visit relatives, usually with gifts of food in hand. Allison and her husband and their four children live with her mother and sister, a social familial arrangement that finds its roots in pre-colonial Wampanoag societies. Steve and I both talked about how much we dislike cell phones. We both mentioned that we would rather drop by someone's house, no matter how out of the way it is, than call to even to see if they are home before we go out. As a child, nearly every weekend one of my dad's friends would show up with some beer and they'd spend a few hours out by the garden or woodpile, taking a break from the chores. Other times, we would stop by my grandparents' house unannounced for a half hour or so, just to say hello and chat about what was happening on that side of town.

I shared with the group one example of spontaneous socializing that stood out to me which occurred when I was about 25 years old. My whole family was at my parents' house for some occasion – my parents, sister, brother, his wife and daughter. A van pulled into the driveway that no one recognized and as we were trying to figure out who it was, a clown got out of the driver's seat. We were all laughing and making jokes about why a clown would be stopping by and when the clown came to the door we realized that it was a relative of ours. She came in and introduced herself by her clown name and did a few magic tricks and made balloon animals for my niece before ending her act and visiting for a while. Although not everyone may necessarily find the same ways to be social, it is certainly a characteristic that cuts across all groups of Wampanoag people in some way or another. Some people utilize powwows in the summer and socials in the winter or other organized community activities as their time to be social. Others may

avoid more crowded, or loud interactions, and prefer to stop by each other's houses and distract each of other from their daily routines by catching up and gossiping. This kind of socializing is not always as easy for many younger people as it is for those of older generations however. Cell phones and the busyness of life in 2013 make it difficult to carve out time to just stop by to visit with friends and relatives, an intentional effect of capitalism (Grande, 2004), which aims to eradicate the remnants of our social and socialist existence. While many older folks still engage in spontaneous social habits, younger people tend toward waiting for the events on their calendars. In this time, organized socials are more likely venues for many people to spend time together.

During the session that followed our discussion of values, we recapped the previous meeting including going over the values we had outlined before. Everyone agreed that these did in fact make up a good comprehensive list of important Mashpee Wampanoag traits. Brad and Elaine were both present at this meeting and so they were invited to give their input on the list we had created. They each agreed that these were all true and neither had any other suggestions to add to the list.

Some of the values that we discussed manifested themselves in our group meetings. The focus groups had both the content and the form of Wampanoag values. In particular, humility, listening, taking care of each other, respect for elders and socializing. The humility of the participants was evident every day we met. No single person monopolized conversation and everyone took turns listening to each other. Anecdotes were offered to round out the conversation and some were extremely personal bringing members of the group to tears at times.

Participants also listened intently to what each other had to say. People made concerted effort not to talk over each other. Care for each other was taken by making sure that people had rides to meetings if they needed them and wanted to attend.

Respect for elders was shown in two ways. Elaine, as our one elder participant, was often referenced in her absence. The things she said in the one meeting she attended echoed throughout the months that followed as people remembered her comments and brought them up again in subsequent meetings. For example, in a discussion about how youth services are advertised, Lucille remembered "[Elaine] said she never sees that stuff. Remember when she was talking about how her grand kids never get to go to language camp." Another time, Allison mentioned Elaine's story about her own educational experience in Mashpee, Falmouth and Barnstable saying "just like [Elaine] said last week or whenever that was, it didn't used to be 'us-versus-them' because there wasn't so many of 'them.' For my mom, too. They're the same age maybe." In contrast, Brad was often the quietest member of the group, giving way for others to talk because he was the youngest.

Finally, socializing was a characteristic that followed throughout. We began every meeting with food and casual conversation, which often found its way back into the work conversation as well. Many times while discussing values and skills, we would turn toward a tangent about a recent social event, or the latest Tribal meeting antics. The socializing that occurred within the meetings themselves and the social/familial connections, while helpful, also provides pause to consider the specifics of this group and what future extensions of the project should consider.

As mentioned before in the discussion of the make-up of the focus groups, the fact that we are all closely related made for inherently foodways-knowledge-based conversations and a less heterogeneous perspective when considering the values we included in our list. Other families in the Tribe are known for other kinds of knowledge and skills, both traditional and contemporary, like their knowledge of ceremony, or their strong voices, or their political savvy. For the most part, these families were not represented by this group and so the ease with which we discussed different values and the degree to which we were able to come to agreement on them is not surprising, but rather a result of what knowledge, skills and interests we shared in common. Having had a different composition to our membership would certainly have made for a different list, as is the case in any research project that is by definition partial. Perhaps the knowledge of ceremony and song would have been included in the knowledge of culture category. Perhaps the cultural practices that were included would have been different. These areas of potential input are further addressed in the final chapter under implications.

Another reason that the values were largely shared in common is because Lucille and I reached out to these people and so they likely reflect the values that she and I hold. Although initially we were hoping for representation of the various knowledges and perspectives in the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal community, in the end, as with any other participatory project, logistics and availability led us to invite specific people to participate. In order to do this, we decided that we wanted to invite people who are not currently serving on the Tribal council, who are not the type to regularly be asked to participate in something like this. Future work, though, can consider the inclusion of

certain families that are highly represented in government, for example, which I address in recommendations.

In choosing our participants, we wanted to create a group of people who we believed were true Mashpee Wampanoag people, who lived their lives the way we thought Mashpee people should. In simply making that criterion a requirement and then handpicking the sample, we were making a judgment on what were and were not Mashpee Wampanoag values. For this reason, it is probably the case that those people who we chose held values that largely mirrored our own. Naturally, our family members would have a closer likeness having been raised by the same parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. It is also likely, that when asking our family members to participate, that they were less able to say no than people with whom we were not socially close or even blood related. We were probably able to lean harder to convince people who we were closer with than those who we didn't know as well.

In the end, I would argue that the final list was inclusive of all traits that make us Mashpee Wampanoag people. We believe that all aspects of our Wampanoag-ness could be housed in one of the categories we listed. Given a larger group of opinions we would likely have been more specific with our list. But, despite the groups' small size, the list is a reflection of our identity and therefore an exercise in self-determination and a step toward exercising that self-determination through education for our youth.

Necessary Knowledge for Wampanoag Youth

The second research question that we worked on in light of our already-established values was "what knowledge is necessary to live as a healthy, successful

Mashpee Wampanoag person in 2013?" This question focused on the application of the previously defined values into the educational experience. The group focused on what skills and knowledge the community believed are important for an eighteen-year-old Wampanoag person to be equipped with. The primary concern of the group was that we wanted children to continue to learn the things that children were taught two or three generations ago. Most of these things were focused around traditional teachings, what Bryan Brayboy classifies as cultural knowledge (2006).

Again, a list was made, this time comprised of all the things we believed Mashpee Wampanoag children should have learned by the time they graduate from high school. The group decided to focus on high school-aged youth in their discussion. Although at times there was discussion about how these skills should be taught to children of all ages, the focus came to high school-aged because it was decided that they were most in need of the community's attention and intervention, and because they feel the most alienated by their educational experiences. We agreed that they are in need of constructive activities and life skills as they move toward adulthood and independence and ways to make their formal education reflective of their lives as Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal members. The skills we discussed were placed into three different categories: life skills, academic skills, and traditional skills. These categorizations of knowledge were created by the participants as those which together, make up all the knowledge that a young Wampanoag person needs. Therefore, they are complementary to, rather than in conflict with one another. Like Brayboy's (2006) discussion of different forms of knowledges, these categorizations are not opposing one another.

Life Skills	**Academic Skills**	**Traditional Skills**
Understanding finances	Reading	Sewing, beading, etc.

Career planning	Computer skills	Singing dancing
Health and wellness: Nutrition Exercise		Hunting, fishing, planting
Swimming and water safety (fresh and salt water)		Food preparation (cleaning, butchering, cooking both traditional and contemporary foods)
Self-advocacy		History, story telling.
Self-care (laundry, housekeeping, etc.)		Medicine and ceremony.

During the discussion that produced this list the participants were concerned with what characteristics we would look for in a well-rounded young Mashpee Wampanoag adult. By the time a student was ready to get a job or go to college, these were the things we believed they should know and that should be fostered by all parties who have a hand in their education. Knowledge derived from diverse knowledge systems should be complementary (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998).

The group members who were present on this day were Steve, Allison and Brad as well and Lucille and me. Everyone had strong personal ideas about what ought to be on this list. Lucille tended to talk about the traditional skills generally, while Steve focused in on hunting. Brad, as a recent high school graduate, advocated for the inclusion of many of the life skills components, and Allison was adamant that reading was the number one skill that our children needed to master. Throughout this discussion I was mostly quiet, adding a few items to the list including nutrition, exercise and medicine. I took note of everyone's contributions but did not take a strong position advocating for any specific skill or set of skills. I think this was due to the fact that all of the other participants had so much to say. I didn't offer many suggestions or contribute stories because the discussion was plenty full without me.

In the 1970s, Lucille recalled attending summer youth programs led by older community members who taught a number of valuable skills to Wampanoag youth. The programs were held on Tribal land and kids learned a variety of crafts and traditional skills such as preparing and sewing with hides, beading, planting and preparing traditional foods, and how to navigate our homelands. She emphasized that this type of programming is what our youth need now. She talked about how today's youth, especially young Wampanoag boys would really benefit from the teaching and guidance of older generations.

> [These kids] need them. When I was a kid, you couldn't do nothing cause your parents would know about it by the time you got home. You didn't step too far outta line cause there was gonna be some consequences! Now it's hard, it's really hard, to get elders to work with these kids, especially these boys.

She spoke about how today, kids have a hollow idea of "Wampanoag pride", that they are proud of being from this tradition, but don't really know what it means.

> Lucille: You know, they show up at powwow and act like that really means something. That's not *us*. We're more than showing up at a powwow but they don't know that.
>
> Brad: Most of 'em don't even dance.
>
> Lucille: They have "Wampanoag pride" tattoos and wear medallions or wampum but what's that?

She lamented that the current generation of young people don't always know how to act, or what values and skills they have that set them apart from the rest of the world, because no one has ever told them or showed them. This replacement of true knowledge of their culture by a meaningless sense of "Native pride" or "Wampanoag pride" happens as a result of students being taught about their culture, rather than through a curriculum where their culture is an inseparable part (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008).

The traditional skill that Steve felt is most lacking in our community is the ability of men and boys to hunt. From his perspective, as a man who continues to hunt for survival, this is an indispensable skill that Wampanoag men must have, especially living on Cape Cod where it is difficult to earn a salary that can support the cost of living here. With so many people focusing on building a casino and running the Tribal office, he felt people are losing their focus on traditional skills, including the ability to be self-sufficient and provide for one's own family in more ways than just financially. "Stop and Shop is expensive! You can't get out of there for less than $50! But I can hunt and my kids can eat." His family can be healthy and well-fed because of his ability to provide for them and because he is actively passing this skill on, his son's future family will share this ability. He continued, "and [my son] can hunt so he'll be able to [provide for his family], too." But Steve believes, and the group agreed, that this is entirely too uncommon. Many men and most boys cannot or do not hunt. Few people are teaching the younger generations of boys.

In attempting to think as a group about which young boys were learning to hunt from their fathers, grandfathers, or uncles, we could only name two: Steve's son and one other boy. The reason for this as hypothesized by the group was that many adult men who hunt are not able to do so legally, most likely because they are hunting without a license to carry, or a firearms card, generally because of felony convictions that disallow it. Everyone in the group knew of men in the community who hunted illegally, and Steve and Lucille both named examples of men who for this reason, specifically refused to take children with them to teach them to hunt. In particular, most stories included not wanting to be held back by a child from running away should they be caught, or not wanting to

have children exposed to the possible consequences of hunting illegally. No one said that they didn't think children should hunt illegally because it is not the right thing to do. Hunting illegally was not really expressed as a concern in general, rather the aboriginal right to feed one's family, in all cases, trumps the lack of a gun permit. Neither of the two options are preferable: minimize the risk of legal action or personal harm by refraining from practicing our aboriginal right to feed our families from the land, or exercise our aboriginal right and put ourselves at risk. This equates to what Grande cites as the

> …profoundly racist and Eurocentric notion that tribal or non-state societies have only two choices: (1) to assimilate to the state system, giving up self-determination; or (2) maintain self-determination and be denied a place in the world's legal and political order. (2004, citing d'Errico, 1997)

It was never implied during the conversation that children shouldn't ever hunt illegally, but that as a young child, they were too young to understand the potential consequences of being caught. Some conversation amongst the group centered around some teenagers who would understand the consequences and the necessary action if they were to be caught, and in some cases, would already be illegal hunters themselves. A number of teenage boys have felony convictions already that would not allow them to carry a gun legally.

Lucille also pointed to three particular court cases where Tribal members were harassed or even attacked for exercising their rights to hunt and fish, including one from her own immediate family. She referenced the story that we all knew of her husband being severely beaten by Mashpee police officers in his own yard after they followed him from the river where he had taken some herring several years ago. After the confrontation where both Julian and the police were yelling back and forth, Julian was

physically assaulted by the officers, which landed him in the hospital and caused injuries to his legs that bother him to this day. Exposing children to this type of experience is difficult. On one hand, it's important that they know their rights; on the other hand, hunting and fishing can be dangerous when other unknowing individuals, law enforcement and civilian alike, challenge those rights.

Steve talked about what a benefit it could be to the community if responsible men who were able to legally carry guns were to teach boys to hunt from a young age. Steve surmised that if young boys were taught what a responsibility it is to their family to be able to contribute in that way, and how it is a continuation of the practice of generations of their family, then it could be a prevention technique for the trouble some boys get into. He expressed that if boys understood why carrying a gun is important to their family's well-being, then perhaps they would be less likely to engage in the type of behavior that would jeopardize that ability. He said, "you can't be in trouble and be a hunter." Likewise, raising a generation of young people, both male and female, who understand their rights as Indigenous people in Massachusetts may bring about a change over time when law-enforcement is faced with more people who they are not able to bully.

Connected to the lack of hunting ability (as well as some other subsistence activities) is the neocolonial reality that there are simply fewer resources. Lucille lamented that it's impossible to go clamming on Cape Cod anymore because there are no clams there now. Another reason was the mainstream culture that children are more exposed to than they were in our parents' generation. Kids now are familiar with the grocery store and the ease of going there to pick their food off the shelf, rather than going to the bay or the woods with their baskets and spending the whole morning. Allison told

a story of taking a walk with her young boys on a street where some grapes were growing on the side of the road. She picked some and gave them to her boys who had not made the connection that the food from the store in fact comes from the natural environment. "[My son] was so excited. He put 'em in his pocket and when we got home he said 'Dad, look! Do you know what this is?' He just couldn't believe you could find stuff to eat outside like that."

While the primary focus throughout the group's conversation was on imparting information and knowledge of tradition orally or through a master-apprentice style of teaching, print literacy was a point of serious concern, particularly for Allison. She was focused heavily on the necessity to build reading skills. Like Brayboy (2006), she was concerned that we needed not only traditional knowledge, but also academic knowledge, and reading in particular, in order to acquire a knowledge of survival. She discussed her own struggle with reading that continues to this day as a woman in her thirties. She said, "I still have a hard time with reading. Thank God, I have the best boss, cause sometimes it takes me a while to do some stuff [that requires a lot of reading]." Lucille, Steve and she all had a lot to say on this subject. The overall consensus of the group was that in our own experiences and in those of people we knew, many Mashpee Tribal members shared a similar experience with reading. All participants felt as though reading was a source of struggle for Mashpee children, but that math comes fairly easily. Allison talked about a whole group of junior high school girls, her oldest daughter and Steve's daughter included, who all struggle with reading. Lucille also talked about her husband and a cohort of older men in their fifties who also had problems reading, describing specifically the way she helps Julian complete tasks that require reading, "I manage his email. When

he gets one, I print it, I read it to him. He tells me how to respond and I type it and send it." On the other hand, she talked about her husband's natural ability to build things by visualizing.

> That man can build anything just by looking at it for a minute. He has an amazing ability to visualize something and the way it works. He should have been an engineer. I swear he's smarter than most of 'em. We get stuff from Ikea or wherever, and I'll get ready to put it together and I lay everything out and open the directions. Then he'll come over and look at the picture, study it for a minute and just get to work. By the time he's done he might have screws left over but it's perfect. It's sturdy, it's beautiful. It's probably build better than it shoulda been.

Three out of the four participants also talked about individuals that they knew who shared this ability. The group agreed that this skill came from a learned behavior of learning by watching and doing. For generations, children have been expected to learn important traditional skills by watching it done repeatedly and then working it out themselves. As part of this conversation, I shared the following:

> I can't tell you how to smoke herring. I don't know how many steps it takes, or, or if it's better to use hickory or apply or whatever. But I've seen it done so many times that I probably would know what I was doing if I tried. I know where to get the fish, how to salt them, how to hang 'em, how long to leave 'em to dry. I know. But nobody ever told me. I've just seen my dad do it just about every year for thirty plus years.

Using prior knowledge to problem solve is a skill that comes naturally to many Tribal members because it mirrors the way we have been taught by our families. Many Mashpee Wampanoag people are at ease learning this way. This kind of learning would be better served by a curriculum that takes a hands-on approach where teachers model the behavior they want their students to understand and students copy when they are ready, whether it be learning to count, or learning to smoke fish (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008; Kawagley, 1990). The group agreed that this type of pedagogy would be beneficial in

schools or any educational environment, either as a primary or supplementary method of teaching.

Learning to read, however, the group believed attempts to tap into a function in which we tend not to excel. The need for better readers, everyone agreed, is essential for a successful life during and after high school. Allison noted from personal experience that it would also help to keep children in school because they would feel more confident while they were there if they were able to successfully manage such a basic but necessary task. The ability to complete their work like the rest of their peers required the ability to read at their grade level. Allison talked about how she struggled to finish school because of what she called her "practically non-existent" reading skills. As a tenth-grader, she dropped out of school because she felt stupid in school and as though she was incapable of doing what was expected of her. When she returned later, she found that rather than truly teaching her to read, her teachers and administrators pushed her through the system to get her to graduation. Lucille chimed in about her son, whose reading level was well below grade-level throughout his school years and how it caused him to struggle to finish.

These students we discussed including some participants and their families, like so many other Mashpee Wampanoag students, were victims of public school systems that place no value on their students' culture and do not only provide them with an educational experience that is culturally irrelevant (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008), but one that makes no effort to sustain cultural knowledge that students have before they begin their education. This is in sharp contrast to the Native American Community Academy example that McCarty and Lee describe which seeks to help its students

through a "holistic or well-rounded education focused on 'strengthening communities by developing strong leaders who are academically prepared, secure in their identity, and healthy,'" (2014, quoting NACA 2012, p. 108,). The project reported on here aimed to do the same: to envision and create a self-determined education for and by Mashpee Wampanoag community members.

Allison, having endured educational struggles herself, felt as a parent at a loss for how to help her daughter who also has trouble in a school that makes no special effort to cater to her cultural needs as a Wampanoag student. She talked about having countless conversations with her daughter's teachers and encouraging her daughter to read to her young brothers. "I have her read anything I can. She reads to [her brothers] before bed, she reads cookbooks, magazines, anything. But it's hard… Her teachers need to help her. They need to help me help her." But still, there remains a gap in her ability and the expectation for her in the seventh grade. Allison looks desperately for a solution to the issue that she is not able to fix herself, not just for her daughter, but her daughter's friends who Allison knows need the same support.

Brad spoke about the need for young adults to learn life skills. As a new college student, he believed that youth his age could benefit from things like financial planning, and learning how to make a budget, manage a checking or debit account, etc. He also thought that it would be helpful to have some help in career planning. This spurred a conversation about how helpful it would be if the Tribal offices would offer open houses to allow high school-aged youth to come and see what they do in their respective departments so that kids could get a sense of what kinds of jobs might be available to them in the future. As a group, we also discussed the potential for instituting an

apprentice program for youth where they could have small jobs in various departments that both are helpful to the operation of the Tribe, but also give students job training and exposure to the operations of a large organization. Brad liked this idea and thought that a program like that would have been helpful for him in choosing a path after high school.

Each of the topics that were discussed in depth reflected the perspectives of those who sat at the table together. Although other skills such as singing and dancing were added to the larger list of what the participants believed were necessary skills, what was spoken about at length, once again, came directly from the lived experiences of the group. The traditional skills that Lucille spoke about were not necessarily inclusive of all the potential skills present in the Mashpee Wampanoag community, but rather the skills that she had been exposed to as a teenage girl. Steve spoke from a place of what he could offer to help fix the issues faced by so many young people and that was his ability to teach young boys to hunt. "I'd love it if that was my job. The Tribe can pay me to take these kids hunting. I'll take 'em to Hunter's Safety. 'Fact, there's one coming up in January. I'll take 'em." Allison and Brad both spoke about what they felt like they are currently missing as adults. They spoke about a hope that future generations of youth graduating from high schools would not be missing the same pieces that they felt they had.

Noticeably absent from the final list were many college-readiness-related skills aside from reading and technology. Although early on in our meetings, Lucille mentioned a struggle that many students have with writing, it was apparently forgotten when it came time to create a comprehensive list. Although computer skills and reading skills made their way onto our list of concerns, missing were such things like writing,

time-management, standardized test-taking skills, college familiarity such as which schools would be comfortable fits for students, where one might go to pursue particular careers, application and FAFSA processes, etc.

The traditional skills were well represented by the list we created, and many life-skills were present as well. However, even including "academic skills" as its own category did not prompt anyone to follow through at much length any discussion on these topics. While the research questions that underlined these focus group do not expressly mention or even imply college as an end goal for any student, it is surprising that not one person in the group, including one person who is currently in college, would think to include those skills as even helpful, if not necessary. It's especially surprising considering what commitment all the participants had to Mashpee Wampanoag youth's education. Also, given Lucille helps students prepare regularly as part of her job, I expected that she would direct us toward such a discussion. I expected that this discussion would extend to preparing students to continue their education after high school as well. Perhaps if I had added more to the conversation we may have eventually come to talk about preparation for higher education because I personally believe it's critical at the high school level, at least to allow students college as an option so that they can make decisions about that path, rather than have it closed off because of lack of familiarity. Brayboy (2006) argues that college readiness skills should be integral components to "academic knowledge" which includes the knowledge we need to navigate a modern world surrounded by mainstream culture. While traditional skills are important and allow us to remain rooted in our culture, it's imperative to also acquire academic skills so that we can combine them to obtain a comprehensive knowledge of

survival. Knowledge of survival is ultimately important to survive as Indigenous people in today's modern whitestream society.

I chose not to add college-preparation skills to the conversation, even after that meeting ended when I realized they had not been included. I chose not to go back to it in later group meetings because I felt like perhaps it was not the group's goal to discuss college readiness. To me, and perhaps to other college-educated people, the question "what knowledge is necessary to live as a healthy, successful, Mashpee Wampanoag person in 2013?" would probably be answered in a way that included college knowledge. But to this group, maybe that is not considered a "necessity," while learning to read certainly is. Math skills, although also a necessity, is not much of an area of concern in our community and therefore was not included an on the list. Looking back, I believe that the group made their list based on what successes we have had with the resources available to us to date. Most people have not gone to college and yet, we still remain an intelligent and largely successful, healthy group in many ways. That said, what is "necessary" in the eyes of the participants, may not be college related. Dorothy Holland discusses this through the concept of figured worlds (1998), that what is in our immediate lived experiences has texture in what we can imagine. As college becomes a more widespread experience, the knowledge of how to approach higher education so that it doesn't lead to the assimilation that "seems to be an inevitable outcome of education that occurs through the formal structures of western schooling," (Brayboy, 2006, p. 437) will take shape, centering the cultivation and maintenance of cultural integrity.

Future work may add the topic of skills for college preparation as higher education may be more of an expectation for Tribal students in the future. As more

Wampanoag youth benefit from CRP and are able to navigate whitestream and Wampanoag worlds, then more detailed conversations about how to engage tertiary education and its specific colonial histories (Deloria, 1969) will become possible.

Throughout the fifteen weeks that the group met, everyone was fully-committed to the mission of theorizing and designing a culturally based education for Mashpee Wampanoag students based on our values and students' needs as they enter adulthood. Based on our own experiences and our knowledge of our community, having all spent most of not all of our lives in and around Mashpee, we confidently determined what believed to be the important aspects. The process was an exercise in self-determination and the result was a move toward providing a cultural education for Mashpee Wampanoag students.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The research project reported on here was a collaborative effort on the part of participating Mashpee Wampanoag community members who want to work toward affecting educational improvement for our Tribal youth. Collaboration was complemented by authentic participation on the parts of the six people involved who shared their stories (theories) (Brayboy, 2006), which helped to establish a self-critical look at the ways in which our community both helps our children when we provide them with cultural and academic knowledge for their survival, and how we fail them when we don't live our lives in a way that allows us to pass our traditions on to our children like carrying a gun illegally and therefore feeling uncomfortable teaching children to hunt. These participatory storytelling experiences served to guide the process toward self-determination in education, which is truly the best way to create positive educational experiences for Tribal children.

This series of focus groups has taught Lucille, the other participants, and me much about the current and future aspirations around education for Tribal youth. We defined our commonly held values through this activity, were able to find the gaps that remain as a result of education, both formal and informal. We've also learned how we can work to fill those gaps and what kind of content and process it will take to do so.

To continue this work beyond the scope of this research, the group members decided to broaden the number of people involved in the process. At the end of our meetings, the participants planned to take their findings to the youth for their input, allowing them to exercise their own self-determination through this process for the

betterment of their own education. Based on the values and necessary knowledge we identified, we wanted to solicit information from the youth as to what kinds of activities they would like to participate in based on these needs. From there, the group believed that they would have a better sense of how to go about actually designing a program that would be culturally based, and also desirable to the population it sought to serve. All the participants except for Elaine committed to help furthering the work we had set out to do. Further work will also help to fill in some of the gaps overlooked by the researcher participants as other community members are able to offer their input from their own experience.

Implications

This study brought to light many truths throughout the process. Just like the limitations, the implications of this work were also divided by implications made by the research process itself, implications for the practice by the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, and implications for research in Indian Education.

Implications of the Process

The implication that stands out from this process is the way that community inclusion trumps the perceived exclusion of Tribal members who leave the community. The Mashpee Wampanoag community is a loyal one. Having been born into this Tribe and having been raised in my community learning the traditions and gaining the knowledge of my family who came before me, and for returning here to live and raise my family, while involving myself and my children in the activities of the community as

often as possible, my status as an insider has been solidified in the eyes of my fellow community members. Despite leaving my home to pursue my education and to work, the effort I have made to conduct myself as I believe a Mashpee Wampanoag person should and my love for my home and my community, have allowed me to move in and out of the whitestream and academic world without compromising my place at home. Despite the other domains in which I operate being ones guided by the systematic oppression and marginalization of my community, they do not see me as a part of that system; they see their family. The participants in our group, as representatives of the community, believed in my intentions to help move our youth in positive directions as coming from a personal motivation and caring for our people and not from a desire to fix what I see as broken.

Another implication of the process of conducting this research project in my home community with their help and guidance is that the two are not easily married and the institution of higher education and scholarly research is still in control of the resulting academic document, regardless of the framework under which the project operates. While the participants in this project were generally at ease with the process of signing consent forms and working within the guidelines of a university-supported project, etc, the traditional linear structure of the university-sanctioned research was less accommodating of the way in which the community chose to conduct the research project. Despite the goal of a self-determined project, university expectations of a traditional dissertation were largely inflexible. That said, dissertation research is a difficult venue for conducting truly participatory research, probably in any community, but certainly in an Indigenous one. Without the help of Indigenous scholars directly involved in the process who can "help to substantiate the Indigenous research done by

others" there remains a need to "constantly justify, validate or change our work in order to fit foreign research paradigms" (Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008, p. 127).

Implications for Practice

This study brought forth many implications for the Tribe's future practices. Among these implications are (1) higher education is not well-understood by the community, despite their agreement that it is a desirable outcome, (2) a set of values that are recognized by the entire Tribe would be beneficial, (3) a unique benefit of doing this kind of participatory, insider research is the exercise in self-determination, and (4) the project of defining values and determining necessary knowledge ought to continue beyond the scope of this research.

The first implication for practice that came to light as a result of this project was that the community would benefit greatly from a definition of values that can be agreed upon by all. If the Tribal community came together as a larger group to define what it is that we collectively value that defined us as a Nation, with more participation from the community and a greater representation of Tribal members along gender, age, and family or clan, the Tribe would be able to move forward in its organization with a unified understanding of what it means to be Mashpee Wampanoag.

If the community developed an agreed-upon set of values they could be used as a framework for the design of future programming in all aspects of Tribal services. In the future, when the Education Department or any other department (Health, Youth, Enrollment, etc.) wants to design a program that reflects our heritage they would only have to look to the predetermined values for guidance. The Iliññiagnikun Apqusiuqtit

benefitted from already having an established set of values that their community had previously agreed to when they undertook their overhaul of the North Slope public school curriculum (Pederson, Harcharek, Okakok, Peetook, Aiken, Riley, et al., 2010).

The second implication for practice is that Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal members clearly respect higher education and believe that it is in fact desirable, but they may not be sure of the details that should be taught and discussed in order to attain it. While the participants came to this group with the intention of improving education for our children, they did not discuss explicitly the need for college readiness and the inclusions on the list of necessary academic knowledge was extremely limited. It seems as though the people who joined our group were unclear of exactly what college readiness should look like. They didn't add specific college-related components to our list of academic skills because they were quite possibly unable to articulate them. That being the case, there is an even greater need for the Education Department to include college readiness skills to the services they provide to the community if higher education is really a desired outcome for Mashpee Wampanoag kids.

Thirdly, a benefit of engaging in insider research in one's own community is that it is an act of self-determination. In conducting our own research for the purposes that we identify ourselves, we are able to further our ability to live our lives in our home and eliminate the perceived need of outsiders to attempt to fix the problems they see (Grande, 2004). In addressing what we see as issues in a culturally appropriate way that only we could define, we increase our autonomy by asserting our existence by our own definition, thereby honoring our elders and ancestors who created this life for us and protecting it for the seven generations who will come after us.

Finally, although the research officially ended after the ten focus group meetings were completed, the analysis of the content of the groups points to more discussion of these questions being necessary in order to keep the findings relevant as time and circumstance change, and to continue to actively encourage the survivance of our Tribal community. Also, because knowledge is dynamic and even within a group of experts on a particular subject, understandings can vary (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008, citing Battiste), we must continue to discuss what we deem to be necessary knowledge and continually make amendments to our goals for and expectations of our youth in different contexts.

Implications for Research

This project, as a display of self-determination by the Mashpee Wampanoag community, provides for Indian Education research a model by which other communities can inspired. Like other insider research that is conceived in the community rather than the academy, this project is one that others can look to when they are presented with "offers" to be a part of university-driven research. Just as I was inspired by the Iliññiagnikun Apqusiuqtit to design a similar project with my community, others might be so inspired by the work we have done in our home. By knowing what others have been able to do for themselves without the help of outsiders, other Tribal communities who may struggle with their self-determination can see that conducting research in their community does not have to come from the outside.

Limitations

Our project, while successful in many ways, including bringing together a group of individuals to begin to discuss how we as a community should be the ones shaping our children's education, there remained some limitations to the study in its design and implementation. These limitations are divided into two sections: limitations of the process, and limitations for the Mashpee community as it puts the results of our project into practice.

Limitations of the Process

The biggest limitation to this study was its small group of participants. While the number of participants was indeed out of our control, there are a number of ways that this impacted the results of the focus groups. Although it may still have been true even with more participants, answers to the research questions were limited by not providing a wider variation of opinion or knowledge. Because we were not able to reach this number, and in the end only were able to recruit six people (one of whom only attended one meeting), the variation of perspectives was limited, making this research all the more specific requiring that due to the dynamic nature of culture and knowledge (Brayboy, 2006), more work will need to be done continuously toward this effort.

The small size of the group also, I believe, contributed to the politeness that was almost always present in the group meetings. While the agreement we shared throughout the meetings made for a pleasant experience for the participants, inclusion of more disagreement and possibly even more arguing which is often a component of Tribal discussions, could have increased the breadth of our discussions by forcing us all to take

a closer and more critical look at the knowledge, story and opinion we were contributing. Given the other sets of knowledges found in the Wampanoag community, future work will build on the foundation laid by these focus groups.

Limitations for Practice

The most important limitation for the Mashpee Wampanoag community as they would attempt to use this study to inform practice, is the obvious lack of college readiness skills in what the participants created as a list of necessary knowledge "to live as a healthy, successful Mashpee Wampanoag person in 2013." Because only reading skills and computer skills were included under the academic knowledge category, a vast collective of college readiness skills were overlooked. Math, writing, critical thinking, standardized testing skills, understanding of college and FAFSA applications, just to name a few were all overlooked in our final determination of what constitutes necessary knowledge.

If the Tribe were to take our work and use it to implement a strategy for improving students' educational experiences, they would miss a large subgroup of the population by not addressing this need. Whether or not the group believed that college was a desired or necessary outcome for its youth, not including college-related skills in the list of academic skills makes the list of knowledges we want our children to have at the time of their graduation for high school incomplete. By not including these academic skills, it could potentially limit the resources the Tribe might make available to students if they were to adopt the results of this project to implement policies and services, thereby

alienating a group of our community's youth who are on a college track but require support to get there.

Also largely missing from the discussion on values was knowledge of Wôpanâôt8âôk. Although it could be assumed that this is a component of cultural "teachings" in fact it was not part of the conversation that named that category. As a language teacher myself, I know that understanding the language helps to more fully understand culture. However, the participants in the group did not include this in the discussion. Reclaiming our language has been one of our proudest achievements as Wampanoag people and has been a massive undertaking that has included many and resulted in a self-determined project of unparalleled proportions. Not including this piece of cultural knowledge as necessary for Wampanoag students is a potentially damaging oversight, not only because of what it means for our cultural knowledge but also because of the positive impact that knowing and incorporating into their education one's own Indigenous language has on children's education (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008; Demmert and Bell, 1991; Meriam et al, 1928). Perhaps because the Language Project has been so transformative it didn't seem necessary to explicitly name. It's important that we do explicitly name it though, as a core to educational self-determination in this community.

Self-determination and Culturally Based Education for Mashpee Wampanoag Youth

Had this project been conceived or facilitated by non-Mashpee Wampanoag researchers, framed by the work of non-Native scholars, or used a methodology other

than a participatory one, self-determined education could not be the result. It would not have been effective in making change in the education systems attended by our students and it would have been impossible to approach our discussions from a place of cultural knowledge. Research in Native communities *must* necessarily be driven by the community in order to serve the goal of self-determination (Brayboy, 2006), a notion taken for granted in whitestream communities but consciously constructed in Native communities.

In committing to participate in this process, community members contributed to the ultimate goal of transforming education for Mashpee Wampanoag students into something more comfortable, familiar, and relevant to them. This project for all of us as Tribal community members, was an act of self-determination, which is never an easy process. In my experience as a Native person navigating a well-integrated whitestream educational system, whether as a student, a teacher, or a supporter of other students, keeping a constant eye open to the ways in which we have been and continue to be colonized is a difficult but necessary task. Simply because we were a group of Indigenous people does not mean that we all were decolonized before or as a result of this project. Recognizing these structures that are built around us is most often contrary to the ways we have learned to think about ourselves in relation to the world we live in because of our existence within a society controlled by the ongoing project of colonialism. However, being aware of the structure and being cognizant of the ways it attempts to oppress and suppress us, gives way to thinking about how to navigate around it and make for ourselves our own route to meet our own goals in a way that is rooted in our culture and knowledge systems. In attempting to re-imagine and re-create an educational project

for Wampanoag youth, we, as a group of community members, are working to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for future generations of our Tribe. Through this project, we have worked collectively for the betterment of our children's experiences the way we are supposed to: with the intention to set forth for the seven generations that follow us, the best possible future.

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Appendix A

Education Focus Group Participants Wanted

Nuweetanuhkôsuwâhuhshômun nuwshkusuwâeenune8unônak

'We are working together for our young ones'

The Education Department is looking for 10 people to commit to participating in a series of 6 monthly focus groups with the goal of shaping a vision for the education of generations of Tribal members to come. The specific result of the group will be determined by the participants, but the initial guiding questions are: "What are the values that we as Mashpee Wampanoag people expect each other to uphold?" and "What knowledge is necessary to live as a healthy, successful Mashpee Wampanoag person in 2012?"

Exact dates and times are yet to be set but sessions will likely be ½ days on either Saturdays or Sundays. Proposed weekends are June 8-9, July 20-21, August 17-18, September 21-22, October 19-20 and November 16-17.

This project is the topic for Nitana Hicks' dissertation research for her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction at Boston College.

For questions or to express interest, please contact:
Renee Lopes-Pocknett at rpocknett@mwtribe.com or in the Education Department at 508-419-6017, or Nitana Hicks at nitanahicks@gmail.com or in the Language Department at 508-419-6281.
More information coming soon! Kutâputunumun!

Appendix B

Question Prompts

- What are your goals for your children after high school? What are their goals for themselves?
    - How do Wampanoag values play a role in achieving those goals?
    - How are Wampanoag values maintained in the reality of achieving those goals?

- Specifically, give an example of when your children have had success in school. Give an example of when they have struggled? What helped (or would have helped) to turn the struggle around?

- How can Wampanoag values be reflected in the way students are taught and assessed?

- How can we as a Tribe best support our students who receive their education in mainstream public schools?

- What is missing from your children's education? If you were to fill in the gaps, how would you do it? Who would help you?