Course Development in American Indian Studies: A Basic Qualitative Research Design

Michael Stewart Oblinger

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Michael Stewart Oblinger

Approved by:

Dissertation Chair: Barry Chametzky, PhD

Committee Member: Tiffany Hamlett, PhD

Abstract

The problem was a lack of consultation from American Indian Studies scholars, tribal leaders, and from specific data sources when courses in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) were created. The purpose of the basic qualitative research design was to provide a voice from experts in American Indian Studies and addresses the problem when pre-existing knowledge existed regarding the courses being taught in American Indian culture, history, and society. American Indian Studies needed to be examined from the perspective of experts. Allowing Indigenous leaders to present various insights and concerns regarding American Indian Studies courses, which are not present in the literature, filled the research gap in knowledge. Constructivism was the theoretical framework. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to retrieve data from 53 sources, including community colleges, tribal community leaders, American Indian Studies scholars, and Virginia Indian tribe websites, which are the best fit in terms of people, organizations, and resources to extract specific information. Two instruments for data collection were used: an internet search for specific documents, and online, open-ended questions via email and SurveyMonkey. Research Question 1 addressed the program objectives for American Indian Studies courses. Research Question 2 addressed the current issues, policies, and other challenges pertaining to American Indians. Manual analysis and NVivo software were used in categorizing the information. Data saturation provided four themes: (a) accurate historical content, (b) cultural traditions, (c) the importance of Indigenous languages, and (d) government relations, which provide opportunities to maintain self-sufficient tribal governments on reservations.

Keywords: American Indian, Indigenous, Constructivist, American Indian Studies, Sovereignty, Decolonization

Dedication

To Susan

Your love and support have helped me complete this dissertation. This would not be possible without you!

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There are many people to thank. I am indebted to my dissertation Chairperson Dr. Barry Chametzky, for his guidance, encouragement, and patience. You have made me challenge myself because of your commitment to excellence. I want to thank my committee member Dr. Tiffany Hamlett, and all my professors at the American College of Education. In addition, my family has been very supportive in my endeavor to earn a doctoral degree, and I am blessed and fortunate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Many educational institutions have not incorporated the valuable input available from minorities when developing courses, curriculums, and degree programs (Krueger, 2019; Schaefli et al., 2018). The omissions regarding minority cultures limit the knowledge and perspectives for students to develop critical thinking skills and perceptions regarding the achievements, values, and beliefs of different people in other societal groups (Krueger, 2019; Mason & Ernst-Slavit, 2010; McBean & Feinberg, 2020; Schaefli et al., 2018). The treatment of marginalized groups in history creates an environment where different cultural groups are viewed as unequal members of society (McBean & Feinberg, 2020). The marginalization, discrimination, and inaccurate information regarding American Indians in textbooks continues and needs to be rectified (Krueger, 2019; Schaefli et al., 2018; Stanton, 2014).

The study was necessary to improve current classes and increase the number of courses taught, in addition to developing an American Indian Studies degree specialization and an associate degree in the discipline. If the research were not completed, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) would have continued to retain American Indian Studies courses which lack the input of Indigenous People. A potential benefit of the changes is the opportunity for faculty and students to gain a greater understanding of the culture and society of American Indians as well as other ethnic and minority groups (Harris & Reynolds, 2014; McBean & Feinberg, 2020). Other benefits for students include supporting the transfer agreements VCCS has with George Mason University (GMU), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI), the College of William and Mary (W&M), and other 4-year institutions offering courses and undergraduate majors and minors in American Indian Studies (NOVA, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c,

2020d, 2020e, 2020f; VCCS, 2020d). In addition, the creation of research and academic services such as an academic internship at the National Museum of the American Indian, an American and Indigenous Alliance Association, the participation in local and national Powwows, the opportunity to attend American Indian conferences, and the opportunity to submit articles in American Indian Studies journals could benefit VCCS students and faculty members with meaningful Indigenous related educational experiences (Lee, 2015, 2017; University of Arizona, 2017).

The benefit of interdisciplinary American Indian Studies courses, specialization, and an associate degree program, enables students to explore multiple fields of study, and develop a knowledge base, and experience, exploring various methodologies, and pedagogies of other disciplines (Augustus, 2015; Clarke & Young-In, 2018; Everett, 2016; Hu, 2017; Luo, 2013; Wiebe, 2016). In a classroom setting, with a community of learners from other fields of study, communication, attitudes, beliefs, and feedback within and between groups, open new possibilities for valuable learning and enrichment where students can have the opportunity to become reflective and critical thinkers (Jorgensen, 2015, 2017). The opportunity for new course and curriculum initiatives offers students the prospect of devising an approved course of study and research which may fulfill other academic and career goals (Augustus, 2015; Clarke & Young-In, 2018; Everett, 2016; Hu, 2017; Jorgensen, 2015, 2017; Luo, 2013; Wiebe, 2016).

The first section of Chapter 1 entails the background of the problem and is a synopsis of information related to the Western European educational system, which has continued presenting inaccurate information regarding many ethnic groups (Boas, 1966a, 1966b; Du Bois, 2018; Mays, 2013). The statement of the problem section includes a discussion of the exclusion of

Indigenous People and other ethnic groups in the existing Western European educational system. The purpose of the study provides a rationale for the research connecting and identifying how the significance of the investigation could benefit particular groups of people, institutions and enhance present courses. Research questions in the investigation were used to discover issues and concerns from the respondents and help explore and identify the central phenomenon in a basic qualitative research design. An explanation was given why a particular method of collecting data was the most appropriate fit for the investigation. Key concepts were provided and defined to facilitate comprehension and were used to offer clear descriptions of the terms used throughout the study. An analysis of the assumptions of the study is given to explain actual or plausible items. The delimitations presented describe and define the boundaries of the research, which can be controlled in the study. An examination of potential weaknesses is discussed in the limitations section. A summary of the information is given which transitions into Chapter 2.

Background of the Problem

The background of the problem encompasses an examination of decolonizing, reorganizing, and re-teaching inaccurate Europeanized historical and cultural information regarding Indigenous People and other ethnic groups (Bennett, 2015; Butler, 2018; Krueger, 2019; National Council for the Social Studies, 2018; Schaefli et al., 2018). Information in many history courses and other disciplines contains misleading material regarding the cultural and societal values of Indigenous People and other ethnic groups (Bennett, 2015; Butler, 2018; Krueger, 2019; National Council for the Social Studies, 2018; Schaefli et al., 2018). Western European perspectives can contain insufficient, or biased information on Indigenous and other

ethnic populations (Butler, 2018; Krueger, 2019; Schaefli et al., 2018; Singer & Haircrow, 2016). The input of Indigenous knowledge and experiences has been minimized and neglected in typical courses and curriculum structures (Bennett, 2015; Boas, 1966a, 1966b; Du Bois, 2018; Mays, 2013; Zehr, 2008). Non-white populations have been projected as inferior in a Western European dominated educational system (Bennett, 2015; Boas, 1966a, 1966b; Du Bois, 2018; Mays, 2013).

W. E. B. Du Bois and Franz Boas are two of the many scholars who influenced the advancement and the creation of various Indigenous and ethnic studies courses and degree programs in academia (Blackhawk & Wilner, 2018; Lewis, 2018; Mays, 2013; Novakowski, 2018; Salenius, 2016; Torres Colón & Hobbs, 2015). Du Bois and Boas investigated racism, colonialism, imperialism, human cultures, and the socio-evolutionary narratives of history (Allen & Jobson, 2016; Andrews, 2015; Henderson, 2013; Inwood, 2017; Seamster & Ray, 2018). Du Bois and Boas shared skepticism in the theory of social Darwinism, which was used to explain biological explanations of racial inferiority (Boas, 1966a, 1966b; Du Bois, 2018; Fallace, 2016). Both scholars agreed the concept of discrimination was a social construct and part of intolerance and political pedagogy (Andrews, 2015; Boas, 1966a, 1966b; Du Bois, 2018; Torres & Torres Colón, 2015). For more than four centuries, the concept of race has been a lens used by individuals to judge people, cultures, and societies (Bennett, 2015; Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Freire, 2016; Liss, 1998). The negative and positive perception of race can include classifying human beings into different physical characteristics such as gender, eye shape, hair form, or skin color (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Gillborn, 2015; Liss, 1998). Boas and Du Bois challenged racist ideas

and employed the methods of social science to discredit the assumptions in relation to Black communities and the negative stereotypes associated with other ethnic and cultural groups (Adu-Febiri, 2017; Blackhawk & Wilner, 2018; Erhart & Hall, 2019; Fallace, 2016; Liss, 1998).

Indigenous Peoples share similar experiences across the globe (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Freire, 2016). The Indigenous Population in many countries are often confronted with discrimination and are affected by being marginalized because of the aforementioned differences in the inequalities of law cases, medical care, land, and educational rights (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Freire, 2016; McBean & Feinberg, 2020; Robertson, 2015). Although the interest in ethnic and Indigenous studies is increasing in colleges and universities internationally, the culture and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples are diminished by what is taught by non-Indigenous instructors, and what is omitted in school curricula and textbooks (Jones, 2018; Pember, 2007; Thornton, 1978, 1999). The Western European educational system has been the primary vehicle by which culture and knowledge were passed from one generation to another and used to suppress Indigenous and ethnic societies (Reyhner, 2015, 2018; Reyhner & Tennant, 1995). In many classrooms the basic understandings of colonialism, Indigenous presence, and the concept of decolonization are unknown to students (Jobin, 2016; Jones, 2018; Thornhill et al., 2018).

In an effort to confront and eradicate the inequalities, more than 25 colleges and universities worldwide offer courses, specializations, and degrees in the discipline of Global Indigenous, Area, Ethnic, and Cultural studies (GradSchools.com, 2020; Nelson, 2018). There are more than 135, 4-year institutions in the United States which offer courses, specializations, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in American Indian Studies (Nelson, 2018). As of

2020, in Virginia, George Mason University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and the College of William and Mary offer a baccalaureate minor in the discipline (Fiske, 2019; Nelson, 2018). More than 50 community colleges offer courses, specializations, and associate degrees pertaining to American Indian Studies (Nelson, 2018; Peterson's, 2019).

The Virginia Community College System encompasses 23 colleges in the commonwealth (VCCS, 2020b). Northern Virginia Community College is one of 23 colleges within the VCCS, and is governed by the State Board for Community Colleges (VCCS, 2020b). None of the colleges in the VCCS offer a specialization or an associate degree in American Indian Studies (VCCS, 2020c). Only two courses are offered in American Indian culture, society, and history: *The History of the American Indian* and *Native American culture* (VCCS, 2020c).

Statement of the Problem

The problem was a lack of consultation from American Indian Studies scholars, tribal leaders, and from specific data sources when courses in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) were created. The purpose of the basic qualitative research design was to provide a voice from experts in American Indian Studies and addresses the problem when pre-existing knowledge existed regarding the courses being taught in American Indian culture, history, and society. The topic needed to be examined from the perspective of experts (Augustus, 2015; Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016; Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). The research study filled the gap in knowledge by allowing Indigenous leaders to present various insights and concerns regarding American Indian Studies courses. Courses, specializations, and degree programs in American Indian Studies in the Virginia Community College System and in many other colleges and universities which were implemented without consulting American Indian Studies scholars and

tribal community leaders, even though these individuals have significant experience regarding the issues and concerns of Indigenous People (Carjuzaa, 2009, 2017; Champagne, 2007, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Eargle, 2016; Glenn, 2019; Prichard, 2016; Stanton et al., 2019). American Indian Studies courses being offered in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and other educational institutions are taught from a Western European perspective and pedagogy (Carjuzaa, 2009, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015; Ngai & Koehn, 2010, 2016). The voices of America Indians have been suppressed for decades and need to be incorporated into many areas of curriculum development in the VCCS and in other educational institutions (Bacalja & Bliss, 2019; Hamilton, 2019; McBean & Feinberg, 2020; Quigley, 2016; Zehr, 2008). The study contributes to the knowledge base because new viewpoints, opinions, concerns, and comments of the participants (American Indians) can provide a contribution and input, which may improve and enhance the existing courses (Maxwell, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the basic qualitative research design was to provide a voice from experts in American Indian Studies and addresses the problem when pre-existing knowledge existed regarding the courses being taught in American Indian culture, history, and society. The topic needed to be examined from the perspective of experts (Augustus, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016; National Council for the Social Studies, 2018; Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). Qualitative research can help scholars explore and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the specific people in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). The valuable insights, input, and concerns of authorities in American Indian culture and

history are essential contributions to determine and justify changes in existing courses. New courses could lead to developing an associate degree program or a specialization in American Indian Studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016; Maxwell, 2013; Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018).

The study filled the gap in knowledge by allowing Indigenous leaders to present various insights and concerns regarding American Indian Studies courses (Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015). Changes in the courses could lead to American Indian Studies courses being taught from an Indigenous perspective rather than a Western European viewpoint (Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015). A more detailed examination is discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Significance of the Study

Educating individuals in the history and culture of American Indians in the United States and in the state of Virginia could be advantageous to native and non-native communities at large (Lee, 2015, 2017). The outcome could result in creating a program which would support the creation of new resources for instructors teaching American history, Virginia history, and Virginia's American Indian history (Lee, 2015, 2017). An interdisciplinary associate degree, a specialization, or new courses in American Indian Studies may lead students into other fields of study such as history, literature, English, American studies, archeology, education, anthropology, law, government and politics, medicine, museum studies, social work, education, and religious studies (Champagne & Stauss, 2002).

Results of the data gathered from the experts could assist in validating and determining if there is an interest or a need to keep the existing format of classes with few changes, redesign

and reorganize existing course syllabi, create new courses, and support an associate degree or a specialization in American Indian Studies (VCCS, 2020a, 2020c). Included in the results would be a creation of curriculum and course program objectives to assist in organizing many of the American Indian educational and cultural resources which already exist but are in isolation without any coordinating structure (Blackwell, 2010). If the research study was not completed, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) would continue to be engaged in American Indian culture, history, and society courses, which are outdated and were implemented approximately 13 years ago.

Research Questions

The objective of the basic qualitative research design was to collect data from experts in the disciplines of American Indian culture, society, and history (American Indian Studies). Two research questions were designed to assist in exploring and examining different thoughts and recollections to build a generalized understanding. The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What are the program objectives for American Indian Studies courses?

Research Question 2: What are the current issues, policies, and other challenges pertaining to American Indians which need to be discussed?

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism is a learning theory based on the study of cognition and is a philosophy of how knowledge is acquired and is not a stimulus-response experience or event (Bada, 2015). The concepts and principles of the constructivist learning theory can be attributed to John

Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Ernst von Glasersfeld, and Jerome Bruner (Akınoğlu, 2018; Bitter, 2018; Bruner, 1974; Gunduz & Hursen, 2015; Jorgensen, 2015, 2017; Mensah, 2015; Pérez-Ibáñez, 2018; Takaya, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). The learning theory of constructivism has impacted the field of education regarding instruction, and how individuals obtain information (Dennick, 2016; Duncan & Redwine, 2019; Illeris, 2018; Iversen et al., 2015; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017). An essential part of the curriculum is student-centered (Dennick, 2016; Duncan & Redwine, 2019; Illeris, 2018; Iversen et al., 2015; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017).

Needham and Hill's (1987) five-phase constructivist model is the specific learning theory design envisioned to enhance student understanding (Lee et al., 2019). The model has been adapted to assist instructors when developing a curriculum in other interdisciplinary programs and adheres to the principles of constructivist teaching, student learning, and instructional goals (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Everett, 2016; Lee et al., 2019). Needham and Hill's (1987) constructivist model can aid an instructor in creating resources so a learner can accomplish the educational objectives outlined in various interdisciplinary lessons and projects (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987; Repko & Szostak, 2016). Based on the learner's perceptions and interests, the curriculum can enable a student to engage fully in the design and outcomes and focus on practical activities and projects, which have relevance, and are essential to the students' and instructors' interests and learning objectives (Iversen et al., 2015).

Fundamental principles in Needham and Hill's (1987) model occur in five phases of instruction. The lessons encompass guidance and assistance from the teacher, which lead a

student in sustained motivation and engagement in the lesson, group and independent learning, the recall of prior information, the introduction of new viewpoints, and the modification of present knowledge (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987; Ngoepe, 2019; Repko & Szostak, 2016). A teacher can assist a learner in establishing new concepts, creating new knowledge, and challenging previous existing ideas to assist in eradicating false and misleading information (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987; Ngoepe, 2019; Repko & Szostak, 2016).

Definitions of Terms

Some terms are defined and appear multiple times throughout the study. The definitions are provided to inform and enhance clarity and understanding for the reader. Each definition is referenced for credibility.

American Indian. Indigenous, American Indian, Native American, or First Nations are the terms commonly used when describing and discussing the first inhabitants and the descendants of North America (Jobin, 2016; Perley, 2019; Peters & Mika, 2017; Pevar, 2012; Yellow Bird, 1999).

***American Indian Studies*.** American Indian Studies focus on the Indigenous Peoples of North America and explore the disciplines of leadership, art, education, religion, law, health, philosophy, politics, history, gender studies, ecology, and the customs and language from an American Indian perspective (Champagne, 2007, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002). American Indian Studies encompass the understanding of the languages, cultures, traditions, and sovereignty of American Indians and provide a vigorous and productive scholarship of teaching,

research, community development, and outreach to foster close and extensive interactions with American Indian communities locally, statewide, and nationally (Champagne, 2007, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002). Although some of these concepts are viewed as political, not academic, the concepts of self-determination and self-governance are at the heart of understanding American Indian concerns, issues, and culture (Champagne, 2007, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002).

Decolonization. This term refers to a process of removing existing colonial influences such as leadership paradigms, teaching methods, and other cultural aspects (Root et al., 2019; Singer & Haircrow, 2016).

American Indian Sovereignty. Sovereignty is frequently termed as self-government and independence, which refers to the political powers exercised by a people pursuant (in accordance with a law or a legal document or resolution) to the willingness to act as a unit (Henderson et al., 2015; Krueger, 2019; Unal, 2018). American Indian nations have inherent sovereignty to self-govern as a cultural and political entity which was established before the founding of the United States (Boxer, 2017; Carpenter & Riley, 2019; J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Meza, 2015; Shoemaker, 2017; Singer, 2018). Federally recognized American Indian nations have intrinsic authority and jurisdiction over many affairs on and off reservations, such as tribal governments, which perform executive, judicial, and legislative functions (Boxer, 2017; J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Meza, 2015; Shoemaker, 2017). Indian nations are sovereign entities within the federal system and have powers of self-governance and autonomy in internal relations (Carpenter & Riley, 2019; Singer, 2018). American Indian sovereign nations are entitled to have powers of self-governance and autonomy in internal relations with some limitations (Carpenter & Riley,

2019). Tribal land in the United States is held in trust for Indian tribes by the federal government (Carpenter & Riley, 2019; Singer, 2018).

Assumptions

Qualitative research methods are used to understand some social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kahlke, 2014; Kennedy, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). One assumption was all the interviewed participants respond to the questions in an open, accurate, and honest manner and willingly shared information through open-ended questions via email survey. The next assumption was the college catalogs, mission statements, course and program descriptions, objectives, outlines, and outcomes, and American Indian Studies course syllabi from the American Indian Studies departments were updated, current, and contain the essential information needed for the study (Ludy et al., 2016). Finally, safeguarding the data was another assumption which ensured the confidentiality of the participants.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are those characteristics selected to define the boundaries of the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). A basic qualitative research design was used because the umbrella of concepts is the appropriate method for collecting data in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Percy et al., 2015; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The range of approaches and research methods to collect data in the design can assist in finding a solution to a particular or specific problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Percy et al., 2015; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The study utilized two instruments for data collection. One instrument required an internet search for the websites of the Virginia Indian tribes, and another search using the internet for online documents such as college catalogs, mission statements, course and program descriptions,

objectives, outlines, and outcomes, and American Indian Studies course syllabi. Another instrument consists of in-depth, online, open-ended questions. Both instruments can provide a focused approach to answer the research inquiries (Behar-Horenstein & Feng, 2018; Kennedy, 2016; Norris et al., 2017).

The total sample size encompassed 53 data sources, which consisted of 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes, 13 American Indian Studies scholars, four tribal community leaders, providing information regarding the history, culture, and current issues and concerns of each Virginia Indian community (National Park Service, 2019), five American Indian Tribal Community Colleges (TCUs) within the Tribal College and University system (AIHEC, 2020a), and 20 non-tribal community colleges offering associate degrees, courses, and specializations in American Indian Studies (AIHEC, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e; Peterson's, 2019). Participants were purposively targeted for the study and were expected to return the responses within two weeks. Participants who had not returned the responses to the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions (see Appendix A) were sent a follow-up reminder after one week to answer the questions and reply. The total amount of time to complete the study was approximately three weeks because all data had to be read several times to obtain an overall perception of the material, and an opportunity to reflect on the intent and value of the information. NVivo software was used to analyze, manage, and organize the data (Phillips & Lu, 2018; Zamawe, 2015).

Transferability can be demonstrated by the degree to which the results can be conveyed to other contexts or settings (Erlandson et al., 1993; Privitera, 2019). Duplicating the methodology and sampling procedures can allow another researcher in a similar study to obtain rich description

and detail from the participants regarding the topic (Carcary, 2009; Denscombe, 2017; Lub, 2015; Privitera, 2019). A detailed description of the research design and methods can assist another researcher in emulating the study (Carcary, 2009; Denscombe, 2017; Lub, 2015; Privitera, 2019).

Limitations

The limitations of any study can contain potential weaknesses, which are usually out of the control of a researcher (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Although the study involved a purposive group of participants, the sampling method allowed for the development of rich detail regarding the topic (Etikan et al., 2016; van Rijnsoever, 2017; Weller et al., 2018). American Indian leaders may have had biased responses based on individual experiences, and the collected data depended on the participants' honest opinions (Brissette et al., 2020; Patton, 2014).

The dependability of the study hinged on the research being able to be duplicated by another investigator under similar circumstances (Privitera, 2019). Researchers use numerous methods which incorporate specific techniques for conducting, documenting, and evaluating a participant’s experiences, and the various research designs have commonalities (Denscombe, 2017; Moser & Korstjens, 2017; Sutton & Austin, 2015). A basic qualitative research design was the best fit for transferability regarding people, organizations, resources, and practical constraints in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). New viewpoints, opinions, concerns, and comments of the experts can allow all the participants a voice and an opportunity to contribute and provide input which may improve and redesign the existing courses**,** create new courses, and assist in developing a specialization and an associate degree in American Indian Studies (Desir et al., 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition, the dependability of the study relies in the interaction with the participants (American Indians) (Walden & West, 2019). If the

rapport with the respondents is not equitable, such as creating a consistent respectful and trusting atmosphere of cooperation toward the contributors, there is evidence to indicate the behavior of an interviewer can influence whether answers will be accurate and honest (Walden & West, 2019).

The use of triangulation in the study can assist in minimizing potential bias (Flick, 2015, 2017). Triangulation was used to rectify any preconceived assumptions which had been formulated (Flick, 2015, 2017). Other limitations may include receiving fewer than half of the participants responding to the survey (Trespalacios & Perkins, 2016). Research data can assist in determining if a need exists for restructuring or adding new American Indian Studies courses, creating a specialization, or developing an associate degree in the discipline. The VCCS community college administrators are under no obligation to implement the curricula or programs (VCCS, 2020a, 2020c).

Chapter Summary

In the introduction to the chapter, the misrepresentation, marginalization, and discrimination of Indigenous People were reviewed (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Freire, 2016). The exclusion of accurate history and cultural information regarding Indigenous People and other ethnic groups in a Western European educational system was discussed. In the Background of the Problem and the Statement of the Problem sections, the concern of omission and input from America Indians in curriculum development in the VCCS and in other educational institutions was examined (Bacalja & Bliss, 2019; Hamilton, 2019; McBean & Feinberg, 2020; Quigley, 2016).

Presented in the purpose of the basic qualitative research design was an examination of the problem when pre-existing knowledge exists regarding the courses being taught in American Indian culture, history, and society, and the topic needs to be investigated from the perspective of experts (Augustus, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018*;* Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016; Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). In the significance of the study, a discussion of incorporating new viewpoints, opinions, concerns, and comments from experts was examined regarding the redesign of existing courses, creating new courses, and developing a specialization and an associate degree in the Virginia Community College System (Lee, 2015, 2017; Maxwell, 2013). The research questions aided in the understanding and focus of the study.

In the theoretical framework section, an examination of Needham and Hill's (1987) five-phase constructivist theory was discussed, and how a specific learning theory can enhance student learning in American Indian Studies is explained (Lee et al., 2019). The definitions were provided to inform and enhance clarity and understanding for the reader. Assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study were important to explain because of the influences which cannot be controlled (limitations), the choices made in the study which describe the boundaries of the study (delimitations), and the assumptions which are accepted as true (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A focused review of the study was described in Chapter 1. Further exploration into the analysis and review of the current scholarly literature related to learning theories and indigenous studies is discussed in Chapter 2. The literature review is an examination of sources starting from a broad perspective of the subject matter to the more specific, regarding aspects of the topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The inclusion of primary sources such as original documents (treaties), interviews, oral histories, and eyewitness accounts from Indigenous People adds an essential and authentic perspective in American Indian Studies (AIS) courses (McAllister, 2018; McClellan, 1999). A problem persists in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and many other higher educational institutions regarding American Indian Studies (AIS) courses (Champagne & Stauss, 2002). Courses in American Indian culture, sovereignty, self-government, society, history, religion, and education were implemented without consulting AIS scholars and tribal community leaders, even though these individuals have significant experience regarding the issues and concerns of Indigenous People in the United States and Virginia (Champagne, 2007, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Eargle, 2016; Glenn, 2019; Prichard, 2016; Stanton et al., 2019).

In determining and justifying whether any changes are needed in current AIS courses taught in the VCCS and specifically at the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), Alexandria campus, feedback from indigenous individuals is necessary (Blackwell, 2010; Champagne, 2007, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Eargle, 2016; Fixico, 2009; Glenn, 2019; Mcpherson & Rabb, 2011; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018; Prichard, 2016; Reyhner, 2015, 2018). If curriculum changes are made, input from individual tribal members and American Indian Studies scholars can provide the necessary information to restructure current classes and create new courses. Developing an Associate of Arts, an Associate of Science degree, or a specialization in AIS entails 15-18 credit hours (VCCS, 2020a, 2020c).

The purpose of the basic qualitative research design involves conducting an inquiry into the topic of pre-existing knowledge regarding courses in American Indian society, culture and history.

The perspectives of experts need to be explored in greater detail (Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016). American Indians remain among the least-understood groups within the general public, in addition to many university scholars, administrators, and policymakers (Champagne, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018; Riley & Carpenter, 2016). Although an attempt may be made to educate individuals on American Indian culture, history, sovereignty, and self-government in ethnic studies courses, the topics are not well-covered or understood because many instructors do not interject Indigenous viewpoints into the subject material from an American Indian perspective (Hain-Jamall, 2013; Jacob et al., 2015; Krueger, 2019; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018; Riley & Carpenter, 2016).

A basic qualitative research design is necessary to improve the current classes being offered, to increase the number of courses taught, and to make the study of American Indian culture, history, and society a specialization or an associate degree (Augustus, 2015; Champagne, 2007, 2008, 2015; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Clarke & Young-In, 2018; Hu, 2017; Wiebe, 2016). American Indian Studies (AIS) is considered an interdisciplinary field of research in many liberal arts departments at colleges and universities in the United States (Augustus, 2015; Clarke & Young-In, 2018; Everett, 2016; Hu, 2017; Wiebe, 2016). Students in AIS can explore other fields of study such as history, literature, English, American studies, archeology, education, anthropology, law, government and politics, medicine, museum studies, social work, women's studies, education, and religious studies (Augustus, 2015; Champagne, 2007, 2008, 2015; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Clarke & Young-In, 2018; Hu, 2017; Wiebe, 2016).

The problem statement and purpose of the basic qualitative research study design have been briefly restated in the introduction to establish the relevance of the current inquiry being

examined. Significant sections of the chapter encompass the literature search strategy, theoretical framework, and a review of seminal and current scholarly books and articles. In the summary, a rationale for why an AIS specialization or an associate degree is explained, and the benefits of the degree is justified. In the literature review, significant components of curriculum and course development of Indigenous, American Indian, First Nations, and Aboriginal studies are discussed. Comparisons, similarities, and connections are made in the design and development of different curriculums to several topics in Indigenous studies programs.

Literature Search Strategy

Scholarly books and peer-reviewed articles from academic journals were used in the literature review. Various databases and search engines such as Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), the Journal Storage (JSTOR), ProQuest, SAGE Publications, Science Direct, and Springer were utilized to collect relevant information (Bates et al., 2017). Keywords and phrases included constructivism, American Indian, Native American, First Nations, federal Indian law, and American Indian learning styles. Included were other keywords such as Associate of Science (A.S.) and Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree, hybrid method of teaching, learning styles, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, learner characteristics, learning theories, learner types, online education, and student-centered approach. Incorporated in the keyword search were scholars and educators such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky, who were involved in the developmental theories of constructivism (Jorgensen, 2015, 2017; Miranda, 2011; Pérez-Ibáñez, 2018; Repko et al., 2017). Seminal works pertaining to American Indian Studies, in addition to interdisciplinary

programs and curriculum development, were a vital part of the literary search strategy (Arias, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the blueprint of a study and implied or explicit, allows a scholar to demonstrate knowledge of a particular subject area, field, and discipline (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Nilsen, 2015). A theoretical framework provides a clear and coherent structure and vision for the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The relevant literature in the theoretical framework is used to relate to broader areas of knowledge being considered, and an appropriate logical flow of information pertaining to the study can be observed (Collins & Stockton, 2018; Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Harvey et al., 2018; Melnikovas, 2018).

Constructivism is a learning theory based on the study of cognition and is a philosophy of how knowledge is acquired and is not a stimulus-response experience or event (Bada, 2015). The concepts and principles of the constructivist learning theory can be attributed to John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Ernst von Glasersfeld, and Jerome Bruner (Akınoğlu, 2018; Bitter, 2018; Bruner, 1974; Gunduz & Hursen, 2015; Jorgensen, 2015, 2017; Mensah, 2015; Pérez-Ibáñez, 2018; Takaya, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). The constructivist learning theory provides an opportunity for a learner to develop ownership, choice, and a voice in the student-centered learning process in an educational environment and is not considered to be a passive process of receiving knowledge (Akınoğlu, 2018; Bada, 2015; Dennick, 2016; Duncan & Redwine, 2019; Illeris, 2018; Thibodeaux et al., 2019). The theory of constructivism has impacted education regarding instruction and how individuals obtain information (Dennick, 2016; Duncan & Redwine, 2019; Illeris, 2018; Iversen et al., 2015; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017).

Constructivist learning can include the concept of memorizing facts and formulas, in addition to adhering to the principle of restructuring and building upon previous and current ideas (Bada, 2015; Rhodes & Rozell, 2015; Walker, 2015). New knowledge is created when students are stimulated to critical thinking (Bada, 2015). This type of analysis and evaluation can assist in the development of higher-level sophisticated skills through the process of reasoning, reflecting, cooperating, questioning, analyzing, creating, and problem-solving; all relevant and beneficial to the student in society (Bitter, 2018; Bruner, 1974; Dennick, 2016; Duncan & Redwine, 2019; Gunduz & Hursen, 2015; Jorgensen, 2015, 2017; Mensah, 2015; Mishra, 2015; Takaya, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). At the core of the constructivist theory is the concept of the student creating new social interactions and developing more sophisticated and complex knowledge (Iversen et al., 2015; Mishra, 2015; Rosch & Priest, 2017; Tikiz & Çubukcu, 2016). Students learn to construct relevant meaning and new understandings by engaging in the learning process (Bada, 2015). New knowledge cannot continually be transmitted directly from teacher to student utilizing worksheets, homework, lectures, tests, and other similar traditional methods of instruction because independent learning is not conducive to the principles of teaching and learning in the theory of constructivism (He et al., 2019; Hockings et al., 2018; Martin & Evans, 2018; Mishra, 2015).

Needham and Hill's (1987) five-phase constructivist model is the learning theory design envisioned to enhance student learning in the American Indian Studies specialization or associate degree program (Lee et al., 2019). The model has been adapted to assist instructors when developing a curriculum in other interdisciplinary programs, and the lesson adheres to the principles of constructivist teaching, student learning, and instructional goals (Amineh & Asl,

2015; Everett, 2016; Lee et al., 2019). The structure of Needham and Hill's (1987) model can assist an instructor in creating resources so a learner can accomplish the educational objectives outlined in the lesson (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Klein, 2006; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987). With the guidance and assistance of the teacher, a constructivist lesson can sustain student motivation and engagement (Ngoepe, 2019). During the entire lesson, students participate and learn how to work independently and in a group, share information with peers, and build social skills while solving problems to generate meaningful learning (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Klein, 2006; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987). The five-phase constructivist model includes orientation, generating ideas, restructuring ideas, application of the ideas, and reflecting on the information and are discussed in more detail (Needham & Hill, 1987).

Orientation is the first phase and is used at the beginning of the lesson (Lee et al., 2019). The instructor's objective is to gain and maintain the attention and motivation of the student throughout the teaching and learning process (Lee et al., 2019). A constructivist classroom environment can enhance the teaching and learning process and is vital to sustaining and enriching instruction, resulting in positive student outcomes, such as reading strategically, communicating clearer, and thinking critically (Li & Wong, 2018; Ngoepe, 2019; Zeegers & Elliott, 2019).

In the introductory activity, the instructor presents a problem, event, subject, or discussion to cultivate opposing views and ideas to enhance the start of the lesson (Li & Wong, 2018; Zeegers & Elliott, 2019). During the orientation phase, the student is expected to control aspects of the

learning process to heighten motivation and stimulate curiosity (Li & Wong, 2018; Zeegers & Elliott, 2019). A specific example might be a discussion related to the importance of being of mixed blood heritage, referring to American Indian leaders such as Quanah Parker and John Ross, and producing further inquiry regarding the term of American Indian (Gravett, 2018; Li & Wong, 2018; Ngoepe, 2019; Zeegers & Elliott, 2019).

In the second phase, the objective of the teacher is to be a guide and not control all of the learning activities (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Klein, 2006; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987). The goal of the second part of the lesson is for the student to be engaged in the recall of prior information (Lee et al., 2019). Sharing and discussing past knowledge with peers can cultivate new understanding, leading the learner to new viewpoints (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Klein, 2006; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987). The teacher is an integral part of the processes and combines an understanding of how individuals learn; the lesson is structured to the interest of the student (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Klein, 2006; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017). Although the instructor is a guide, they are fully engaged with students to provide input and assist the learner and the quest on how new knowledge can be obtained through critical thinking skills (Bada, 2015). The model assists educators and enables learners to create new knowledge rather than reproduce a series of memorized facts (Bada, 2015; Walker, 2015).

Restructuring ideas of the student is the third phase and is used to develop or modify present knowledge or ideas of the learner (Lee et al., 2019). New data, concepts, and information

are introduced in various forms to coincide with the learning progression of the student and assist in modifying and changing the individual's perceptions (Lee et al., 2019; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017; Weiss et al., 2020). To create a sense of ownership, the student is provided an opportunity to make decisions in several independent situations to foster engagement and to promote a vested interest in the learning experience; such ownership is beneficial during the reflective phase (phase five) (Martin & Evans, 2018; Needham & Hill, 1987; Thibodeaux et al., 2019). To help eradicate false and misleading information, the teacher can assist the learner during the third phase when reflecting upon new knowledge and current experiences (Lee et al., 2019; Weiss et al., 2020). Students are provided a decision-making opportunity and can become experts in an area of study controlling the majority of the educational process in phase three (Lee et al., 2019; Martin & Evans, 2018; Thibodeaux et al., 2019). The restructuring of ideas and information is used by the student to establish new concepts, creates further knowledge, and challenges previous existing ideas of the learner, thereby enabling the individual to structure more meaningful and applicable knowledge (Needham & Hill, 1987; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017; Weiss et al., 2020).

The application of ideas in the fourth phase involves utilizing new concepts and ideas from the restructuring phase (third phase) (Lee et al., 2019). New knowledge is applied to solve current problems and design new projects (Lee et al., 2019). A constructivist instructor can provide the student with assistance to formulate and test conclusions and inferences by aiding the learner in conducting research in a collaborative learning environment (Kordaki & Psomos, 2015; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987; Ngoepe, 2019; Peltola, 2018; Thibodeaux et al., 2019). Shifting to learner-centered instruction can ensure students are attaching relevance to a

given lesson because applying new information can increase knowledge (Brown, 2016; Rosch & Priest, 2017). An instructor has the role of monitoring and observing the students during the exercise and surveying the student's progress in the classroom (Mohamad, 2012).

Reflection in the last phase is used to evaluate and assess an individual's understanding of the topic (Lee et al., 2019; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017). An assessment opportunity for the student is needed to demonstrate the amount of progress made in the topic from the previous knowledge (Lee et al., 2019; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2017). The evaluation can be a combined exercise agreed upon by the teacher and the student (Lee et al., 2019). In a constructivist environment, the learner can express and test any new concepts by sharing perceptions and conclusions with peers in a safe, non-judgmental educational environment, so students are comfortable and confident in the classroom (Bada, 2015; Lundgren et al., 2017; Ngoepe, 2019; Peltola, 2018; Thibodeaux et al., 2019).

Research Literature Review

From a comprehensive view to more specific observations and connections, many curriculum topics related to American Indian Studies are discussed and investigated, including background information on every theme. An overview of Indigenous Populations and ethnic discrimination are important issues to be reviewed because of the changing diversity of schools (Warkentien, 2019). A significant difference in American Indians living in the United States examined, and the scholarly contributions leading to the creation of Indigenous and ethnic studies globally and in the United States are provided. Common issues and concerns are discussed among American Indians, First Nations, Aboriginal, and Indigenous colleges and universities, and an examination of some of the vital resources and methods used to restore

culture to Indigenous Populations are investigated. A brief history of Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and instruction methods used for individuals attending on-campus classes using distance education are examined. The curriculum of an American Indian Studies (AIS) program taught primarily from an Indigenous perspective in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is discussed. In addition, connections are made to several topics such as mission statements, language, instruction, and faculty in Indigenous studies programs, TCUs, and other AIS programs in the United States, which could align and emulate other programs, providing a more Indigenous perspective to the AIS program in the VCCS, and specifically at NOVA (Ayers, 2015, 2017).

Globally, and in the United States, the Western European educational system has been the primary vehicle by which culture and knowledge were passed from one generation to another and used to suppress Indigenous and ethnic societies (Reyhner, 2015, 2018). Most educational systems are monocultural and are based exclusively on a set of values, standards, and intellectual perspectives of Western European societies, disregarding the valuable contributions of other ethnic groups (Reyhner, 2015, 2018). Many ethnic minorities have suffered because of an educational system which overlooks Indigenous cultural knowledge and cultural values (Reyhner, 2015, 2018). Indigenous People and different ethnic groups are often marginalized and treated as second-class citizens due to historical misrepresentations based on the information gathered inaccurately or not at all by Western European people (Porter et al., 2017; Snyder, 2017). Non-ethnic majorities suffer because of the lack of understanding regarding the knowledge and customs of the inhabitants of people living in the same region (Reyhner, 2015, 2018).

To appreciate Indigenous ethnicity is to realize the history and cultures of people are not merely a collection of objects, stories, and ceremonies (Littletree et al., 2020; Schaefli et al., 2018). Many Indigenous People belong to a societal group having a complete language, and knowledge system encompassing personal and group perceptions of epistemology, philosophy, and scientific and logical validity (Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Littletree et al., 2020; Schaefli et al., 2018). Simply recording words or images fails to capture the essence of context and meaning of songs, rituals, arts, or scientific and medical wisdom (Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Littletree et al., 2020; Schaefli et al., 2018). The educational materials in many institutions of higher education have inadequate information to present the Indigenous point of view (Galloway, 2018; Littletree et al., 2020; Reyhner, 2018; Schwartz, 2018).

Although many Indigenous Populations have different customs and cultures, the commonalities of various ethnic groups are many (Amnesty International, 2019; Porter et al., 2017). The loss of language, knowledge, legal rights, the destruction of the environment, and the removal of people on ancestral lands are some of the shared experiences of the Indigenous populace due to the dominating Western European societies (Amnesty International, 2019; Porter et al., 2017; Watson, 2018). Indigenous studies programs can promote the importance of a voice of ethnic groups silenced by dominant Western European cultures (Amnesty International, 2019; Porter et al., 2017). When a student understands other cultures, individuals can appreciate the contributions made by other ethnic populations (Paris & Biggs, 2018). To eradicate the misconceptions and marginalization of an ethnic group, the solution is to offer courses and degree programs which inform individuals about Indigenous People's culture, history, and ways of thinking (Paris & Biggs, 2018).

Indigenous People Worldwide and Course Development

Indigenous People can include Native Americans, American Indians, First Nations, and Aboriginals (Jobin, 2016; Yellow Bird, 1999). Understanding some of the complexities of Indigenous cultures and history is vital when developing curricula, courses, and syllabi (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019; Jobin, 2016). The populations exceed 364 million people, spread across 70 countries worldwide, and belong to more than 5,000 different groups (Amnesty International, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019). Various ethnic groups and populations in many countries are increasing (Amnesty International, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019).

Central to Indigenous individuals are community well-being, social and environmental justice, and environmental sustainability (Deloria et al., 2018; Seck, 2019). For many Indigenous Populations, language connects the past, present, and the future of cultural survival (Deloria et al., 2018). The maintenance, renewal, and repatriation of the mother tongue language are one of the most significant goals for cultural survival in Indigenous communities (Deloria et al., 2018). Many ethnic people have responded by initiating programs designed to protect and promote the language, culture, and environment from Western European influence and assimilation (Deloria et al., 2018; Gilbert, 2018).

The examination of language, culture, environmental issues, and the human rights of Indigenous People is vital (Augustus, 2015). Becoming a responsible global citizen encompasses the understanding of an increasingly diverse world population (Augustus, 2015). Developing courses and examining ways Indigenous People combat Western European societal influences can justify the need for a global Indigenous degree program (Augustus, 2015).

Language

The Indigenous Population of New Zealand (Maori) established a curriculum language immersion program for elementary, secondary schools, and in some colleges and universities called Te Kohanga Reo, or language nest (Angelo & Perham, 2015; Tocker, 2015). The language nest referred to as Te Kohango Reo is comprised of essential elements and were ultimately the guarantors of a successful program, including targeting young children; hearing the Maori language spoken from the time of birth is a crucial component and can deter the loss of the mother tongue dialect (Albury, 2018; McInnes, 2017; Morcom, 2017; Olsen & Andreassen, 2017). The impetus for language revitalization came from the Maori community, and the control of language nest centers rested exclusively on the belief the Maori understood the best methods of how to teach people of the same culture (Albury, 2018; Maia et al., 2018).

Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in the curriculum program and participate in the learning process alongside the children to break the cycle of influence created by the dominant Western European language and ways of thinking (Albury, 2018). The Te Kohango Reo language immersion programs go beyond acquiring linguistic instruction; physical, spiritual, cultural, and intellectual principles are embedded in as many curriculum models as possible (Albury, 2015, 2018; Beyer, 2018). The system is a model of success regarding school immersion programs because of the emphasis on engulfing the students in Maori language, culture, values, and ways of life (Albury, 2015, 2018; Beyer, 2018; Cardno et al., 2018). Communication differences between various cultures are a major part of the history of the country where individuals live (Albury, 2015, 2018; Faircloth et al., 2016; Macfarlane, 2015). A vast majority of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (New Zealand included) recognize

the connection and benefits of learning and understanding the mother tongue language (Albury, 2015, 2018; Faircloth et al., 2016; Macfarlane, 2015). Many people now perceive Indigenous cultures as a national treasure to be understood and embraced, existing no other place in the world (Albury, 2015, 2018; Faircloth et al., 2016; Macfarlane, 2015).

The rejuvenation and preservation of Indigenous languages can be found in many countries (May, 2013; Reyhner & Tennant, 1995). Globally, more than 60 academic institutions offer academic degree programs and courses in sociolinguistics, language description, and documentation relevant to the safeguarding of endangered and Indigenous languages (Coates, 2004; LSA, 2018). As an educational tool, restoring and revitalizing a language of Indigenous People has become successful because the outcomes exceed saving a dialect; the major focus became the restoration of authority, dignity, identity, and spiritual power to a culture of people (Albury, 2015, 2018; Beyer, 2018; Coates, 2004; Henne-Ochoa, 2018).

Culture

A global cultural studies program could explore how cultures are constructed, organized, how the societies evolve, and the ways civilizations create and transform communities, individuals, social relations, and power structures (Goldberg & Greenberg, 2004). The program could be designed to educate students on global perspective regarding ethnic languages, religion, anthropology, politics, history, sociology, economics, society, and cultures of various world regions, and investigate geographic areas and ethnicities with advanced work in the humanities and social sciences (Goldberg & Greenberg, 2004). Cultural studies programs are interdisciplinary academic programs and can prepare students for careers in government, law,

international relations, business, education, journalism, non-profit organizations, social work, and environmental studies (Goldberg & Greenberg, 2004).

The cultural beliefs of many Indigenous individuals and societies are tied to the environment and cannot be viewed in isolation (Amnesty International, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019; Magallanes, 2015). Traditional Indigenous knowledge is constantly present in the environment (Amnesty International, 2019; Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019). The life force of the water, land, and other resources are the building blocks of a complete global view in culture and identity (Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2019; Magallanes, 2015).

Environment

Environmental concerns are a commonality in many Indigenous Populations (Goralnik et al., 2019; Smithers, 2019). In the past three decades, more people have become environmentally aware and concerned about the unnecessary debris people produce (Goralnik et al., 2019; Smithers, 2019). However, complexities in Indigenous Populations have created challenges regarding legal issues globally (Kim, 2018). Internationally, educational institutions face a fundamental challenge to produce students capable of responding to complex environmental challenges (Belluigi & Cundill, 2017).

An interdisciplinary curriculum from a global Indigenous perspective could encompass the examination of the many complex interactions of the web of earth systems, which could include environmental issues, sustainability, climate change, and environmental changes in a community or a region (Lowan-Trudeau, 2019; Manase, 2016; Smithers, 2019; Zehr, 2008). The courses in such a program could assist people in becoming sensitive to ongoing environmental

changes in the world and help to create individuals to become more ecologically literate in making decisions regarding the respectful treatment of the earth using Indigenous methods of preservation (Lowan-Trudeau, 2019; Manase, 2016; Smithers, 2019). The curriculum could encompass a hybrid program format, which combines taking courses on a college campus with fieldwork (Lowan-Trudeau, 2019; Manase, 2016; Smithers, 2019).

Courses in the program might help expand an individual's knowledge in environmental policy, renewable energy, and ecology from an Indigenous perspective (Lowan-Trudeau, 2019; Manase, 2016; Smithers, 2019). Analyzing the regulations, policies, and processes could protect the health of people on the planet, and students could explore ways to balance the needs of commerce in conjunction with respect for natural resources and ecosystems globally (Lowan-Trudeau, 2019; Manase, 2016; Smithers, 2019). The significance of the program could assist in providing student and faculty discussions on international environmental issues affecting the areas of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, and raise questions regarding self-governance, law, sovereignty, the physical environment, and environmental management in Indigenous communities based on an Indigenous perspective (Amnesty International, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019; Lowan-Trudeau, 2019; Manase, 2016; Smithers, 2019).

Legal Issues

The protection of individual rights is a major concern (Edge & Arnold, 2017). In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (Edge & Arnold, 2017). In many countries, ensuring the human rights of Indigenous Populations is questioned and criticized, which can be seen in the inequalities of law

cases, medical care, land, and educational rights (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Edge & Arnold, 2017; Freire, 2016).

A curriculum on human rights could encompass issues on a global scale (Edge & Arnold, 2017). Civic, ethical, health, and multicultural education could be part of the program, which is examined worldwide (Edge & Arnold, 2017; Magendzo & Pavez, 2017). Indigenous People in many countries are often confronted with discrimination and are marginalized, which can be seen in the inequalities of law cases, medical care, land, and educational rights (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017; Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Freire, 2016). A course which incorporates issues pertaining to global discrimination and marginalization could lead to discussions on tolerance regarding the racial differences of a person or group, and could be a vital part of an Indigenous studies curriculum (Basbay, 2014; Rubin, 2018; Sleeter, 2018). In an Indigenous multicultural education course, an examination of the history and struggle between different cultures living in a particular region would be discussed, resulting in shared strategies to empower individuals to live without the fear of a particular group of people dominating others (Basbay, 2014; Rubin, 2018; Sleeter, 2018). In addition, the efforts to correct social injustices in different areas of the world could be studied (Lew & Nelson, 2016; Sleeter, 2018).

The marginalization and discrimination of Indigenous People and other ethnic populations worldwide should be investigated (Edge & Arnold, 2017). A student exploring the topic could become a concerned and active global citizen engaged in discussions pertaining to the rights of all ethnic people and individuals (Edge & Arnold, 2017; Magendzo & Pavez, 2017; Trajković, 2015). In addition to the discussion, a student could develop problem-solving skills and the ability to reflect upon worldwide issues related to legal and human rights, gain relevant

knowledge to ongoing global issues regarding personal freedom, and be treated with dignity (Edge & Arnold, 2017; Magendzo & Pavez, 2017; Trajković, 2015).

American Indian People in the United States

The Federal Government of the United States recognizes more than 570 tribal nations (Amnesty International, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019). Many more tribes exist in other states but are not federally accepted (Arias, 2018; Gutiérrez, 2017). More than 6.5 million Indigenous People in the United States identify as American Indians or Native Alaska Natives, which is 2% of the total population (Amnesty International, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019). The terminology of Indigenous, Indian, First Nations, and Aboriginal are European definitions and can be misleading when used to label a population (Peters & Mika, 2017). Some American Indians prefer the term *communities* or *bands*; some favor the word *tribe* or *rancherias*, and others select the word *nation*; all expressions are interchangeably used in Indian treaties and statutes (Blackhawk, 2019; Pevar, 2012; Wood, 2016). Acknowledging and identifying people as members of a specific tribe or nation such as Navajo, Shawnee, or Cherokee is the most acceptable way of giving respect and more authentically describing the cultural heritage of a particular group of people (Minthorn et al., 2019; Peters & Mika, 2017; K. Wood, 2007; W. Wood, 2016).

American Indian Course Development

Assimilation or extinction is not an option for many American Indian People (Carpenter & Riley, 2019). Tribal colleges and universities have successfully incorporated Indigenous cultural traditions and language into the curriculum of these institutions (Angelo & Perham, 2015; Beyer, 2018; Ka'ai, 2017; Reyhner, 2015, 2018). Many public and private schools

throughout the United States have incorporated American Indian history, culture, and ways of knowing into various disciplines (Stanton et al., 2019). The background of American Indians regaining control of their culture by means of education can be traced back to the desire to transform Indigenous People to Western European standards (Bertolet, 2017; Glenn, 2019; Gregg, 2018; Reyhner, 2015, 2018).

The efforts of people from the non-Indian dominant culture to educate Americans, regardless of motive or method, have been aimed at transforming American Indians into mainstream citizens and eliminating traditional languages, culture, and identity (Bertolet, 2017; Glenn, 2019; Gregg, 2018; Reyhner, 2015, 2018). In the educational history of the United States, the relationship between mainstream society and American Indians can be expressed as having a devastating effect on American Indian languages, cultures, the environment, and human rights (Bertolet, 2017; Glenn, 2019; Gregg, 2018; Reyhner, 2015, 2018). Western European education was another method which tried to assimilate and make American Indian cultures obsolete (Glenn, 2019; Reyhner, 2015, 2018; Tsosie, 2016).

For example, American Indian children in 1875 were sent to Indian boarding schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (Glenn, 2019; Reyhner, 2015, 2018). Upon admission to the Carlisle school, comparable to the other 153 boarding schools, children were forbidden to speak native tongue languages, often under threat of physical punishment (Gibson, 2016; Reyhner, 2015, 2018; White, 2018). Boys were required to clip their hair to the skull, and males and females were forced to renounce American Indian origins. Loose-fitting clothing and moccasins common to the cultural custom were taken away and burned (Gibson, 2016; Reyhner, 2015, 2018; White, 2018). Boys were given military uniforms, and girls

were forced to wear tight-fitting, Victorian-style dresses. In addition, new names were given to the children, and were told never to use Indian names (Reyhner, 2015, 2018; White, 2018). Traditional cultural or religious rituals were abolished, usually under threat of punishment, and children were expected to become devout Christians (Gibson, 2016; Reyhner, 2015, 2018; White, 2018).

Language

Among the concerns was that native languages and cultures were being decimated and lost due to American Indians being pressured by non-Indians to be part of mainstream society (Blackhawk, 2019; McCue-Enser, 2017). In the past decades, numerous attempts have been made to rebuild and revitalize the language of Indigenous People in the United States, such as the 1972 Indian Education Act, and the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Carson, 2019; McCarty et al., 2015). Past language restoration methods have not been successful (Carpenter & Riley, 2019; Reyhner & Tennant, 1995). To maintain and learn a language, the restoration and cultivation of a culture have not been accomplished by relying on non-Indigenous school initiatives and U. S. governmental efforts (Carpenter & Riley, 2019; Reyhner & Tennant, 1995).

The language technique embedded in the educational curriculum being used by the Maori People of New Zealand has been effectively utilized in reclaiming the language and culture has been successfully adapted by many American Indian charter schools, communities, tribe, and some Tribal Colleges and Universities (Carjuzaa, 2009, 2017; Macfarlane, 2015). American Indian immersion programs are relatively new, only starting in the 1990s (Reinhardt, 2017). A

key factor in language revitalization is excluding (as much as possible) the need to rely on the dominant majority for assistance (Reyhner & Tennant, 1995).

Many of the immersion curriculums have been adapted and used in private and charter schools, which are hybrids of traditional half-day and full-day language immersion programs (Carjuzaa, 2009, 2017; Macfarlane, 2015). American Indian immersion programs are comparable to Maori total immersion programs in the excellence and understanding of mother tongue languages and cultural traditions, which are important to group and individual identity (Adu-Febiri, 2017). The language, knowledge, and values of the Indigenous culture are interjected into the curriculum system (math, history, art, social sciences, and other subjects) and every aspect of the daily school routine of students (Adu-Febiri, 2017; Albury, 2015, 2018; Cardno et al., 2018). Knowing and understanding a traditional language builds self-confidence and academic success (Beyer, 2018; Meza, 2015).

For many Indigenous People, culture and language have been separated (Reyhner & Tennant, 1995). Critical parts of Indigenous cultures are lost if the language is removed (Lee, 2015, 2017; Shreve, 2018). Knowing the mother tongue language presents individuals with strong self-identity, cultural identity, and contains a linkage to cultural values (Reyhner & Tennant, 1995; Shreve, 2018).

Cultural Connections and Tribal Colleges and Universities

Many Tribal college and universities (TCUs) mission statements operate as cultural-cognitive indicators, and the use of words in the purpose statements may indicate group commonality and shared beliefs (Ayers, 2015, 2017; Cortés-Sánchez, 2018; Gurley et al., 2015). Frequently, there are implicit or explicit words and phrases in the TCU mission statements which

emphasize traditional wisdom, helping students preserve Indigenous identities in addition to promoting higher education for American Indian People (Ayers, 2015, 2017; CMN, 2019; Diné College, 2019; Warner & Gerald, 2009). A mission statement can be an empowering tool. At TCUs, the objectives of the mission relate to the advancement and self-determination of American Indian People and reflect a desire to interact with the administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community (Ayers, 2015, 2017).

Cultural identities are reflected in the mission statements in almost every aspect of daily and college life (AIHEC, 2020c; Ayers, 2015, 2017; Boyer, 2015; Bull & Guillory, 2018; Warner & Gerald, 2009; Wilson & Mitchell, 2018). The vision of TCUs is to combat and resist the effects of generations of economic depression, empowering students to become leaders and contribute to the tribe, nation, and world (AIHEC, 2020c; Ayers, 2015, 2017; Boyer, 2015; Bull & Guillory, 2018; Warner & Gerald, 2009; Wilson & Mitchell, 2018). Providing an excellent educational experience in a non-threatening environment for students free of marginalization and discrimination is common in educational institutions (Ayers, 2015, 2017; Types of Institutions, 2017). Although the concept of educational achievement may attract students, many individuals may choose to attend a college where race, religion, or cultural identities can be more represented in the population of the student body in addition to obtaining knowledge (Thompson et al., 2019).

The curriculum at all TCUs includes cultural relevance and an infusion of educational values preparing students for careers and advanced studies (AIHEC, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e; Bull & Guillory, 2018; Wilson & Mitchell, 2018). TCUs were created in response to the higher educational needs of American Indians (AIHEC, 2020b, 2020c; Boyer, 2015; Warner &

Gerald, 2009). TCUs have similar objectives as other educational institutions in advancing the education of the students, in addition to cultivating Indigenous cultural identities (AIHEC, 2020c, 2020e; Boyer, 2015; Halvorson, 2016; Warner & Gerald, 2009). As of 2020, 38 TCUs serve more than 17,000 undergraduate and graduate students throughout the United States (AIHEC, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e). American Indian students attending TCUs are offered a distinct opportunity to become educated citizens in addition to regaining and reinforcing cultural identity (AIHEC, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e; Boyer, 2015; Warner & Gerald, 2009).

Many TCUs offer distance education in language classes, courses, and degree programs (AIHEC, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e). Technology and distance education play an important part in Native American society (Al-Asfour & Bryant, 2011; Hampton, 2013). The learning principles need to be replicated and not stray from on-campus education concepts such as discussions and interactions between faculty members, students and faculty, students and peers, active learning, a respect for diverse ways of learning, and high communication expectations from faculty members and students (Borup & Evmenova, 2019; House-Peters et al., 2019).

As American Indian self-determination continues, the population has responded by initiating programs designed to protect and promote the traditional languages and culture through the use of the Internet (Hampton, 2013). There has been an increase in younger American Indians' interest in learning more about and maintaining traditional tribal cultures (Al-Asfour & Bryant, 2011; Hampton, 2013). Through satellite communication, distance education, and technology, American Indian cultural values, history, and teachings are more accessible (Al-

Asfour & Bryant, 2011; Hampton, 2013). Distance education offers more than just access to skills and information; the technology provides American Indians the opportunity to educate themselves without mainstream society interference (Al-Asfour & Bryant, 2011; Hampton, 2013). Distance learning provides ways of exposing American Indians to curricula taught by TCUs and is controlled by Indigenous People who reflect the same values, beliefs, and traditional tribal cultures (Al-Asfour & Bryant, 2011; Hampton, 2013).

The responsibility of the administration and faculty members is to educate students and assure the quality of the TCU is comparable to other national and state college and university standards in the areas of instruction, administration, governance, and the employment of qualified personnel (Boyer, 2015; Bull & Guillory, 2018; Warner & Gerald, 2009). Core courses and degree programs of study need to be of the equivalent quality as other educational institutions (Council for Higher Education Accreditation) to maintain and keep accreditation (Boyer, 2015; Warner & Gerald, 2009). Student populations enrolled at TCUs are not as numerous as other 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities, and many facilities may not be as new or large (Boyer, 2015; Warner & Gerald, 2009). Courses taken at TCUs need to be transferable to other institutions of higher education (Boyer, 2015; Warner & Gerald, 2009). Educational leaders and visionaries are responsible for inspiring TCU graduates to stay on the reservations or seek higher education and return to fill the critical jobs held by non-Indians (Boyer, 2015; Warner & Gerald, 2009). Tribal colleges and universities are vital repositories of culture, traditional language, and knowledge and become centers of Indian research and scholarship (Boyer, 2015; Bull & Guillory, 2018; Warner & Gerald, 2009). The TCU curriculums are designed and reflect an American Indian perspective and enhance self-

determination, mother tongue languages, cultures and the traditions of Indigenous People (Boyer, 2015; Cole, 2006; Warner & Gerald, 2009).

Environment

To ensure Indigenous knowledge, language, customs, religion, culture, and respect for the environment do not disappear, students in some classes are taught by tribal elders (Bull & Guillory, 2018; Wilson & Mitchell, 2018). An American Indian environmental curriculum is centered on the perspective of Indigenous traditions (Gritter et al., 2016; Peacock, 2018; Talahongva, 2018). The use of elders can assist youth in understanding the American Indian perceptions of spiritual well-being, which involve living in harmony with all beings, including animals, humans, the physical world, and plants (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019; Peacock, 2018; Talahongva, 2018).

The curriculum involves elders telling the stories regarding American Indian folklore, which has an explicit or implied message regarding how to live harmoniously with the earth's wildlife and natural environment (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019). The stories are in contrast with many beliefs, premises, and scientific methodologies and include a set of concepts or thought patterns, learning theories, research methods, postulates, and standards which do not conform to established ways of Western European teaching and learning (Jobin, 2016; Martin & Ventre, 2012; Minnesota Department of Education, 2019; Peacock, 2018; Talahongva, 2018). Students learn reverence and respect for the environment by listening to the elders and the stories (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019). American Indian ways of knowing can enable a mode of understanding the Indigenous view of nature in a holistic approach, which is observed

by looking for relationships and interconnectedness of all living things (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019; Peacock, 2018; Talahongva, 2018).

In addition, discussions regarding traditional land (spiritual and hunting), on and off the reservation, and the cultural role in the continuance of specific religious practices are investigated (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019; Peacock, 2018; Talahongva, 2018). The United States legal system has allowed the taking and destroying of American Indian lands, bodies (displayed in museums), artifacts, religious beliefs, and identities (Pevar, 2012; Riley & Carpenter, 2016; Tsosie, 2016). Manifest Destiny was used as an excuse and rationale for advancing Western European cultural dominance (Pevar, 2012; Riley & Carpenter, 2016; Tsosie, 2016).

Legal Issues

Differences in American Indians living in the United States compared to other ethnic groups residing in the same region is profoundly different in the complexity of political and legal issues (Boxer, 2017; Conner et al., 2017; Nesper, 2018; Ortiz, 2017; Peters & Mika, 2017; Wells, 2017). Many legal terms are difficult to understand regarding the relationship to American Indians living in the United States (Blackhawk, 2019). The uniqueness of American Indian nations, tribes, and individuals lies in the multiple treaties with the United States government and state authorities providing sovereignty and other rights to many Indigenous Populations (Blackhawk, 2019; Boxer, 2017; Conner et al., 2017; Nesper, 2018; Ortiz, 2017; Peters & Mika, 2017; Wells, 2017).

American Indian tribes, nations, members, and descendants have established sovereignty and other rights in a lawful relationship with the United States government (Blackhawk, 2019;

Carlson, 2018; Morgan, 2017; Peters & Mika, 2017; Riley & Carpenter, 2016). The unique legal status is at the heart of American Indian constitutionalism and afforded to Indigenous People living on and off reservations (Blackhawk, 2019; Carlson, 2018; Morgan, 2017; Peters & Mika, 2017; Riley & Carpenter, 2016). The established legal agreements are not often understood or recognized by the majority of the American public and raise many misconceptions and questions concerning how the public perceives the rights, privileges, history, and the culture of American Indian nations and tribes (Blackhawk, 2019; Boxer, 2017; Conner et al., 2017; Iverson, 1996; Nesper, 2018; Ortiz, 2017; Wells, 2017). American Indian tribes have a varying amount of control over activities occurring on and near reservation land (Crepelle, 2018). Tribes are exempt from some state taxes and can exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction within limitations, operate casinos, impose taxes on specific activities, and establish hunting and fishing laws on the reservation (Crepelle, 2018; Singer, 2018).

Programs at TCUs and at other colleges and universities offer federal Indian law courses because the interest is growing, and the concern for Indigenous injustice has become an issue (Christensen & Tatum, 2018; Fiske, 2019; Peterson's, 2019). American Indian law courses are part of the legal curriculum offered in more than 42 higher educational intuitions (Christensen & Tatum, 2018; Fiske, 2019; Peterson's, 2019). A curriculum in federal Indian law could include specific cases defining a period in U.S. history, not the wins and losses in legal battles over tribal sovereignty (Morris, 2015). The Nebraska Indian Community College curriculum enables a student to examine treaty-making and different policy eras (Morris, 2015). An important aspect in considering offering federal Indian law is additional information could be provided regarding

American Indian culture and history to students (Blackhawk, 2019; Champagne, 2006; Morris, 2015; Steele, 2018).

American Indian People in Virginia

In Virginia, the 11 American Indian tribes are known as the Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Upper Mattaponi, Nansemond, Rappahannock, Monacan Indian Nation, Pamunkey, Cheroenhaka (Nottoway), Nottoway of Virginia, and Patowomeck (National Park Service, 2019). These Indigenous People were confronted with assimilation by the dominant Western European people with the start of the colony at Jamestown (Atlas, 2016; Berger, 2019; Glenn, 2019; Goetz, 2019; Reyhner, 2015, 2018; Rountree, 1996, 2013; K. Wood, 2007; W. Wood, 2016). The European-Indian interaction came in the form of land encroachment, hunting and fishing rights, religious conversation, education, various legal disputes, and basic personal freedoms, which marked an era of discrimination and injustice for the original inhabitants of Virginia (P. Davis, 2016; Dikant, 2019; Rountree, 1996, 2013; K. Wood, 2007; W. Wood, 2016).

American Indian Course Development in Virginia

Many textbooks gloss over the topic of American Indian assimilation (Krueger, 2019). Curriculum development in an American Indian Studies program at NOVA could include a focused course on approximately 6,000 American Indian tribal members representing the 11 state-recognized tribes in the state of Virginia (National Park Service, 2019; K. Wood, 2007). An investigation of the boarding school experience in the 1800s at the Hampton Institute in Virginia could be discussed, and an educational comparison of Black and Indian students attending the school could be analyzed (Emery, 2012). Further investigation into the forced assimilation, removal, migration, relocation, and enslavement of the Nanzatico Indians of

Virginia, displaced by English settlers could be studied (P. Davis, 2016; Goetz, 2019). Additionally, intermarriage with Indian People and the free Black slave population in Virginia contributing to the loss of religion, culture, traditional knowledge, and language could be investigated (Ablavsky, 2011; P. Davis, 2016; Dikant, 2019; Rountree, 1996, 2013). By the 20th century, American Indian languages in Virginia (Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Siouan) had become extinct, but more than 250 Powhatan words (largest Indian tribe in Virginia) have had their meanings identified (Rountree, 1996, 2013; Whitford, 2014). The cultures of American Indians need to be preserved, taught, and passed down to the next generation (Brimhall et al., 2012; Rountree, 1996, 2013).

Language

In an American Indian linguistic course, non-Indigenous students learning to speak one of the three languages (Algonquian, Iroquoian, or Siouan) may not be necessary, but being exposed to elements of some of the traditional Indigenous mother tongues could heighten an appreciation and develop a deeper understanding of the ethnic population (Ngai & Koehn, 2016). The outcome of the exposure to an Indigenous language could produce and enhance respect for some of the traditions, such as American Indian knowledge, culture, heritage, ceremonies, songs, and stories (Meza, 2015; Ngai & Koehn, 2016). All students should know Indigenous People are not historical artifacts or just figures of the past but are contributing members of society (Meza, 2015). Administrators of an AIS program can coordinate with the linguistics department to provide lessons and inform students regarding the Indigenous languages of the Americas, and methods used by linguists and anthropologists to document and examine the diversity among the many different mother tongues (J. L. Davis, 2016; Limerick, 2018; UVA: Linguists program,

2019). American Indian cultural knowledge and ceremonies are oral-language based (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019; Reyhner & Tennant, 1995). The inability of American Indians to understand or to speak the traditional mother tongue has perpetuated a loss of a place in Indigenous communities (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019). Speaking or understanding the mother tongue is therapeutic; specific native words express love and caring (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019). Knowing the language allows American Indian People to identify with an ethnicity (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019).

Culture

A course in Indigenous ways of knowing (philosophy) could encompass strategies to keep the culture intact (Tayac & Schupman, 2019). American Indian communities resisting the influence of non-Indigenous people to lose traditional societal values would be one objective of the course (Tayac & Schupman, 2019). Students could discuss the struggle for cultural survival among various tribes during the colonial era to the present (J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Shoemaker, 2017; Tayac & Schupman, 2019). There has been cooperation between the two cultural societies at various times in Virginia, which could further student discussions of past and present history (J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis; Shoemaker, 2017; Tayac & Schupman, 2019). Topics such as cultural revitalization, resistance, and the enduring effects of colonialism, including the impact of European diseases on American Indians in Virginia, could be explored (J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Shoemaker, 2017; Tayac & Schupman, 2019). Analyzing historical maps of American Indian hunting, fishing, and religious sites could lead students to discuss the protection of the land and the environment (J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Shoemaker, 2017; Tayac & Schupman, 2019). The aforementioned topics could lead to further

discussions, including the effects of treaty-making, the denial of civil rights, and the importance of legal recognition (J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Shoemaker, 2017; Tayac & Schupman, 2019).

Environment

In an American Indian Studies program, course instruction could move from teacher-centered conceptions towards student-centered learning to develop intrinsic motivation, critical thinking, and student ownership of learning (Belluigi & Cundill, 2017). Environmental concerns are a commonality in many Indigenous Populations (Goralnik et al., 2019). A course included in the curriculum on environmental issues could retain an Indigenous perspective by incorporating interactive classrooms from TCUs in which the information is presented to the student from American Indian professors (Carjuzaa & Hunts, 2013; Goralnik et al., 2019; NOVA, 2020c, 2020e, 2020f, 2020g; Smithers, 2019; VCCS, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e).

From an Indigenous perspective, a student could understand the concepts of local and national ecologies compared to the Western idea of resources being used for economic growth, and how urbanization devastated the environment, reshaping where and how American Indian People lived (Smithers, 2019). Indigenous individuals used various ecological areas for food, clothing, medicine (Smithers, 2019). Shrubs, trees, plants, and wildlife provided a sense of place and time and place (Smithers, 2019). Most Indigenous People depended on the oral sharing of information regarding ecological knowledge as part of the culture (Fixico, 2009; Smithers, 2019). From an Indigenous perspective, when people neglect to respect nature, individuals will disappear from the land (Fixico, 2009). Scholars from other VCCS campuses and disciplines could share with students and faculty members the issues and concerns of

Indigenous Peoples regarding state and local environmental concerns and issues (Berkes, 2009; NOVA, 2020b, 2020c; VCCS, 2020b, 2020c). Environmental and land issues between non-Indians and American Indians have been an ongoing problem because of broken treaties and other agreements which were permitted and many agreements were only orally settled among the two cultures (Dussias, 2012).

Legal Issues

In 2018, the Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Upper Mattaponi, Rappahannock, Monacan, and the Nansemond of Virginia were recognized by the United States Government (Christensen, 2018). A concern arises on why federal Indian law needs to be taught, what the instructors' qualifications are teaching the classes, and which department will be responsible for the course (Morris, 2015). The solution to the concerns can only be determined by staff member expertise, funding, and students' particular needs (Morris, 2015). Providing students with the fundamental objectives of lawmakers, and how implementing and interpreting the rules of tribal legal issues could be discussed, would assist in future decision-making for people concerned about American Indian rights and claims (Morris, 2015).

Courses in federal Indian law could provide a student interested in exploring the legal and ethical issues of American Indians in Virginia (Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2020). An investigation of the significant historical periods in Virginia could be examined and the motivations and other factors contributing to the ongoing disputes and conflicts between American Indians and non-Indians would be analyzed (J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Shoemaker, 2017; Tayac & Schupman, 2019). Forced segregation, federal and state Indian policies, such as the reason American Indians and the English agreeing to make treaties, could

lead to an examination of why some agreements were violated (J. L. Davis, 2016; P. Davis, 2016; Dussias, 2012; Shoemaker, 2017; Tayac & Schupman, 2019). To promote active learning, a student could become involved in local American Indian communities and participate in job shadowing and legal internships (University of Arizona, 2017; Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2020). A capstone project could provide a student the opportunity to demonstrate a mastery of all skills and knowledge acquired by either writing an in-depth academic legal research paper, a civic-based project, an electronic portfolio, or an oral presentation to several faculty members (Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2020).

The curriculum would allow educators and students to examine the origins and scope of tribal sovereignty as recognized under federal law (Carjuzaa & Hunts, 2013; Christensen & Tatum, 2018; Morris, 2015; Stanford Law School, 2019). Current issues regarding the division of authority between tribal, federal, and state governments, federal statutory arrangements governing American Indians, and American Indian tribes and nations could be discussed (Christensen & Tatum, 2018; Morris, 2015; Stanford Law School, 2019). Additional current legal issues which may be covered based on class selection include American Indian claims, gaming, family law, religious and cultural rights, and natural resources (Christensen & Tatum, 2018; Morris, 2015; Stanford Law School, 2019; Zehr, 2008).

An American Indian Studies program in the VCCS could be utilized in a specific instance concerning federal Indian law, environmental issues, American Indians, and non-Indians (Dussias, 2012). For example, a dispute arose from municipal authorities in the city of Newport News, Virginia, and a plan to build a water supply reservoir in King William County could be provided and summarized (Dussias, 2012). The reservoir was going to access water from the

Mattaponi River and other areas as needed because, in past decades, the residents living in the peninsula area have been under mandatory water restrictions (Dussias, 2012). A three-mile zone of non-encroachment circumvents the Mattaponi reservation, and the pipeline accessing water extends more than a half-mile into the zone, violating the agreement if the reservoir project had been approved (Dussias, 2012). The reservations of the Pamunkey and the Mattaponi Indians are in an area near the reservation in King William County and operate a shad hatchery where fishing, crabbing, and hunting provide income for the residents (Dussias, 2012). American Indians from the Mattaponi Tribe have legal rights to the Mattaponi River, granted by the Treaties of 1658 and 1677 (Dussias, 2012). For non-Indians, a pipeline accessing water could serve more than four counties and five cities, including eight military installations (Dussias, 2012).

An interdisciplinary AIS would allow learners to investigate the issues using other disciplines related to legal studies (treaty violating), history (U.S. and Virginia), economics and business (shad hatchery and residential incomes), archeology, cultural anthropology, religion (destruction of burial grounds), civil engineering (building the reservoir), environmental, horticulture, and forestry science (more than 500 acres of wetlands lost (Dussias, 2012; NOVA, 2020c; VCCS, 2020c). The hybrid course could entail the combination of face-to-face interaction and fieldwork (Crawley, 2015; NOVA, 2020c, 2020g; VCCS, 2020c, 2020e). Fieldwork could involve visiting several American Indian reservations and communities in the state of Virginia or Maryland, which could have law-related investigations involving tribal land disputes, seminars, and field trips (Crawley, 2015; NOVA, 2020c; VCCS, 2020c; Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2020).

Chapter Summary

Although the interest in Indigenous studies is increasing in colleges and universities globally and in the United States, the culture and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples are diminished by what is taught by non-Indigenous instructors and what is omitted in school curricula and textbooks (Krueger, 2019; Pleasant et al., 2018). In many classrooms, students lack the basic understandings of colonialism, Indigenous presence, and the concept of decolonization is unknown (Jobin, 2016; Thornhill et al., 2018). The Western European approach appropriates, romanticizes, and misinterprets Indigenous ways of life and ways of knowing (Krueger, 2019).

An Indigenous voice can be incorporated into several curriculums in higher educational institutions and an American Indian Studies approach needs to emerge from traditional Indigenous cultural ways of knowing (Jacob et al., 2015; RedCorn, 2016). Indigenous knowledge is personal, orally transmitted, holistic, and narrative (Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2019; Jacob et al., 2015). In addition, knowledge and values include respect for humans and animals, spirituality, caring for the extended family and the environment, sharing (cooperation), knowledge and respect of the land, and belief in the circle of life where everything is connected (Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2019; Foxworth et al., 2015; Kanu, 2011; Lopez & Bobroff, 2019). Included is American Indian leadership, which centers around individuals who serve the community discreetly (Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2019; Martinez et al., 2018; RedCorn, 2016).

Indigenous, American Indian, First Nations, and Aboriginal studies are not considered an academic discipline by many administrators and professors (Martin & Ventre, 2012). Indigenous studies programs are often in jeopardy of losing funding on college campuses and universities,

especially in constricting budgetary times (Elfman, 2018; Martin & Ventre, 2012). The discipline is still emerging and should not be excluded as being part of an academic institution because of a different set of paradigms, which includes a set of concepts or thought patterns, learning theories, research methods, postulates, and standards which do not conform to past established ways of research (Elfman, 2018; Jobin, 2016; Martin & Ventre, 2012). Western European voices have already been heard in legal issues, language, history, education, literature, environmental concerns, and culture (Augustus, 2015; Reyhner, 2015, 2018). The voice of American Indians has been suppressed for more than four decades and needs to be incorporated into many areas of curriculum development (Bacalja & Bliss, 2019; Carjuzaa & Hunts, 2013; Hamilton, 2019; Quigley, 2016).

A benefit of an American Indian Studies program is understanding other ethnic groups (Harris & Reynolds, 2014). In a diverse society, Indigenous People's historical and philosophical roots should be understood and appreciated in conjunction with how these cultures have impacted the past and continue to influence contemporary societies (Reyhner, 2015, 2018). To infuse culturally responsive approaches to teaching and learning, many educators are developing partnerships with AIS instructors when developing curricula, courses, and syllabi with the assistance of Indigenous instructors (Carjuzaa & Hunts, 2013; Ragoonaden & Mueller, 2017).

In 2020, ethnic minority students made up approximately half of the nation’s college population (Evenbeck, 2019; Rodriguez, 2015). Diverse and shared cultures and values of different cultural and ethnic groups could provide debates regarding national and local policies concerned with rectifying the unequal treatment and assimilation of immigrants and different ethnic groups (Dee & Penner, 2017; Pring, 2018; Sleeter, 2018). The additional dialog could lead

students to explore the approaches to gain an increased understanding of immigrants, native-born people, and the Indigenous Populations living in the same region or community (Lakhwani, 2019; Sleeter, 2018).

Chapter 3 contains the purpose, problem statement, and research questions. Additionally, Chapter 3 includes the research design, rationale, and a justification of why a basic qualitative research design was used. The role of the researcher is explained, and population sampling is addressed. The appropriate means of collecting data is part of the chapter, and data collection is reviewed. Data from the responses and the process of examining and organizing the qualitative information will be explained. The chapter incorporates a discussion on how reliability and validity are achieved using triangulation, member-checking, and reflexivity. Another section involves a description of ethics and how the Institutional Review Board procedures at the American College of Education (ACE) are followed to protect the participants. The key elements of the research study are summarized in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The American education system overall has failed to enlighten and educate students about the original inhabitants of our nation. The limited information about American Indians presents students with distorted views and beliefs (Alexander, 2013; Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015; Jones, 2018; Meyer, 2011). Students not having a basic understanding of American Indian history, culture, society, concerns, and issues fail to learn American history concerns and issues (Jones, 2018). Teaching classes which focus on American Indians assist in enabling students to engage in critical thinking, which can allow learners to reflect and understand the nation's history because Indigenous Populations have been misrepresented or excluded in the history of the United States for many years (Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015; Jones, 2018; Meyer, 2011). The problem was a lack of consultation from American Indian Studies scholars, tribal leaders, and from specific data sources when courses in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) were created.

The purpose of the basic qualitative research design was to provide a voice from experts in American Indian Studies and addresses the problem when pre-existing knowledge existed regarding the courses being taught in American Indian culture, history, and society. The topic needed to be examined from the perspective of experts (Augustus, 2015; Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016; Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). This research study fills the gap in knowledge by allowing Indigenous leaders to present various insights and concerns regarding American Indian Studies courses. Current American Indian Studies courses taught in the VCCS are outdated and were implemented approximately 13 years ago. The research gap entails developing courses without consulting American Indian Studies scholars and Tribal community leaders (Fox &

Tippeconnic, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015). These individuals have valuable insight, but the concerns and issues of this group of people were not heard when creating these classes (Jones, 2018; Minthorn & Shotton, 2018).

The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to conduct research and examine the topic from the experts' perspective (Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016) and to help discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the specific people (Kahlke, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data from the inquiry were used to recommend and reorganize existing faculty members, propose and create new course syllabi, and establish an A.A. or A.S. degree program with a specialization in American Indian Studies in the VCCS. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: What are the program objectives for American Indian Studies courses?

Research Question 2: What are the issues, policies, and other challenges pertaining to American Indians which need to be discussed?

Included in the first section of the chapter is an introduction, restated purpose, the problem statement, and research questions. The chapter additionally encompasses the research design and rationale of the study. In the proceeding section, the role of the researcher is defined. A description of why a basic qualitative research design is discussed. The justification for purposive and snowball sampling is addressed in the population and sample section. In the next section, the instruments used to collect data are examined. The appropriate means of how to collect data are part of the research procedure. In the data collection section, an explanation of how the responses to the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended, researcher-developed

questions and information from documents are explained. The sorting of words, themes, or phrases which assist in answering the research questions is examined in the data preparation section. Data analysis is examined, and the process of organizing the qualitative information is discussed. In addition, a section exists on how reliability and validity are achieved using triangulation, member-checking, and reflexivity. Another section involves a description of ethics and how the procedures of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the American College of Education (ACE) were followed to protect the participants. Key elements of the research study are summarized at the end of Chapter 3. The data is analyzed and explained in Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

Qualitative research includes words and visual aids, which consist of images, photography, film, videos, paintings, drawings, collages, sculptures, artwork, graffiti, advertising, and cartoons, and covers an array of interpretive techniques to assist in exploring, examining, describing, decoding, and translating the meaning of data gathered from a participant's experience (Kahlke, 2014; Moser & Korstjens, 2017; Rahman, 2017). There are five qualitative research methodologies frequently used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Researchers use numerous methods which assist in incorporating specific techniques for conducting, documenting, and evaluating a participant's experiences, and these research designs have commonalities (Denscombe, 2017; Moser & Korstjens, 2017; Sutton & Austin, 2015). The similarities include observations, document analyses, focus groups, in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions, surveys, questionnaires, and artifact analyses (Creswell &

Poth, 2017; Moser & Korstjens, 2017; Sutton & Austin, 2015). The following brief definitions help explain the basic concepts of the five qualitative research methodologies considered.

Case study is a research design used in social and life sciences which involves a deep understanding of various types of data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Percy et al., 2015). Case studies can be exploratory or explanatory and inquire into a small number of cases or a single case (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Percy et al., 2015). Ethnography is a qualitative design, which involves the production of highly detailed accounts of how people in a social setting lead and interact in a culture-sharing group (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The investigator becomes immersed in the target participants' environment and culture, leading to an understanding of the cultures, motivations, and themes emerging from the collected data (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Percy et al., 2015). From several data sources, an investigator using grounded theory explores and describes the behaviors of participants to form a theory from the analyzed data (Chametzky, 2016). In narrative inquiry, research is focused on one or two individuals and the interpretation of people's accounts, experiences, or stories, using in-depth interviews and documents (Moen, 2006). The interpretations are weaved together, and the sequence of events forms a cohesive story (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Percy et al., 2015). Phenomenological research methods are used when describing an event, activity, or phenomenon. In this type of study, a combination of data collection methods, such as conducting interviews, reading documents, watching videos, visiting places, and relying on the participants' perspectives, providing insight into the motivations of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Flick, 2015, 2017). A basic qualitative research design consists of an umbrella of concepts taken from these previously mentioned research designs and can use a range of approaches and research

methods to find a solution to a particular or specific problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Percy et al., 2015; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The study encompassed online documents and in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions sent by email and SurveyMonkey (see Appendices B & C). Analysis of documents and the questions are appropriate for this basic qualitative research design and provide a focused approach to answering the research questions (Behar-Horenstein & Feng, 2018; Kennedy, 2016; Norris et al., 2017).

A basic qualitative research design is best characterized by the intention to link research with action (Desir et al., 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and fits the particular study in terms of people, organizations, resources, and practical constraints. New viewpoints, opinions, concerns, and comments of the experts can allow all of the participants a voice, an opportunity to contribute, and provides input which that may improve and redesign the existing courses, create new courses, and assist in developing a specialization or associate degree in American Indian Studies. In addition, the specialization or associate degree may lead students into other fields of study such as history, literature, English, American studies, archeology, education, anthropology, law, government and politics, medicine, museum studies, social work, education, and religious studies (Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Foxworth et al., 2015), which supports the transfer agreements the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has with George Mason University, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the College of William and Mary, and other 4-year institutions offering courses in American Indian culture, history, and society, and undergraduate majors and minors in American Indian Studies (NOVA, 2020d, 2020e, 2020f; VCCS, 2020c, 2020d).

Redesigning, creating new courses, and creating an associate degree or specialization may further educate individuals in the history and culture of American Indians in the United States and the state of Virginia. These new initiatives will support professors teaching American history, Virginia history, and Virginia's American Indian history. A part of these initiatives at the NOVA, which is a part of the VCCS, could include an academic internship at the National Museum of the American Indian, the creation of an American and Indigenous Alliance Association, participation in area and national Powwows, an opportunity to attend American Indian conferences, and submit articles to AIS journals which would benefit students and faculty (Lee, 2015, 2017; University of Arizona, 2017).

Role of the Researcher

In this basic qualitative research design, the researcher was an observer-participant and the collector and analyzer of the data. In this study, an observer-participant was known by the participants but did not have face-to-face contact with the respondents (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Brief contact was made with several American Indian community leaders in Virginia 6 years ago, and the research idea was not discussed. Developing new courses and degree programs is important. This study did not interfere or conflict with other teaching assignments or work environments. There was no relationship of authority with the participants, nor dual roles, and the faculty at the NOVA, Alexandria Campus, were not part of the study.

In this basic qualitative research design, the reliability of data and validity of interpretations and conclusions entailed unbiased research. Prior experiences were disclosed. Understanding any former encounters was insignificant to the study. The high standards of quality and integrity were demonstrated with one person having the ability to clarify and respond

to new avenues of inquiry, which entails examining all the data and supporting a justified conclusion (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The concept of being transparent allows readers to draw individual conclusions about the interpretations presented through the research. Data in a qualitative study are dependent on the nature of the information collected from the documents and responses from the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions, and the availability of participants (Behar-Horenstein & Feng, 2018; Hammarberg et al., 2016; Richter & Maier, 2017). The objective of an investigator is to have a neutral role (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Privitera, 2019).

Research Procedures

In the research procedures section, the population and sample selection are explored and justified because understanding the opinions, reasons, and motivations of the participants is vital in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Various procedures are used by researchers when gathering responses from the stakeholders. A detailed discussion regarding the instruments used to collect and analyze the data in the study is given here (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, reliability and validity, ethical procedures, and a chapter summary are part of the section.

Population and Sample Selection

The total number of sources relevant in answering the research questions is referred to as the population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). There are more than 50 community colleges throughout the nation offering associate degrees with a specialization in American Indian Studies (Peterson's, 2019). Excluded in the study are the other community colleges throughout the nation not offering associate degrees with a specialization in American Indian Studies (Peterson's,

2019). In addition, the estimated 6,000 American Indian tribal members living in Virginia representing the 11 state-recognized tribes were omitted in the investigation (K. Wood, 2007).

The total sample size encompassed 53 data sources, which consisted of 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes, 13 American Indian Studies scholars, four tribal community leaders providing information regarding the history, culture, and current issues and concerns of each Virginia Indian community (National Park Service, 2019), five American Indian Tribal Community Colleges within the Tribal College and University system (AIHEC, 2020a), and 20 non-tribal community colleges offering associate degrees, courses, and specializations in American Indian Studies (AIHEC, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e; Peterson's, 2019).

Purposive and snowball sampling were used in the study, which allowed relevant data to be collected on the topic (Etikan et al., 2016; van Rijnsoever, 2017). The objective of purposive sampling relies on targeted sources of information such as documents and instruments (Etikan et al., 2016; van Rijnsoever, 2017). This sampling was deliberately chosen based on the relevance and knowledge about the topic being investigated (Etikan et al., 2016; van Rijnsoever, 2017; Weller et al., 2018). In conjunction with purposive sampling, a snowball sampling statement encouraging other participants to join the study was embedded in a recruitment flyer. Using snowball sampling, American Indian Studies scholars could share contacts, and potential participants in the study could increase (Giordano et al., 2020). The additional number of respondents provided another overall perspective of what was viewed as important about the culture, issues, and concerns regarding Indigenous Populations and individuals (Giordano et al., 2020). A recruitment flyer with a link to SurveyMonkey was posted in a Facebook discussion board area (see Appendix D).

There are 25 American Indian Studies departments that have information (documents) which were accessed. Documents included college catalogs, mission statements, course and program descriptions, objectives, outlines, outcomes, and American Indian Studies course syllabi in the American Indian Studies department at each of the 25 community colleges. Five Tribal Community Colleges were selected within the Tribal College and University System and have student transfer agreements to other colleges (AIHEC, 2020a, 2020d). The chosen 20 non-tribal community colleges offer American Indian Studies and have student transfer agreements to other colleges which emulate the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA, 2020d, 2020e, 2020f; Peterson's, 2019; VCCS, 2020d). In addition, 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes provided information regarding the history, culture, and current issues and concerns of each Virginia Indian community.

Tribal Community Colleges and non-tribal community colleges provide courses related to American Indian history contemporary life, language, culture, traditions, governmental status, Tribal leadership, and other American Indian issues. The sampling strategy from the community colleges provided data regarding commonalities or differences in the various curriculums (Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015; Lobo et al., 2016; Meyer, 2011). American Indian community leaders and the internet websites of the 11 Virginia tribes provided data on the history, culture, society, concerns, and issues specific to living in Virginia (Waugaman & Moretti-Langholtz, 2001; K. Wood, 2007). American Indian Tribal and non-tribal community colleges, combined with responses from in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions, and the 11 Virginia Indian websites (four different sources), provided the rich illuminating information (Behar-Horenstein & Feng, 2018;

Blackwell, 2010; Brimhall et al., 2012; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Chenault, 2001; Foxworth et al., 2015; Jones, 2018; Lobo et al., 2016; Meyer, 2011).

Approval of the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at the American College of Education (ACE), before emailing the department chairpersons and accessing the documents from the American Indian Studies department at each community college (see Appendix E) (ACE, 2018). Procedures to obtain documents start with an email to the American Indian Studies department chairperson at each college (see Appendix F). The goal of initiating contact was to establish professional respect with the chairperson and included an introduction, project title, brief description of the methodology, the purpose of the study, and a statement assuring confidentiality (Saeed, 2017; Whitney, 2016). The department chairpersons did not need an informed consent letter because these individuals were not responding to the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions. The online documents from the community colleges were available to the public without any restricted access (Whitney, 2016). Although a consent form was not necessary, the letter of contact to department chairpersons describing the research study will be kept for three years, defining the dates for the study and other pertinent information (ACE, 2018). There were several advantages to gathering data from documents. Document collection and analysis were unobtrusive, did not change, and were available for repeated review (Denscombe, 2017).

Procedures to obtain responses from the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions started with an email letter of recruitment to the American Indian community leaders of the 11 state-recognized tribes in Virginia involved in the study (see Appendix B). The goal of contact was to establish professional respect, curiosity, and rapport with the potential participants

who might volunteer to be involved in the research (Cohen et al., 2018; Saeed, 2017). The email had the informed consent letter, which was electronically signed by the participant before any research began (see Appendix B) (ACE, 2018). After the consent letter had been signed, the research questions were mailed to the participants (see Appendix A). In addition, SurveyMonkey was used to collect responses (see Appendix C). The online data collection instrument was user-friendly and provided a variety of templates and features which could be used in the survey design process (Cary, 2014; Havill, 2014). In addition, SurveyMonkey can provided an easier dissemination of the survey to potential participants (Havill, 2014). The SurveyMonkey email had the informed consent statement the participant electronically accepted before any research begins (see Appendix C) (ACE, 2018). The link to the survey can be found in Appendix C.

Instrumentation

Five experts having doctorates who were not participating in the study were asked to validate the six researcher-developed questions (see Appendix G). Comments and suggestions from the experts were used to modify and revise the questions. After the corrections were made, the questions were emailed to American Indian community leaders in Virginia. For the convenience of the participants, online interview questions were used (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

College catalogs, mission statements, course and program descriptions, objectives, outlines, outcomes, and American Indian Studies course syllabi were downloaded from AIS department webpages. The online interview responses and documents were used to collect data and were utilized to explore in-depth topics, to obtain new information (Behar-Horenstein & Feng, 2018; Richter & Maier, 2017; Weller et al., 2018). Open-ended questions and documents were used in similar studies by scholars in AIS to obtain relevant data that provide comparable

and different viewpoints (Blackwell, 2010; Chenault, 2001; Foxworth et al., 2015; Heuvel, 2011). The research from these scholars is a model for this basic qualitative research design.

Data Collection

A step-by-step procedure of gathering data started with an email sent to the five AIS department chairpersons at each tribal community college, 20 AIS department chairpersons at each non-tribal community college (see Appendix F), and more than 200 surveys to American Indian Studies scholars (see Appendix C). In addition, an email was sent to 11 American Indian community leaders (see Appendix B). The American Indian Studies departments at each Tribal community college were located and accessed by logging on to the specific American Indian Higher Education Consortium website (AIHEC, 2020e). American Indian Studies departments from non-tribal community colleges were accessed by logging on to the specific American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) website, Community College Finder (Community College Finder, 2019).

Participants (American Indian community leaders) were contacted using a work or home email address and were obtained by using the internet site, Secretary of the Commonwealth: Virginia Indians (Virginia Indians, 2021). Procedures for conducting in-depth, online, and asynchronous open-ended questions were sent to the respondents via email. Participants were sent a letter of contact and consent and a request for a signature of consent (see Appendix B), the research-developed questions (see Appendix A), and at the end of the study, an appreciation email letter (see Appendix H). Appendices B and C have the informed consent letter, which was electronically signed or accepted by the participant before any research began (see Appendices B & C) (ACE, 2018). The 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes, which provided information

regarding the history, culture, and current issues and concerns of each Virginia Indian community, were accessed by logging on to the internet site, Secretary of the Commonwealth: Virginia Indians (Virginia Indians, 2021).

In addition, SurveyMonkey was used (see Appendix C), and a recruitment flyer was posted on Facebook (see Appendix D). The in-depth, online, and asynchronous open-ended questions, letter of contact and consent, and a request for an acceptance of consent are embedded in each. Facebook and SurveyMonkey were used in conjunction with the email sent to the American Indian leaders to ensure more than 10 responses were obtained.

Data Analysis

The theoretical framework of Needham and Hill's (1987) instructional constructivism is the guideline used to assist instructors in eliciting new knowledge (Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Klein, 2006; Lee et al., 2019; Mishra, 2015; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005; Needham & Hill, 1987). Procedures for the organization and preparation of data analysis started with keywords, themes, or phrases copied into a Microsoft Excel document. All data were entered into the NVivo qualitative software program. The NVivo program offers the needed flexibility for qualitative data analysis and is equipped with the ability to provide keyword coding, mind-mapping, and theory building, and the software is an efficient means to store and locate qualitative data (Phillips & Lu, 2018; Zamawe, 2015). Reading through the documents and responses from the participants multiple times to uncover the keywords, themes, or phrases was necessary (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Privitera, 2019). These ideas and concepts were grouped and checked for accuracy.

The data were displayed in tables and figures format using NVivo, to include specific words and phrases pertaining to American Indian contemporary life, language, culture, traditions, governmental status, concerns, and issues. The keywords, themes, and phrases were identified to answer each research question. Sovereignty is an example of a possible reoccurring keyword to help answer the question regarding historical, cultural, and societal issues and concerns of American Indians in Virginia. Not all questions can be answered with one word (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Popping, 2015). Unneeded keywords, themes, and phrases grouped by the use of NVivo were interpreted to assist in answering other questions.

Before information was placed into the NVivo software program, the data were cleaned. To clean the data, incomplete, incorrect, improperly formatted, duplicated, or irrelevant keywords, themes, and phrases were removed or sidelined (Allen, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Fielding et al., 2017). Faulty and inconsistent data could lead to misleading conclusions (Allen, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Fielding et al., 2017).

The data collected from the two instruments were uploaded into the NVivo software (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017). NVivo software assisted in analyzing, managing, and organizing the data (Phillips & Lu, 2018; Zamawe, 2015). All data were read several times to provide an overall perception of the material and an opportunity to reflect on the intent and value of the information regarding American Indian issues and concerns.

The objective of data preparation is to sort data into keywords, themes, or phrases to answer the research questions (DuBois et al., 2018). The collected data did not include the names and personal or physical characteristics of the participants. The location of each AIS department

remained anonymous. Each participant and document were assigned a non-identifying pseudonym which corresponded to the information which had been collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Privitera, 2019; Sieber & Tolich, 2013). An example of an American Indian Studies syllabus obtained from the Bay Mills Tribal Community College, for example, would have the non-identifying pseudonym of 1TBMD. All data group information (participants and documents) is safeguarded on a personal computer hard drive with a protected password. The computer and the password can only be accessed by the client and is stored at a home office in a locked file cabinet. By the policies which the American College of Education sets, the informed consent form will be kept for three years (ACE, 2018). In addition, the data will be kept for 10 years because the research study will be published (ACE, 2018). All data will be destroyed after the 10-year period (ACE, 2018).

Participants who have not returned the responses to the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions (see Appendix A) were sent a follow-up reminder after week one to answer the questions and reply. Reminders are an effective strategy to improve overall return rates (Trespalacios & Perkins, 2016). Without such reminders, email response rates are likely to be less than 50% (Trespalacios & Perkins, 2016).

An exit email to individuals who contributed valuable information signifies closure to a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Privitera, 2019). Exiting the study encompassed an appreciation letter to the participants after the responses to the questions were returned (see Appendix H). Participants are able to request a copy of the dissertation in the appreciation email (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Privitera, 2019).

Reliability and Validity

Incorporating different strategies such as triangulation and member-checking are procedures to enhance credibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Flick, 2017; Noble & Smith, 2015). Triangulation can ensure a participant's views on the subject matter reflect and confirm accuracy (Candela, 2019). Engaging the research contributors is a part of the member checking process (Allen, 2017; Candela, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Noble & Smith, 2015; Richter & Maier, 2017).

Triangulation is a strategy which legitimizes a study (Allen, 2017). When different data sources are used and the collected information is similar, a coherent justification for themes and conclusions is built (Allen, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Flick, 2015, 2017). The process adds to the validity of a study when themes are established using several sources of data or perspectives from the respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Flick, 2015, 2017). Triangulation minimizes potential bias and is utilized to rectify any preconceived assumptions which have been formulated (Flick, 2015, 2017). Triangulation was employed by collecting, comparing, and analyzing the data from the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions, SurveyMonkey responses, information from the 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes, and multiple online documents (college catalogs, mission statements, course and program descriptions, objectives, outlines, and outcomes, and American Indian Studies course syllabi) from Tribal and non-Tribal community colleges.

Member-checking occurred after data cleaning to ensure the participants' information was accurate (Allen, 2017). Increasing the credibility of a study and building trustworthiness can be achieved by member-checking (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017;

Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Privitera, 2019). Each participant was asked to corroborate the truthfulness of the information from the responses to the open-ended questions if the data were summarized or paraphrased (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A transcribed summary of the response from each participant was emailed to the appropriate American Indian community leader, and each participant was asked to add new information (if necessary). The emails were sent back to confirm if the data were accurate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Privitera, 2019). With member-checking, bias in the interpretation of the data can be avoided because each participant has control over this portion of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Privitera, 2019; Richter & Maier, 2017).

Transferability is demonstrated by the degree to which the results can be conveyed to other contexts or settings (Privitera, 2019). The terms *contexts* and *settings* refer to similar populations and circumstances. The sampling method can allow for rich detail regarding a topic (Erlandson et al., 1993). Utilizing in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended interview questions produced rich descriptions from the respondents and assisted in drawing clear inferences and credible explanations from the data (Adiguzel et al., 2016; Erlandson et al., 1993; Palinkas et al., 2015; Rambod et al., 2016).

Dependability is defined as the extent to which the same results would be achieved if another investigator conducted the same study under similar circumstances (Privitera, 2019). The research process was traceable, logical, and documented to achieve dependability, (Carcary, 2009; Denscombe, 2017; Lub, 2015). An audit trail was used to accomplish the objective (Carcary, 2009; Denscombe, 2017; Lub, 2015).

Confirmability is the establishment of interpretations clearly derived from the data and findings made by an investigator and the results being substantiated by other researchers, which can result in a clear link to the conclusions which can be followed logically (Amankwaa, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Privitera, 2019). Confirmability is based on the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases (Allen, 2017; Amankwaa, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Lub, 2015). The objective was to verify the primary goals of the study, which incorporate an understanding of a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants (Allen, 2017; Amankwaa, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Lub, 2015). When credibility, transferability, and dependability are achieved, confirmability is established (Allen, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Privitera, 2019). Any interests in American Indian history, culture, and concerns need to be set aside to avoid a biased conclusion. Reflexivity was employed as a continual process of exposing how the participants could influence this research project and provide an opportunity to examine the respondents and the way each shaped and informed the study (Shelton, & Flint, 2019).

Ethical Procedures

The Internal Review Board of the American College of Education (ACE) approved the study before any data collection began (see Appendix E) (ACE, 2018). The ethical issues related to any conflicts of interest consist of acknowledging any bias which would interfere with the research study. Pre-exiting knowledge and assumptions regarding American Indian history, culture, and society are not relevant. The basic qualitative research design was dependent on the nature of the information collected from the documents, and responses from the in-depth, online,

asynchronous, open-ended questions, and the availability of participants (Behar-Horenstein & Feng, 2018; Hammarberg et al., 2016; Richter & Maier, 2017).

Provided in Appendices B and F are an introduction, the project title, a brief description of the methodology and purpose of the study (ACE, 2018). The contact letter to the American Indian community leaders (see Appendix B) encompasses a document consisting of the informed consent and a signature form (see Appendix B) (ACE, 2018). Appendix B has the informed consent letter, which the participant electronically signed before any research began (see Appendix B) (ACE, 2018). Appendix C (SurveyMonkey) has the informed consent letter, which was electronically accepted by the participant before any research began (see Appendix C) (ACE, 2018).

Each participant were assigned a non-identifying pseudonym. All participants were kept from any potential harm, ensuring the information gathered was anonymous. Each participant and document were assigned a non-identifying pseudonym corresponding to the collected information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Privitera, 2019; Sieber & Tolich, 2013). Data from the participants and documents were safeguarded on a computer hard drive with a secure password. The computer was stored at a home office in a locked file cabinet. By the policies which are set by the American College of Education, the consent letter to the participants will be kept for three years and then destroyed (ACE, 2018). Data will be kept for 10 years, then destroyed (ACE, 2018).

At the Northern Virginia Community College, none of the faculty members were recruited to participate in the basic qualitative research design to safeguard against possible coercion or undue influence in the work environment (Resnik, 2016; Saeed, 2017). There are no relationships of authority with the participants nor dual roles at any of the NOVA campuses. The

research study did not interfere or conflict with other teaching assignments or work environments.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of the study and research questions were identified in the introduction. A basic qualitative research design was explained and justified in the next section. A research definition of participant-observer was clarified in the Role of the Researcher section. Population and sample selection were addressed, and why purposive and snowball sampling are valuable to enhance transferability was examined (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015; Rambod et al., 2016). In the Research Procedure section, a justification was made for the two instruments. The open-ended, researcher-developed interview questions, the information from the 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes, and the documents (college catalogs, mission statements, course and program descriptions, objectives, outlines, and outcomes, and American Indian Studies course syllabi) assisted respondents in elucidating information on American Indian history, culture, society, concerns, and issues.

How responses from the various instruments and how information is accessed were discussed in the Data Collection section. The process of manual analysis and the use of NVivo was discussed in the Data Analysis section, which included a discussion of how the qualitative information was organized. The methodology chapter additionally encompassed a section on issues of reliability and validity. Included in the chapter was a description of ethics and how the procedures of the Institutional Review Board at the American College of Education were used to protect the participants.

In Chapter 4, four types of data collection methods are be used to answer the research questions. Emergent themes, keywords, and phrases are evaluated. In addition, the research findings and data analysis are discussed.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results

The background of the problem is related to information which has been taught from the viewpoint of the Western European educational system, which has continued to present inaccurate information regarding many ethnic groups (Boas, 1966a, 1966b; Du Bois, 2018). Information in many history courses and other disciplines contains misleading information regarding Indigenous People's cultural and societal values and other ethnic groups (Butler, 2018; Krueger, 2019; National Council for the Social Studies, 2018; Schaefli et al., 2018). Western European perspectives can contain insufficient or biased information on Indigenous and other ethnic populations (Butler, 2018; Krueger, 2019; Schaefli et al., 2018). The input of Indigenous knowledge and experiences has been minimized and neglected in typical courses and curriculum structures (Bennett, 2015; Boas, 1966a, 1966b; Du Bois, 2018; Mays, 2013; Zehr, 2008).

The problem was a lack of consultation from American Indian Studies scholars, tribal leaders, and from specific data sources when courses in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) were created. The purpose of the basic qualitative research design was to provide a voice from experts in American Indian Studies and addresses the problem when pre-existing knowledge existed regarding the courses being taught in American Indian culture, history, and society. The topic needed to be examined from the perspective of experts (Augustus, 2015; Kahlke, 2014; Liu, 2016; Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). The research study filled the gap in knowledge by allowing Indigenous leaders to present various insights and concerns regarding American Indian Studies courses. The research findings compiled from Tribal and non-tribal colleges, official websites of the American Indian tribes in Virginia, responses from American Indian leaders in Virginia, and American Indian Studies professors (AISP) teaching courses in

the field of study assisted in answering the research questions. Valuable insights, input, and concerns of authorities in American Indian culture and history were essential contributions to determine and justify if any changes are needed in existing courses.

A review of the background of the study, problem statement, and purpose was provided in the introduction. In the next section, there is a discussion regarding the description of the data collection, which includes the time frame for the study and any deviations or unusual events which occurred during data collection. The data analysis segment contains visual overviews presented in tables and graphs to show commonalities in five tribal colleges and 20 non-Tribal colleges located in Arizona, Michigan, California, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, and New Mexico.

Eleven Virginia Tribal websites provide information regarding Virginia Indians, which are located on the internet and are accessible to the public. Additionally, in Virginia, there are 11 state-recognized tribes. Within the 11 tribes, six of the tribes are federally recognized. Four tribal leaders responded to the online open-ended survey questions. All 11 tribal reservations and cultural centers are located east of the Appalachian Mountains (see Table 1).

Table 1

Tribal Indian Leaders Responding to Open-Ended Survey Questions

Tribal Leader Participant	Virginia Tribe Pseudonym	State & Federally Recognized
Virginia Leader 1	Umpattx	X
Virginia Leader 2	Ekcihc	X
Virginia Leader 3	Happar	X
Virginia Leader 4	Nanse	X

There are 13 American Indian Studies professors (AISP) teaching courses in this field. The American Indian Studies participants were from 13 different states, including Alabama, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Virginia. Participants represented professors from 4-year and 2-year tribal and non-tribal colleges. Eleven professors were from non-tribal colleges, and two were from tribal colleges (see Table 2).

Table 2

American Indian Studies Professors Responding to Open-Ended Survey Questions

AISP Participant	Degree	Educational Institution	State
Participant 1	Ph.D.	4-year non-tribal college	AL
Participant 2	M.A.	4-year non-tribal college	AK
Participant 3	Ph.D.	4-year non-tribal college	CA
Participant 4	Ph.D.	4-year non-tribal college	HI
Participant 5	Ph.D.	2-year non-tribal college	ID
Participant 6	Ph.D.	4-year non-tribal college	ME
Participant 7	Ph.D.	4-year non-tribal college	MI
Participant 8	M.A.	2-year tribal college	MN
Participant 9	Ph.D.	4-year non-tribal college	NE
Participant 10	Ph.D.	4-year non-tribal college	NV
Participant 11	M.A.	2-year tribal college	ND
Participant 12	Ph.D.	2-year non-tribal college	OK
Participant 13	M.A.	2-year non-tribal college	VA

The data analysis segment describes the processes used to secure confidential material, how the information was prepared, coded, sorted, and how themes were identified. Common themes are identified from the gathered data and are organized according to the research questions, in relation to the theoretical framework of the study. Included in the research findings and data analysis results is the reliability and validity of the study.

Data Collection

Tribal and non-tribal 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities from various states were used as data sources. In the United States, there are 25 American Indian Studies (AIS) departments located in eight different states which were investigated. The AIS programs have online documents to be accessed, such as program and course descriptions, objectives, outcomes, outlines, and American Indian Studies course syllabi. Additionally, 11 Tribal websites and responses from four Virginia Indian leaders and 13 American Indian Studies professors teaching courses in this field of American Indian Studies were examined and evaluated.

Time Frame

Procedures to obtain responses from the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions started with an email letter of recruitment to the American Indian community leaders of the 11 recognized tribes in Virginia. Emails were sent during the first week of October 2020 (see Appendix B). The goal of contact was to establish professional respect, curiosity, and rapport with the potential participants who may volunteer to be involved in the research (Cohen et al., 2018). The emails had an informed consent letter which the participant electronically signed before the research began (see Appendix B) (ACE, 2018). Participants were expected to return the responses within two months.

American Indian Studies professors teaching courses in this discipline were sent a questionnaire containing six open-ended questions using SurveyMonkey during the third week of April (see Appendix C). The questionnaire, sent via SurveyMonkey, and recruitment flyer distributed through Facebook were closed during the first week of May 2021 (see Appendices C & D). In addition, documents from the 25 community college catalogs, American

Indian Studies course outlines and syllabi, 11 American Indian tribal websites, responses from four American Indian tribal leaders in Virginia, and the responses from 13 American Indian Studies professors were downloaded and saved to a secured file during May 2021.

Deviation from the Data Collection Plan

There were deviations from the data collection plan which were outlined in Chapter 3. From the original approved proposal, a request was made by the researcher to make revisions to narrow the search parameters. No changes were made to the IRB approved method. The changes did not affect the intended methodology or research design of the study.

Modifications had to be made to the original informed consent email. Deletions were made, and several words and sentences were added. Enhancements were made to ensure the participants could avoid any apprehensions when opening the investigator's email. Emailed Coronavirus (COVID-19) phishing scams and the 2020 election email scams affected the schedule of sending the in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions to the American Indian leaders in Virginia. A phone message was made to each Virginia Indian leader as emails were sent, stating the correspondence was not SPAM or a scam.

One response for a tribal leader was obtained in October 2020. A second response was collected from a tribal leader in December 2020. The third response from a Virginia leader was obtained in January 2021, and although the time frame for collection had expired, the information was accepted because data collection on the topic had not been analyzed.

A request was made by several dissertation supervisors from the American College of Education to increase the number of human participants. Changes to the approved proposal were made before data collection began. Permission was obtained from the ACE IRB to proceed with

the research. SurveyMonkey questionnaires were sent to American Indian Studies professors teaching courses in this discipline (see Appendix C). Four Virginia Indian leaders and 13 professors were participants.

An unusual event that was encountered entailed data collection. Two participants answered the questions via phone messages. Although the information was useful to the study, the material could not be included without a signed informed consent form. During the time period when the SurveyMonkey was sent and the recruitment flyer posted, another Virginia Indian leader responded to the questionnaire, which increased the number of Virginia Indian leaders to four participants.

There were no other unusual or significant circumstances encountered when obtaining information for analysis. Electronic signatures were appended on the informed consent forms by the participants. Data collected were coded manually, and some of the information was transferred to the NVivo software for analysis. Keywords, phrases, and themes emerged which are presented in the following Data Analysis and Results subsection.

Data Analysis and Results

Six steps adapted from Flick (2015, 2017), Clarke and Braun (2013), and Saldaña (2016) were used to obtain the data needed to assist in answering the research questions. The six steps align with the information presented in the Data Analysis section in Chapter 3 (see Table 1). Components within the college catalogs, such as the program and course descriptions, program and course objectives, program and course outcomes, American Indian Studies course outlines or syllabi, American Indian websites, and participants were read multiple times (Step 1). The procedure was employed to extract keywords and phrases (Step 2). Data from all of the sources

were cleaned (Step 3). Next, the codes and themes were entered NVivo for further analysis. NVivo was used in conjunction with reading the information to ensure other valuable data were not overlooked (Step 4). The themes and codes were labeled, grouped, named, and defined (Step 5). The analysis of the data was then written (Step 6) (see Table 3).

Table 3

Six Steps Used in the Thematic Analysis Process

Steps	Procedure
Step 1: Familiarization	Read and get a thorough overview of all of the data.
Step 2: Generate Codes	Separate words and phrases which are relevant or potentially interesting. Collate data into groups. Identify main points and common meanings which recur throughout the data.
Step 3: Search for Themes	Review the codes. Identify patterns. Decide and discard codes which are vague or not relevant.
Step 4: Review Themes	Decide which codes or themes are useful and are accurate representations of the data.
Step 5: Define Themes	Define each code or theme. Define each theme (if necessary). Decide how each code or theme assists in understanding the data.
Step 6: Produce the Report	Conclude and write an analysis of the data.

Altogether, there were more than 50 program objectives, 150 course objectives, and 200 student learning outcomes when all the classes in the programs were examined. Common themes were gathered and presented, and a synopsis was given, representing the standard principles for each course. The four themes which were found through data saturation were (a) historical content overview, (b) cultural traditions, (c) the importance of language, and (d) government

relations. Responses from all data sources and participants reinforced the information discovered in the data. Each of these themes is discussed in turn (see Table 4).

Table 4

Four Common Themes

Themes	Description
Historical Content	Information regarding an overview of Indigenous history
Cultural Traditions	Information regarding various cultural traditions pertinent to the different tribes
Importance of Language	Information regarding traditional, Indigenous languages
Government Relations	Information which provides an understanding of issues regarding government relations and sovereignty

Historical Content Overview

The introductory courses pertaining to historical content often overlap in subject information in particular areas such as culture and government relations and provide a student with a factual impression of Indigenous societies in the United States. Courses offered at tribal and non-tribal colleges are separated into two sections: (a) historical and (b) government relations and sovereignty. Both sets of courses provided an overview of the subject matter. Course titles, descriptions, and syllabi information represented the best fit in each category (see Table 5).

Table 5

Introductory Courses for Degree Completion in American Indian Studies

College Code	(A) History & Culture	(B) Government Relations
1TFDL	American Indian History I & II	Intro to American Indian Studies
2TNEI	American Indian History I & II	–
2TNEI	Cultures & Peoples of Native America	–
3TRLN	Anishinaabe and U.S. History	–
4TSIG	Survey of Native American History	–
4TSIG	Anishinaabe History I & II	–
5TTOD	Cultures & History of Indigenous People	Intro to American Indian Studies
6NAZW	Intro to Native American Studies	–
6NAZW	Overview of Native American Studies	–
7NCHB	American Indian History & Culture	–
8NCGX	American Indian History	Intro to American Indian Studies
9NBCC	Native American History	–
10NDEA	Native American History	–
11NESX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies
12NGWX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies
13NGDX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies
14NMEN	Native American History	–
15NSAX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies
16NMNI	Native America	–
17NIDA	American Indian History	Intro to American Indian Studies
17NIDA	Native People of North America	–
18NPMX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies
19NPXX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies
20NPIM	History and Culture of the Yaqui People	–
20NPIM	History of Indians of North America	Intro to American Indian Studies
21NSAJ	Native Cultures of North America	–
22NSBA	American Indian: Past And Present	–
22NSBA	Native American Cultural Heritage	–
23NSTR	Survey of Native American History	–
23NSTR	Intro to Native American Studies	–
24NSDX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies
25NSMX	Native American History	Intro to American Indian Studies

Note. T denotes Tribal College. N denotes Non-tribal College. 8NCGX: Consortium of colleges in Arizona consisting of 11NESX, 12NGWX, 13NGDX, 15NSAX, 18NPMX, 19NPXX, 24NSDX, & 25NSMX.

An analysis of 25 tribal and non-tribal college historical overview lecture classes revealed similarities in the course descriptions. Information from lectures and the reading material assigned to students provided an overview of the relationships Indigenous People have with land and place, architecture, technology, agriculture, and American Indian societies before and after contact. Significant responses for the need for the introductory courses which provide factual information were provided from American Indian tribal leaders and American Indian Studies professors (see Table 6).

Table 6

Virginia Leader Responses Regarding Historical Content

Virginia Tribal Leaders	Significant Responses
Tribal Leader 1	"Courses in American Indian Studies should include the History of Virginia Indians since the time of European contact."
Tribal Leader 2	"Not a monolithic group." "There are differences in culture, food, and clothing between Eastern Woodlands Indians and Western Tribes."
Tribal Leader 3	"People of all races need to know the real history and culture of Virginia Native American tribes."
Tribal Leader 4	"We are not extinct. Natives are human beings, not a sub-species. We are resilient, strong, intelligent, adaptable, and spiritually centered. Natives are the original stewards of the lands of the United States."
AISP Participant 8	"Truth, truth, truth, and more truth. No more lies, falsehoods, and cover-ups."
AISP Participant 11	"The most important is that the tribes have thousands and thousands of years of history...it did not begin in 1492 or when immigrants stepped on our shores."
AISP Participant 13	"As a historian, I think a grounding in the history of Native Peoples is important before examining contemporary issues."

From the lectures and discussions in the historical content classes, students enrolled in the courses would examine information regarding the impact of the fur trade, and cultural and societal changes in relation to interaction with Western European inhabitants. This information would enable students to evaluate the positive and negative social, political, and economic influences from other cultural groups pertaining to Indigenous People. Additionally, a deeper understanding of linguistic identity, civil rights, political issues, and religious issues was offered. An individual should gain a greater understanding of the diversity, history, cultures, and societal concerns, issues, and values of the Indigenous People in the United States and worldwide.

As paraphrased from all participants, American Indian People cannot be reduced to one set of attributes, beliefs, and practices. For example, American Indian Studies professor (AISP) Participant 8 indicated, “All the ridiculous stereotypes they (non-Indians) learned growing up are nothing but discrimination, double standards, and propaganda.” AISP 11 stated the following:

> Non-Americans, immigrants, Caucasians, and other cultures must learn to deprogram their teachings and training that natives were uncivilized, heathen, and savages. They must learn they were people with families, cultures, governments, spirituality (religion), medicines, agriculture, complex societies, language, and strong values and beliefs of love, kindness, generosity, loyalty, survival, and more.

As expressed by all participants, and found in the historical content data and responses, the outcome of the discipline is the need to raise awareness and create increased respect and value of Indigenous People and cultures, which could foster a closer relationship between the college or university and local Indigenous People and communities. By analyzing the

complexities and not the misinformation presented regarding American Indian tribes and nations, students would examine the diversity of various tribes and identify the challenges facing Indigenous People in the United States and worldwide. The response made by the Virginia Indian Leader 4, "They (non-Indians) should know we are still here," and the statement made by Participant 3, "we are still here" connect the course descriptions with the other data sources. Data showed the need to understand there was history in America, thousands of years before 1492.

Cultural Traditions

Eighteen colleges embrace the instruction of hands-on cultural traditions as a core or elective class. Seven colleges do not offer hands-on activities as a course (core or elective). The colleges exhibit a respect and interest in American Indian traditional culture by having Indigenous guest speakers during Native American month, American Indian student unions, interactive Powwows, and arts and crafts demonstrations on campus. Significant responses from a Virginia tribal leader and an American Indian professor (AISP) regarding the importance of teaching hands-on cultural traditions are provided in Table 7.

Table 7

Responses to Teaching Hand-On Cultural Traditions

Virginia Tribal Leader & AISP Participant	Significant Responses
Tribal Leader 3	"A breakdown of each of Virginia's tribes' culturally rich history. Include things like Tribal Land mapping, reservations, family names/tribal chiefs, clan traditions, and identifying different characteristics of cultural arts such as Beading, hunting, dancing, fishing, pottery, and weaving."
AISP Participant 3	"It's important to balance the heavy stuff with celebrations of our cultures and peoples."

Participant 9 stated, “I see a lot of concern for appropriate presentation in schools and museums for the full historical experience and current cultural practices of Native Peoples.” Participants 1 and 3 paraphrased and added, ask local tribal members and American Indian Scholars to teach or co-teach. Participant 2 stated, “Non-Indigenous students should have an opportunity to learn about their implicit and explicit biases when thinking about Indigenous Peoples.”

There are more than 50 core and elective courses which require a student to engage in hands-on activities in both non-Indian and tribal college American Indian Studies programs. In conjunction with oral history and storytelling, hands-on learning reinforces the lecture part of comprehending and appreciating the culture and history of Indigenous People. Additionally, language is used in hands-on activities, including giving and listening to directions and communicating with team members during an event. Each tribal college incorporates the term *tradition* to understanding culture and participating in cultural activities. An example of tribal and non-tribal college hands-on traditional cultural courses is provided in Table 8.

Table 8

Culturally Relevant American Indian Studies Courses Taught at Tribal and Non-Tribal Colleges

College	Course
1TFDL	Foundations of Anishinaabe & American Arts
2TNEI	Traditional Native American Games
2TNEI	Native American Clothing Design & Clothing Construction
3TRLN	Anishinaabe Black Ash Basket Making
4TSIG	Contemporary Native American Art
4TSIG	Native American Environmental Issues
5TTOD	O'odham Dancing
5TTOD	Environmental Issues and Conservation in the US-Mexico Borderlands
6NAZW	Curanderismo: The Healing Tradition of Mexico & the Southwest
8NCGX	Native American Gaming
20NPIM	Traditional Ceramics
21NSAJ	Navajo Rug Weaving

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Learning about Indigenous cultural traditional is an essential part of understanding American Indian society. Thirteen non-tribal and all five tribal colleges, including Virginia Indian Leader 4, and Participant 9 conveyed, hands-on activities go beyond attending a Powwow or other cultural events. The hands-on activities in many courses serve to connect with Indigenous culture, religion, and society.

A class such as *American Indian hand games* at a tribal college provides a student with an introduction to the history, rules, and etiquette of highly competitive games of skill and chance. A course such as *American Indian traditional dance* is designed to introduce a student to the history, songs, etiquette, and cultural awareness, emphasizing the participation in Anishinaabe dances. In *Regalia-traditional dress and the arts of Ojibwe culture*, students participate in designing, pattern making, and handwork skills, and the regalia are culturally suitable for indigenous ceremonies and rituals when completed. In addition, hands-on proficiency in the use

of tools is demonstrated by students at tribal colleges in courses related to making traditional American Indian jewelry and beading. Being exposed to the oral history, songs, and stories pertaining to the use and production of pottery, and using natural and contemporary materials to construct finished products (pottery), is a part of what a student will experience in the class.

Importance of Language

Participant 3 stated, "American Indian Studies can assist tribal communities in numerous ways with language programs." Different opinions emerge on the subject of the importance of Indigenous mother tongue language classes in an AIS program. In areas where there are Indian communities near the college or university, three participants expressed, teaching or having students understand an Indigenous mother tongue language should be the foundation of an American Indian Studies program. Nine participants considered language revitalization a vital part of the program. Thirteen American Indian Studies participants acknowledged the value of learning or understanding the importance of mother tongue language courses being part of an American Indian Studies program.

Five tribal colleges and 13 non-tribal colleges incorporate Indigenous language courses in the American Indian Studies programs. Among the seven community colleges not offering a traditional Indigenous language course, the importance of the topic is not devalued. Making the public (students) aware of language rights lost in the 19th-20th centuries is an important part of an American Indian Studies program, as noted by Participant 5 (see Table 9). Significant responses from American Indian Studies professors (AISP) are provided regarding the importance of the loss of Indigenous mother tongue languages are provided in Table 9.

Table 9

Indigenous Mother Tongue Language Concerns and Issues

AISP Participants	Significant Responses
AISP Participant 5	"The loss of traditional language broke down family connections and structures."
AISP Participant 13	"A course on culture could address the question of language loss and the ways in which that impacts culture."

There are multiple language courses in which a student can be enrolled at tribal and non-tribal colleges. Each class enables a student to attain an understanding of the complexity and beauty of the traditional Indigenous language. Understanding the traditional language assists in honoring the values, culture, history, methodologies, and philosophies of Indigenous People. Tribal colleges located near or on American Indian reservations have cultural connections to those Indigenous communities and offer traditional language courses. All five tribal and 13 non-tribal colleges have language courses in which students are exposed to a mother tongue language and are expected to understand the language or learn to speak and write the traditional Indigenous mother tongue language (see Table 10).

Table 10

American Indian Studies Indigenous Language Courses Taught at Community Colleges

College	Language Course
1TFDL	Anishinaabe Language for the Classroom
1TFDL	Examination of Anishinaabe Language
1TFDL	Anishinaabe Language I, II, III, & IV
2TNEI	Omaha Language I, II, III, & IV
2TNEI	Dakota Language I, II, III, & IV
3TRLN	Ojibwemowin I, II, III, & IV
4TSIG	Ojibwe Language I, II, III, & IV
5TTOD	Apache Language I & II
5TTOD	Elementary Tohono O'odham I & II
5TTOD	Conversational Tohono O'odham I & II
5TTOD	Intermediate Tohono O'odham
5TTOD	Advanced Tohono O'odham
6NAZW	Tribal languages
16NMNI	Dakota Language I & II
16NMNI	Ojibwe I & II
17NIDA	Elementary Coeur d'Alene Language I & II
17NIDA	Intermediate Coeur d'Alene Language
21NSAJ	Navajo I & II
21NSAJ	Beginning Navajo Reading & Writing
21NSAJ	Navajo Oral Traditional & Styles
8NCGX	Elementary Navajo I & II
8NCGX	Beginning Navajo Conversation I & II
8NCGX	Beginning Navajo Conversation I: Daily Living
8NCGX	Beginning Navajo Conversation I: Culture
8NCGX	Intermediate Navajo I & II
8NCGX	Navajo for Navajo-Speaking Students I & II
8NCGX	Intermediate Navajo Conversation I & II
8NCGX	Beginning Pima Conversation I & II

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Government Relations

The term *sovereignty* is the ability to self-govern, gain independence, and maintain independence (Henderson et al., 2015; Krueger, 2019; Unal, 2018). An issue and concern for many tribes in Virginia and the United States is gaining and achieving sovereignty. All

participants agreed the concepts of sovereignty, federal Indian law, and government relations need to be addressed. The 11 Virginia Indian webpages included discussions on tribal government, sovereignty, and government-to-government relations with the United States and the Virginia state government. Significant responses from American Indian Studies professors (AISP) are provided regarding the importance of the loss of sovereignty and government are provided in Table 11.

Table 11

Importance of Sovereignty and Government Relations

AISP Participants	Significant Responses
AISP Participant 1	"Native Americans are part of sovereign nations."
AISP Participant 3	"We are still here as tribal sovereign nations, with a government-to-government relationship with the federal government and state government."
AISP Participant 9	"Each Nation will have its own particular concerns, but in general indigenous sovereignty is at the core of these issues. Without tribal sovereignty, cultural, economic, and historical issues are not adequately addressed by a tribal nation."
AISP Participant 10	"A good AIS/NAS department educates its students on Native-US history, law, and policy."
AISP Participant 12	"In a grander context, I would suggest designing curriculum content around sovereignty and assists to prepare Native students to be part of the greater effort of defending Native rights and tribal sovereignty variously."
	"Native Americans are unique in their political identity through the process of treaty-making and how that makes their experience different from other groups."

Tribal colleges' core beliefs and visions are committed to empowering students with tools for Tribal Nation-building, and in doing so, the community can achieve a higher level of sovereignty and self-determination. Participants agreed an American Indian Studies program

needs to educate the public and students of the inequities created by the United States government and emphasized the courses which cover the topic need to be part of the curriculum. Not having sovereignty, as Participant 6 stated, “chips away at their (Indigenous) distinct status, lands, waters, and resources.” Participant 9 added, “Without tribal sovereignty, cultural, economic, and historical issues cannot be adequately addressed by a Tribal Nation.”

Nineteen of the 25 colleges offer specific classes on Indigenous sovereignty. Analyzing federal Indian policy developments and identifying American Indian rights, and the ability to explain and evaluate the historical developments and unique legal and political status of Indigenous People in the United States would be a course objective. The classes encompass a wide range of information which focuses on political, self-government, legal, federal trust responsibility, and social justice issues. An understanding of government-to-government relations is complex and continues. As Participant 13 added, “the issue of appropriation of Indian land by the United States and attempts to regain back land in the courts and why a monetary settlement is not acceptable to many tribes, is a difficult concept for non-Indians to understand.” Table 12 presents the 20 classes which specify Indigenous sovereignty.

Table 12

Community Colleges Offering Specific Classes on Indigenous Sovereignty

College	Course Title
1TFDL	Federal Laws and the American Indian
2TNEI	Federal Indian Law
3TRLN	Treaty Law I & II
4TSIG	Native American Law & Policy
5TTOD	Geography of the Borderlands
6NAZW	Criminal Justice Systems
8NCGX	Sovereign Indian Nations
10NDEA	Native American Contemporary Society
11NESX	Sovereign Indian Nations
12NGWX	Sovereign Indian Nations
13NGDX	Sovereign Indian Nations
15NSAX	Sovereign Indian Nations
16NMNI	Dakota Culture & History & Ojibwe Culture & History
17NIDA	American Indian Sovereignty & Federal Policy
18NPMX	Sovereign Indian Nations
19NPXX	Sovereign Indian Nations
21NSAJ	Native American Politics
21NSAJ	Introduction: Tribal Governance, Sovereignty & Religion
24NSDX	Sovereign Indian Nations
25NSMX	Sovereign Indian Nations

Note. T denotes Tribal College. N denotes Non-tribal College. 8NCGX: Consortium of colleges in Arizona consisting of 11NESX, 12NGWX, 13NGDX, 15NSAX, 18NPMX, 19NPXX, 24NSDX, & 25NSMX.

Responses from American Indian Studies professors among the various tribal and non-tribal colleges and courses related to government relations and Indigenous Populations was examined. Participant 9 stated, “to gain allies in our ongoing challenges to tribal sovereignty, we need to educate all students.” Referring to the previous statement, Participant 5 added, “Create awareness of Native American issues, historical as well as current, inform the local community about local rights, and broken treaties.”

Alignment of Findings to Guiding Research Questions

Program objectives for American Indian Studies courses were the focus of the first research question. Current issues, policies, and other challenges pertaining to American Indians, which needed to be discussed, are the focal points of the second research question. The research questions were designed to assist in exploring and examining different thoughts and recollections to build generalized understanding.

Program Objectives for American Indian Studies

Research Question 1 addressed the program objectives for American Indian Studies courses in which Tribal and non-tribal colleges have a common program objective. All 25 community college American Indian Studies programs offer courses including factual history, cultural awareness, and classes related to the government-to-government relations with the United States federal government. The course objectives provide an individual with an understanding and appreciation of the rich cultural heritage, knowledge, sovereignty, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and American Indian Nations in the United States.

Program descriptions from non-tribal colleges use the term *interdisciplinary*. The phrase *unique interdisciplinary scholarly field* is used to describe the program at one non-tribal college in California. The diverse subject matter assists in cultivating discussions on past and current issues and concerns related to the tribe and other Indigenous People in the United States and globally.

Current Issues, Policies, and Other Challenges

Research Question 2 addressed the current issues, policies, and other challenges pertaining to American Indians. Participants 5, 9, and 12 stated the needs and challenges depend

on the size of the regional or local American Indian communities. The issues and concerns align with the four themes, which were found through data saturation and included (a) historical content overview, (b) cultural traditions, (c) the importance of language, and (d) government relations. The data collected from the 25 AIS program documents, 17 participants, and the Virginia Indian official websites indicated there are American Indian concerns and issues which are similar.

Historical Content Overview

All participants and all sources of data agreed there is a concern of the lack of accurate information in schools which inform students regarding the history of American Indians in the United States. Virginia Indian Leader 1 stated, "If you read the books of today, there is sparse information in textbooks concerning Virginia Indians." Virginia Indian Leader 1 stated, "students should be provided with a more complete history (American Indians included) of the country and create awareness." Additionally, Virginia Indian Leader 1 added, "American Indians are still here and live in Virginia and the other parts of the country." Other statements from all Virginia Indian leaders aligned with what is taught in the historical overview courses. Virginia Indian Leader 2 expressed "Individuals need to gain knowledge regarding the pre-contact culture of tribes located along the East Coast."

Cultural Traditions

Regarding culture, Virginia Indian Leader 2 indicated, "differences in the many Indigenous groups are apparent in the cultures of the Eastern Woodlands Indians and Western Tribes." Findings from the data collected revealed a concern in providing an appropriate education for American Indians in conjunction with cultural relevance. The various tribal and

non-tribal community colleges provided an avenue for Indigenous students to stay connected to the cultural traditions of the tribe. Understanding a person's own cultural identity can lead to emotional well-being, self-confidence, and self-determination. Students can preserve and learn the culture of the tribe by attending tribal colleges and non-tribal colleges which encompass culturally relevant classes regarding Indigenous ways of knowing.

The Importance of Language

Indigenous mother tongue languages which were lost, devastated American Indian culture. All data sources stated the importance of mother tongue language courses or in-depth discussions regarding the topic as part of an American Indian Studies program. For example, "Respectfully promote the language, culture and history of the Anishinaabeg," is part of the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College mission statement. Ojibwemotaadidaa Omaa Gidakiiminaang (Ojibwe Language Immersion Academy) is part of the vision. Language assists in understanding the history, values, and knowledge of the Ojibwe-Anishinaabe People, thereby ensuring the longevity of the Ojibwe-Anishinaabeg culture.

Government Relations

Sovereignty, as Participant 12 stated, "is at the forefront." All data sources agreed obtaining and maintaining sovereignty is vital. Sovereignty is the ability to have self-sufficient tribal governments on Indian reservations enabling Indigenous People to control the use of the land, such as gaming rights, taxes, industry, religion, access to mainstream education, personal property, and schools for American Indian People. Specifically, Virginia Indian Leader 3 stated the problem exists because:

> Although we have Federal and state recognition now, at the Virginia State level they still do not recognize us . . . took our tribe over 100 years to achieve the legal recognition we have . . . don't even get considered or included in political aspects or issues unless someone is trying to get elected. Tribes not having sovereignty experience a lack of support for economic independence, no avenues to return historical lands to tribes, or funding and teaching the youth culture and customs.

Virginia Indian Leader 2 stated students need to be more "informed of how Eastern tribes were forced away from traditional ancestral lands, just like the Western tribes." Virginia Indian Leader 2 added "students do not realize there were self-governing structures in tribes prior to contact and need to be aware of the multiple attempts at forced assimilation by government and educational institutions by Western Europeans." By studying factual and accurate Virginia history, many individuals do not realize as Virginia Indian Leader 1 stated, "Government treaties with the colonial tribes were with England and not the United States, and treaties with a majority of the Western Tribes were with the United States as they were established after 1776."

Reliability and Validity

Credibility was achieved by member checking, which permitted the participants to countercheck information (Moustakas, 1994). The participants did not request or add any other information to the statements. Document collection and analysis were unobtrusive, did not change, and were available for repeated review (Denscombe, 2017).

Triangulation

A total of 53 data sources were used in the research study. Triangulation was used to provide credibility and was employed by collecting, comparing, and analyzing the data from six

in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended survey questions from 17 participants, information from the 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes, and the multiple online documents (college catalog program and course descriptions, objectives, outlines, and outcomes, and American Indian Studies course syllabi) from five Tribal, and 20 non-Tribal community colleges. Triangulation minimized the potential bias and assisted in rectifying any preconceived assumptions which had been formulated. In addition, triangulation strengthened the study's validity and reliability (Flick, 2015, 2017).

Saturation

Data saturation was achieved when there was adequate data from a study to develop a valid understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (van Rijnsoever, 2017). A comprehensive range of data collection was investigated using the criteria of the study's parameters. In the study, all the sources were reviewed multiple times and similarities and differences were discovered to answer the research questions. Data saturation was achieved in the categories by incorporating the information from documents from various American Indian Studies departments, responses of the four Virginia Indian leaders, and 13 American Indian Studies professors.

Transferability

Transferability is demonstrated by the degree to which the results can be conveyed to other contexts or settings (Privitera, 2019). Purposive and snowball sampling were used to extract specific information regarding American Indian Studies. Duplicating the methodology and sampling procedures in Chapter 3 could allow another researcher in a similar study to obtain rich descriptions and detail from participants regarding a given topic. A comprehensive description of

the research design and methods can assist in emulating the study and making informed transferability judgments (Carcary, 2009; Denscombe, 2017; Lub, 2015; Privitera, 2019).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was achieved in the study by member-checking. Bias in the interpretation of the data was avoided because each participant had control over the responses to the open-ended questions. Follow-up emails were sent to the participants if clarification on any of the AISP or Virginia Indian leader contributors' responses needed clarification which confirmed the statement's intent. Email confirmation on the information given was sent to all 17 participants, and each participant was asked if additional information needed to be included in the responses to the open-ended questions.

Chapter Summary

The data from various documents and participants were collected. The first research question focused on the program objectives for American Indian Studies. Themes were identified after the information was reviewed, analyzed, sorted, and grouped. Collected data revealed four common themes in the program objectives: (a) historical content overview which involves lectures pertaining to Indigenous history; (b) cultural traditions include various oral history, storytelling, and hands-on learning, which reinforces the lecture part of the historical overview classes; (c) the importance of language which is interactive and discussion-based; and, (d) government relations which provide students with an understanding of the complexities of government relations, sovereignty, and treaties with United States Government.

The second research question focused on current issues, policies, and other challenges pertaining to American Indians. The restructuring, developing, creating new courses, and

establishing a new program of study will embrace an Indigenous perspective instead of a Western European viewpoint. Non-Indians would understand the concern Indigenous People have regarding the preservation of American Indian culture, losing traditional language, and the importance of gaining and maintaining sovereignty if (a) accurate and complete history of the country regarding Indigenous People was provided and, (b) Virginia Indian specific modules of learning were included in the curriculum for students. The new discipline will require an American Indian Studies program description, program objectives, course objectives and outcomes, additional classes, and the creation of syllabi, which guide the development of the sequence of the courses to be taught as part of the total curriculum.

The summary of the research findings in Chapter 5 provides a discussion of implications for leadership. Data from the research study will assist in making recommendations to administrators to review a proposal which justifies why changes are needed in existing American Indian Studies courses. Creating an associate degree program in the new discipline will create a working and learning relationship with American Indian leaders and tribal members in Virginia.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The problem was a lack of consultation from American Indian Studies scholars, tribal leaders, and from specific data sources when courses in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) were created. The purpose of the basic qualitative research design was to provide a voice from experts in American Indian Studies and addresses the problem when pre-existing knowledge existed regarding the courses being taught in American Indian culture, history, and society. The topic needed to be examined from the perspective of experts.

Fifty-three data sources were examined. By conducting a study which allowed input from Indigenous leaders, scholars, and other data to emerge, the research gap in knowledge was filled. The theoretical framework was constructivism. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to retrieve data from 25 community colleges, four tribal community leaders, 13 American Indian Studies scholars, and 11 websites of the Virginia Indian tribes.

Two instruments for data collection were used. One instrument required an internet search for the websites of the Virginia Indian tribes and online documents from 25 colleges. Another instrument consisted of in-depth, online, open-ended questions via email and SurveyMonkey.

Question 1 addressed the program objectives for American Indian Studies courses. Question 2 addressed the current issues, policies, and other challenges pertaining to American Indians. Manual analysis and NVivo software were used in categorizing the information. Data saturation provided four themes from participant responses in conjunction with other data sources. The themes included (a) accurate historical content regarding American Indians, (b) cultural traditions and the connection to hands-on cultural traditions, (c) the importance of

Indigenous languages, which assists in understanding Indigenous culture, history, and values, and (d) government relations which provide opportunities to maintain self-sufficient tribal governments on Indian reservations, and the ability to control land use, gaming, taxes, religion, industry, personal property, and access to Indigenous and mainstream education.

In Chapter 5, the research in the Literature Review Chapter 2 and the data collected in the basic qualitative research design study are analyzed. Limitations identified in the study are addressed. Recommendations are made for further research and should affect current policies. Leadership opportunities which are discussed should bring positive outcomes and social change. A review of the procedures and key methods to achieve credibility is presented. The analyzed data results are clarified and interpreted. Conclusions which are justified and focus on the input of experts in the field of American Indian Studies are presented in the chapter.

Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions

Indigenous People and groups globally, the United States, and in Virginia were examined. In the Literature Review, the categories of (a) culture, (b) environment, (c) legal issues, and (d) language were investigated. The results gathered from the data sources in the basic qualitative study revealed there are four common themes which include (a) historical content, (b) cultural traditions, (c) importance of language, and (d) government relations. Although some topics are labeled differently, there are overlapping concerns, issues, and relevant information in the 53 data sources and the Chapter 2 Literature Review categories.

A discussion regarding constructivism is presented. Specifically, how different academic disciplines use Needham and Hill's (1987) constructivist model is examined. Examples of how

the theory of constructivist instruction and learning are used in American Indian Studies are given.

Historical Content

The culture and history of Indigenous Populations have been misrepresented or excluded globally, in the United States, and in Virginia for many years (Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Fox & Tippeconnic, 2017; Foxworth et al., 2015; Jones, 2018; Meyer, 2011). Often, history and culture are linked together and to assist in eradicating the misconceptions and marginalization of an ethnic group, the solution is to offer courses and degree programs which inform individuals about the culture, history, and ways of thinking of Indigenous People (Paris & Biggs, 2018). Classes pertaining to historical content would include information regarding an overview of Indigenous history and focus on American Indians, which enable students to engage in critical thinking, allowing learners to reflect and understand the nation's history from a different perspective.

An overlap of the history of Indigenous People cannot be separated from the culture (Littletree et al., 2020). All responses from the participants, the Virginia Indian websites, and information gathered from the literature review in the qualitative study, agreed there is a concern of the lack of accurate information in schools, which inform students regarding the history of American Indians in the United States. An analysis of the course syllabi supported the instruction of accurate information regarding Indigenous historical content. American Indian Studies programs from the 25 community college programs offer one or more required courses, which are introductory classes to earning an AIS degree. An overview of the history and culture of the Indigenous People of the United States is a significant part of the curriculum. Many of the

courses entail specific historical and cultural information regarding American Indian People and tribes living in the local area or state.

Culture and Cultural Traditions

The literature review revealed that the history of Indigenous People should not be taught without including the importance of learning an overview of the cultures (Littletree et al., 2020; Rountree, 2013). The commitment to learning the culture of Indigenous People has expanded to tribal colleges offering distance learning courses which provide ways of exposing American Indians to curricula taught and controlled by Indigenous People and reflect the same values, beliefs, and traditional tribal cultures (Al-Asfour & Bryant, 2011; Bull & Guillory, 2018; Hampton, 2013). Cultural traditions are an essential part of understanding American Indian society. Hand-on activities in many courses serve to connect Indigenous culture, history, religion, and society together. Understanding the culture and participating in cultural hand-on traditions reinforces the diversity found in different tribes. Information from the literature review revealed an increase in the interest among younger American Indians to maintain traditional tribal cultures (Bull & Guillory, 2018; Hampton, 2013).

From the 25 colleges investigated, data revealed 18 of the American Indian Studies programs offer instruction in hands-on cultural traditions as a core or elective class. Although seven colleges did not offer hands-on activities, the interest and respect for American Indian traditional cultures were present in having Indigenous guest speakers during Native American month, American Indian student unions, interactive Powwows, and Indigenous arts and crafts demonstrations on campus. Hands-on activities in non-Indian and tribal college American Indian Studies programs can include American Indian dance, arts and crafts, hunting (archery), clothing

design, music, planting, storytelling, ceramics, weaving, sign language, and cooking. The hands-on activities in many courses serve to make connections with Indigenous culture, religion, history, and society. If the culture and cultural traditions of Indigenous People are diminished or eradicated, American Indian People and communities lose their place, self-determination, and identity (Reyhner, 2015, 2018; Riley & Carpenter, 2016).

Importance of Language

The information gathered in the literature review revealed, critical parts of Indigenous cultures are lost if the language is removed (Lee, 2015, 2017; Shreve, 2018). Knowing the mother tongue language presents individuals with strong self-identity, cultural identity, and contains a linkage to cultural values (Reyhner & Tennant, 1995; Shreve, 2018). For Indigenous Populations, language connects the past, present, and future cultural survival (Deloria et al., 2018). Information from the literature review, responses from participants, Virginia Indian websites, and the 25 AIS programs acknowledge the importance of the mother tongue language. If courses in the Indigenous mother tongue are not offered in AIS programs, the topic of language loss and revitalization is analyzed in various courses. In-depth discussions regarding the topic are a vital part of an American Indian Studies program.

Tribal colleges and universities and many non-tribal colleges have successfully incorporated Indigenous cultural traditions and language into American Indian Studies programs (Angelo & Perham, 2015; Beyer, 2018; Ka'ai, 2017; Reyhner, 2015, 2018). All five tribal and 13 non-tribal colleges have language courses in which students are exposed to a mother tongue language and are expected to understand the language or learn to speak and write the traditional Indigenous mother tongue language. Many tribes, such as the Patawomeck tribe of Virginia, are

working with other Indigenous linguistics to revive their historic traditional language (Virginia Indians (2021). American Indian Studies programs play an essential role in assisting tribal communities in numerous ways with language revitalization programs.

Government Relations and Legal Issues

Conclusions from the literature review, course information, Virginia tribal websites, and responses from participants, which focused on government relations and legal issues, revealed Indigenous People want to control their own lives and destiny. Self-sufficient tribal governments on Indian reservations break the cycle of relying on the United States government. A summary of the data revealed there is the necessity of having and maintaining sovereignty, which provides the authority of each tribe the use of land on American Indian territory. Included in Indigenous sovereignty are gaming, tax, industry, personal property, educational, and religious rights, which assist in creating self-determination. For more than 40 years, the formal federal policy in Indian Affairs has been Indian self-determination, which can create the conditions for a new era in which American Indians create potentials for success, which are determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions (Shoemaker, 2017).

As paraphrased from American Indian Studies Professor 12, an American Indian Studies program should concentrate on designing curriculum content around tribal sovereignty, which in turn would assist in preparing Native students to be part of the greater effort of defending Indigenous rights. Nineteen of the 25 colleges offer specific classes on Indigenous sovereignty. American Indian Studies concepts of sovereignty, federal Indian law, and government relations are taught in specific courses and are interwoven into various other classes, which connects as a tool for ensuring tribal sovereignty. The concepts are difficult for non-Indians to understand

because there is a lack of public knowledge regarding American Indian legal and political status (Shoemaker, 2017).

Environment

Embedded in the topic of legal issues and sovereignty is the topic of environment. The subject is a significant concern but not a theme which produced saturation among the 53 data sources. Concluded from the literature review, connections were discovered between the sovereign authority obtained by Indigenous People and groups to land use, nature, culture, and personal well-being. As paraphrased from AISP 11, all things on this planet (Mother-Earth, the animals, plants, elements, Moon, Sun) are equal if not more important than humans.

The cultural beliefs of many Indigenous individuals and tribal societies are tied to the environment and are not viewed in isolation (Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019). Traditional Indigenous knowledge is constantly present in the environment (Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2019; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019). Some leading historians in United States history and American Indian Studies such as Gary Nash, Herman Viola, Helen Rountree, and Donald Fixico have made a case for why United States history cannot be taught effectively or accurately without indigenous content (Fixico, 2009; Rountree, 2013). New knowledge is evolving regarding the topic of environment (Leddy, 2017; Smithers, 2019). Further investigation has revealed, many American Indian Studies experts have written essays which have touched upon indigenous-environmental history, which is intertwined with legal issues regarding land dispossession, which affect Indigenous communities, in addition to American Indian and non-Indian relations (Leddy, 2017; Smithers, 2019). American Indians are the original stewards of

the lands of the United States (Leddy, 2017; Smithers, 2019). The theme of environment is interwoven in all aspects of life (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019; Smithers, 2019). American Indian Studies graduates can have a positive impact on environmental justice matters, which promote past and current Indigenous agricultural technologies (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019; Smithers, 2019).

As paraphrased from American Indian Studies Professor 13, courses which pertain to Indigenous political and social issues should be taught and expanded to include environmental concerns. Further analysis which would be relevant could include connections which might be made regarding the environment, government relations, sovereignty, and Indigenous Populations worldwide. The concepts of self-determination and self-governance are at the heart of understanding Indigenous concerns, issues, and culture.

Although some of these concepts are viewed as political and not academic by the responses of the participants. The literature review and data collected from the AIS course descriptions and syllabi revealed, many tribal colleges and non-tribal colleges offer courses in federal Indian law and international law. Implicitly or explicitly discussed in the courses is an inherent right of Indigenous Peoples to (a) protect their ancestral land, resources, and territories, (b) control and manage their lands, territories, and resources, (c) self-govern institutions and authorities within the land, and (d) make decisions regarding the conservation and development on the lands, territories, and resources (Champagne, 2007, 2008; Champagne & Stauss, 2002; International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

In the literature review, constructivism was described as a learning theory which assists in enhancing a student's interest in learning (Iversen et al., 2015; Needham & Hill, 1987). In conjunction with an instructor, a student is actively involved in the outcome of the educational experience by assisting in creating practical activities and projects, which are relevant and are essential to the students' and instructors' interests and learning objectives (Iversen et al., 2015). Needham and Hill's (1987) constructivist five-phase guidelines were further investigated in curriculum design.

Specifically, Needham and Hill's (1987) constructivist model was examined. Using the five-phase method, individuals can accomplish the educational objectives outlined in various lessons and projects in different disciplines and among diverse student populations. The five-phase model can aid an instructor in creating resources, which can be adapted to fit various disciplines (Akpan & Beard, 2016; Hashim & Kasbolah, 2012; Jasin & Shaari, 2012; Lee et al., 2019; Mohamad, 2012; Nair & Muthiah, 2005).

Using Needham and Hill's (1987) five-phase constructivist model can be used as an effective teaching strategy for understanding and retaining the studied concepts. During the instruction and learning process, active participation from individuals assisted in enhancing group discussions. Additionally, an interest in the subjects being taught is increased and sustained, which can assist in the students' becoming independent learners. In the learning process, students should be allowed an opportunity to discuss, reflect and assist in developing assessment rubrics in conjunction with the instructor.

Needham and Hill's (1987) five-phase model was not part of any syllabi in the 25 American Indian Studies which were investigated. Constructivist approaches and hands-on teaching and learning were evident. The following two examples from the state of Wisconsin and the Chesapeake area illustrate the use of constructivism.

The state of Wisconsin incorporates the input of American Indian leaders, artists, and other curriculum material in conjunction with constructivist approaches in teaching to enhance student learning regarding American Indian culture. Constructivist teaching and learning regarding many hands-on activities are referenced and explained in the Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction, Curriculum in Art and Design (Pontious, 2013). There are more than 15 American Indian tribes located in Wisconsin (Pontious, 2013). The lessons incorporate hands-on activities, integrate the Indigenous concepts dealing with the histories, cultures, and sovereignty issues of the tribes (Pontious, 2013). Students and teachers create achievement standards together using a rubric in which both have input and provide powerful opportunities for learning (Pontious, 2013). The rubrics are used to develop a student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and improve by having clear learning outcomes, time to revise assignments, challenge the student, and are sequenced to reinforce and build upon previous and new knowledge (Pontious, 2013).

Tayac and Schupman (2019) used a constructivist approach and hands-on teaching regarding student learning in lessons pertaining to American Indians living in the Chesapeake region, especially the Powhatan, Nanticoke, and Piscataway Peoples. The lessons entail the history and culture from pre-contact to the present. Students participate in an overview of accurate information regarding the Indigenous People living in the area, independent learning, individual

and group discussion activities, other small group projects which related to critical contemporary issues, and individual oral and group reports (Tayac & Schupman, 2019).

Limitations

The limitations of the study are influences which cannot be controlled by an investigator regarding the boundaries of the study. College and Virginia Indian websites provided information by the author or organization, which are assumed to be current and accurate. Further interviews with AIS professors and Virginia Indian leaders may have uncovered more information related to the study.

Only four of 11 Virginia Indian leaders responded to the online, asynchronous in-depth, open-ended questions and is a limitation of the study. Another limitation was the total number of American Indian Studies professors responding to SurveyMonkey. More than 300 surveys were sent, with 29 professors completing the online questions. Thirteen professors met the criteria of the study and were selected to participate. Five tribal and 20 non-tribal community colleges participated. Not all community colleges meet the standards to participate in the study.

Confirmability was established when credibility, transferability, and dependability were achieved (Allen, 2017; Privitera, 2019). Credibility in the study was addressed using several strategies. Input from 4 Virginia Indian leaders, 13 American Indian Studies professors, 25 community colleges offering American Indian Studies degrees, in addition to the 11 websites of American Indian tribes in Virginia, were examined. Data collection from multiple sources allowed for triangulation, which increased dependability (Allen, 2017; Privitera, 2019). Four common themes emerged through triangulation. After data were collected and before coding occurred, member checking to review the transcripts was offered to the participants. The

participants did not ask to review the information, but the repeated issues and concerns of the participants from direct quotes regarding the themes provided a degree of confidence in order to be included in the findings of the study. The conclusions of the study which are analyzed and interpreted by only one individual is a limitation in the study.

Replicability was achieved by making a comprehensive description of the steps and processes for data collection (Lub, 2015). The research design and methods used in the study should provide an opportunity for the research to be duplicated by another researcher (Denscombe, 2017; Lub, 2015; Privitera, 2019). Purposive and snowball sampling, in conjunction with the instruments used to elicit input from experts, and the research questions, could be generalized to other studies such as African-American and Latino Studies.

Transferability is obtained when a particular study is duplicated, and similar methodology procedures are employed to attain information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Providing an opportunity for input from minorities and marginalized people could enhance a curriculum focused on ethnic studies and Indigenous studies worldwide, such as Maori studies at the University of Auckland and Sami studies at the Arctic University of Norway (Augustus, 2015). Constructivist approaches in many of the classes would be utilized. Blackwell (2001) duplicated the methodology and sampling procedures, which was the best fit in terms of people, organizations, and resources available, and used a basic qualitative research design the dissertation entitled, *Development of an American Indian studies program for the Tohono O'odham community college.* Similar to this study, the problem was a lack of an American Indian Studies program at the college, and the purpose was to design program objectives and syllabi for the courses (Blackwell, 2001, 2010). From the dissertation, Blackwell created an

American Indian Studies program guide for the Tohono O'odham Tribal Community College (Blackwell, 2001, 2010).

Recommendations

Positive changes in the delivery of instruction should occur by offering conferences, workshops, and seminars, which introduce and reinforce professors to the constructivist method of instruction. Needham and Hill's (1987) five-phase model should be emphasized. Multiple examples should be presented to illustrate how other disciplines have adapted the constructivist theory to facilitate student learning. Other disciplines have adopted the constructivist model, which illuminates the effectiveness of this approach over teacher-centered instruction.

Included in the delivery of instruction is a logical sequence of classes to be taken, which should be outlined for students. An American Indian Studies program and additional classes offered should be a positive organizational change. Based on the analysis of the literature review, responses from participants, Virginia Indian websites, the program of studies from the 25 community colleges, and syllabi, the courses should follow a sequential pattern. Four courses are briefly explained, and students should take:

- Six credits hours, which would consist of two courses, emulating classes relating to the culture and history of American Indians in North America
- A three-credit course, which emulates a class incorporating sovereignty, government relations, and federal Indian law
- A three-credit course pertaining to learning a traditional Indigenous mother tongue language or a class which emphasizes the interrelationship between language and culture, and

- A three-credit course which combines Indigenous culture and embraces the instruction with hands-on cultural traditions.

Students in an AIS program should work with a tribe to comprehend the vital role language has in cultural behavior and beliefs. In addition, introducing students to other American Indian languages of North America should assist in developing an insight into the diversity among Indigenous People. Elective classes should include various courses from other disciplines and should include assignments which connect to American Indian Studies and other Indigenous cultures, such as literature (Folklore), archeology, international dance, world religions, art appreciation, cultural anthropology, various history classes, and environmental sciences. History and culture, and sovereignty courses should be prerequisites in the program. Other courses could be taken concurrently.

Policies and courses in the community college catalog should be reviewed to ensure American Indian Studies classes are transferable to other four-year educational institutions offering the degree. An American Indian Studies program should support students who plan to finish their degree at other 4-year institutions offering an American Indian Studies degree major or minor. An American Indian Studies program should lead students into other disciplines such as American studies, history, museum studies, archaeology, anthropology, law, religious studies, social work, and education (Champagne & Stauss, 2002; Everett, 2016). A student should work with an American Indian Studies core faculty member to ensure courses correspond with other programs without losing credit hours already earned.

Positive curriculum changes should involve input from students. Each student in the program should have an exit questionnaire so AIS faculty can continue to improve the

curriculum. American Indian tribal colleges and other non-tribal AIS syllabi should be continually examined and appraised. Further investigation should be conducted to ensure program modifications align with Indigenous instruction and not Western European teaching. The American Indian Studies program should be evaluated by AIS faculty not affiliated with the college.

The coordinator of the program should recruit faculty with a background in American Indian Studies. In addition, tribal leaders, visiting American Indian Studies professors, and online lectures from tribal colleges should be integrated from tribal colleges. A non-tribal college should incorporate specific classes from American Indian tribal colleges using distance education. The courses from tribal colleges reflect Indigenous viewpoints, American Indian values, beliefs, and traditional tribal cultures.

Implications for Leadership

Positive organizational change should occur when faculty collaborate with other department professors, allowing for shared accountability, communication, and a sense of community. Discussions within the interdisciplinary program should be invaluable when courses need to be revised. The benefit of interdisciplinary American Indian Studies programs is they enable students to explore multiple fields of study and develop a knowledge base, and experience, exploring various methodologies and pedagogies of other disciplines (Augustus, 2015; Everett, 2016).

The American Indian Studies faculty will create an internship for students with the National Museum of the American Indian, which would be part of the cultural traditions course or serve as an elective (University of Arizona, 2017). Creating and maintaining American

Indian Alliance Association, participating in local and national Powwows, attending American Indian conferences, and submitting articles in American Indian Studies journals would be part of the leadership training learned from the internship (Lee, 2015, 2017). The involvement in the aforementioned activities should assist in dispelling the inaccurate myths and stereotypes, eradicating preconceived prejudices, and benefit students and faculty members with meaningful Indigenous related experiences (Lee, 2015, 2017).

Conclusion

The basic qualitative research study addressed the problem that the courses in American Indian culture, history, and society have been taught in many educational institutions from a Western European perspective. The purpose of the study provided a voice from experts in Indigenous studies. A result of the American Indian Studies program will (a) help preserve the culture and heritage of Indigenous People, (b) assist other tribal members and non-Indians in dealing with the issues and concerns of Indigenous People, and (c) increase awareness of the need for greater understanding of social, educational, and economic issues confronting Indigenous People globally, in the United States, and in Virginia. The value of an American Indian Studies program is to introduce students to Indigenous ways of knowing in addition to reading materials written and researched by American Indian Studies scholars, which could assist in eradicating prejudice, discrimination, marginalization, and misinformation.

One of the most significance outcomes should result in the increased public awareness and understanding of the economic, social, and educational issues confronting Indigenous People. When both American Indians and non-Indians groups discuss the issues and concerns Indigenous People have endured and overcome, and work to resolve current conflicts, new

knowledge should continuously evolve from the communication between the two groups (Indigenous and non-Indigenous). The collaboration should assist in keeping the faculty and students informed on current issues and concerns of Indigenous People globally, the United States, and in Virginia.

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Appendix A

Online, Asynchronous In-Depth Open-Ended Questions

1. What do you believe is the value of an American Indian Studies program?
2. What can an American Indian Studies program at a college or university do to support tribal communities?
3. What courses and subjects should be included in an American Indian Studies program?
4. What are the most important historical, cultural, tribal, political, economic, and societal issues and concerns of American Indians?
5. What should non-American Indians know or understand regarding American Indians?
6. What are some other items which have not been mentioned pertaining to the discussion that should be included in the planning of the curriculum and the teaching of the courses such as racism, tribal leadership, religion, education, heritage/blood quantum, environmental issues, the loss of mother tongue language, and legal and medical rights? Please elaborate on any other issues and concerns that have not been mentioned.

Appendix B

Letter of Contact and Consent to Participants American Indian Community Leaders

<<Date>>

Michael S. Oblinger
[redacted]

Dear <<Name>>,

Introduction and Recruitment

I am a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education. I would like to invite you to be part of my research study. My research is designed to examine the experiences and perceptions of pertaining to American Indian history, culture, society, issues, and concerns.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because your experience as an American Indian community leader which will contribute to the creating new course syllabi, and establish an A.A. or A.S. degree program with a specialization in American Indian Studies in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether or not to participate. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier, without repercussions.

Lead Researcher: Michael S. Oblinger
[redacted]
Supervising Faculty Member: Dr. Barry Chametzky, American College of Education

Prospective Research Participant: Please read the following information and consent form carefully. This form will give you more information about the project. Please ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether or not you want to participate in this research study. You may ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you have questions later, please feel free to contact me. There is no obligation to be a participant of this project.

Project Title: Course Development in an American Indian: A Basic Qualitative Research Design

Purpose of the research: The information I am seeking concerns data from this inquiry, which will be used to recommend and reorganize the faculty, which exist already, propose and create new course syllabi, and establish an A.A. or A.S. degree program with a specialization in American Indian Studies at the Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, Virginia, and in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

Brief description of methodology

This study is qualitative and will focus on gathering information by asking American Indian community leaders to respond to in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions. The responses will elicit data which will encompass the history, culture, society, concerns, and issues of American Indians by proving an opportunity to hear the voices and viewpoints of the Indigenous People in Virginia. Information collected will be analyzed, categorized, and described as recurring themes.

Procedures

Data from the responses to in-depth, online, asynchronous open-ended questions from American Indian community leaders from the 11 Virginia state-recognized tribes, will be collected from participants. I will collect the response by email, analyze the data and summarize the results. I will return the summary of the result to you so you may reread it and make any changes or additions necessary. The questions are at the end of this document. Please use another page to answer the questions if needed.

Duration

This research project will take place during the course of one month. Please send your responses back to me via email ([redacted]) within this time period.

Possible Risks or Discomforts and Benefits

Questions are structured to provide an opportunity to hear the voices and viewpoints from American Indian People in Virginia. There is no financial compensation for your participation.

Confidentiality and Sharing the Results

Information about you or anything you say will be held in confidence, including E-mail addresses. Confidentiality will be assured by assigning a non-identifying pseudonym to each participant, corresponding to the information which has been collected. All data from the responses will be secured on a computer hard drive which is located at a home office in a locked file cabinet (ACE, 2018). The informed consent form which will be returned to the researcher is kept for three years (ACE, 2018). In addition, the data will be kept for 10 years because the research study will be published (ACE, 2018). All data will be destroyed after the 10-year period (ACE, 2018). Any participant who would like a copy of the dissertation will be given one upon request.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Again, your participation in this study is purely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions.

Signature Form

Michael Oblinger, the researcher, has explained to me the purpose and benefits of his research study and has also explained to me that:

1. My participation is voluntary.
2. I can withdraw from the study at any time.
3. I am assured my information is confidential.
4. I am assured I will remain anonymous, and my name will not be shared with any other organizations.
5. He/she expects to publish the study, and the findings of the research study will be managed so the sources of information cannot be identified.
6. I can contact him at [redacted] (Phone).

I understand the terms of my participation, and I give consent to voluntary participation in the research study. The attached PDF version of this document is more efficient when signing this form.

Printed name of participant: _____ Date:

Signature of participant: _____

Date:_____/_____/2021

I have read the information about this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. The attached PDF version of this document is more efficient when signing this form.

Print or Type Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant: _____ Date:_____/_____/2021

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Print or type name of lead researcher: Michael S. Oblinger

Signature of lead researcher:_____ Date:_____/_____/2021

Appendix C

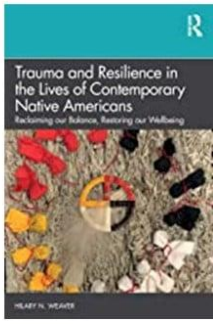
Survey Monkey

Appendix D

Recruitment Flyer

Participants Needed

Looking for volunteers to take part in a study



Introduction and Recruitment

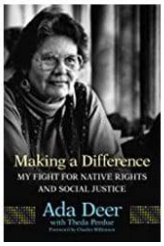
I am a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education

Lead Researcher: Michael S. Oblinger
Supervising Faculty Member: Dr. Barry Chametzky, American College of Education

Project Title:
Course Development in American Indian Studies: A Basic Qualitative Research Design

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to answer seven open-ended questions using SurveyMonkey.

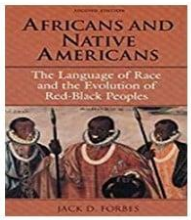
Your participation is entirely voluntary and would take up approximately 1 hour of your time over 1 occasion.
The information I am seeking concerns data from this inquiry, which will be used to recommend, propose, and create new course syllabi, and establish an A.A. or A.S. degree program in American Indian Studies.



Confidentiality and Sharing the Results

Information will be held in confidence, including E-mail addresses. Any information about you will be coded
In addition, would you be willing to pass along the enclosed information to other peers or mentors?

Survey can be found at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5BGP9BX



Appendix E

American College of Education IRB Approval

AMERICAN COLLEGE of EDUCATION

August 24, 2020

To : Michael Oblinger
Barry Chametzky, Dissertation Committee Chair

From : Institutional Review Board
American College of Education

Re: IRB Approval

"Course Development in American Indian Studies: A Qualitative Applied Generic Study"

The American College of Education IRB has reviewed your application, proposal, and any related materials. We have determined that your research provides sufficient protection of human subjects.

Your research is therefore approved to proceed. The expiration date for this IRB approval is one year from the date of review completion, August 24, 2021. If you would like to continue your research beyond this point, including data collection and/or analysis of private data, you must submit a renewal request to the IRB.

Our best to you as you continue your studies.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Hamlett
Chair, Institutional Review Board

AMERICAN COLLEGE of EDUCATION

Dear Michael,

The American College of Education IRB has reviewed your research and determined it to be sufficiently protective of human subjects. Your letter of approval is attached to this email. You may also view this letter and any feedback from your review committee through the MyACE Portal under *I Want To… (Request Forms)* and then *Begin the Doctoral Research Review/IRB.*

Thank you,

ACE IRB

Appendix F

Letter of Contact to Department Chairperson

<<Date>>

Michael Oblinger
[redacted]

Dear <<Name>>,

Introduction: I am a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education, and a history professor at the Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, Virginia. Based on the information I found, the American Indian Studies department at this community college may be needed to complete my study.

Lead Researcher: Michael S. Oblinger
[redacted]
Supervising Faculty Member: Dr. Barry Chametzky, American College of Education

Project Title: Course Development in an American Indian Studies: A Basic Qualitative Research Design

Brief description of methodology and purpose of the study: This study is qualitative and the researcher will examine the topic of American Indian Studies from the perspective of experts. The information I am seeking will allow me to collect data from the mission statements, course descriptions, and the syllabus from courses which are taught in the American Indian Studies department at this community college. I will use this data to recommend and reorganize the faculty, which exist already, propose and create new course syllabi, and establish an A.A. or A.S. degree program with a specialization in American Indian Studies in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The information collected will be analyzed, categorized, and described as recurring themes.

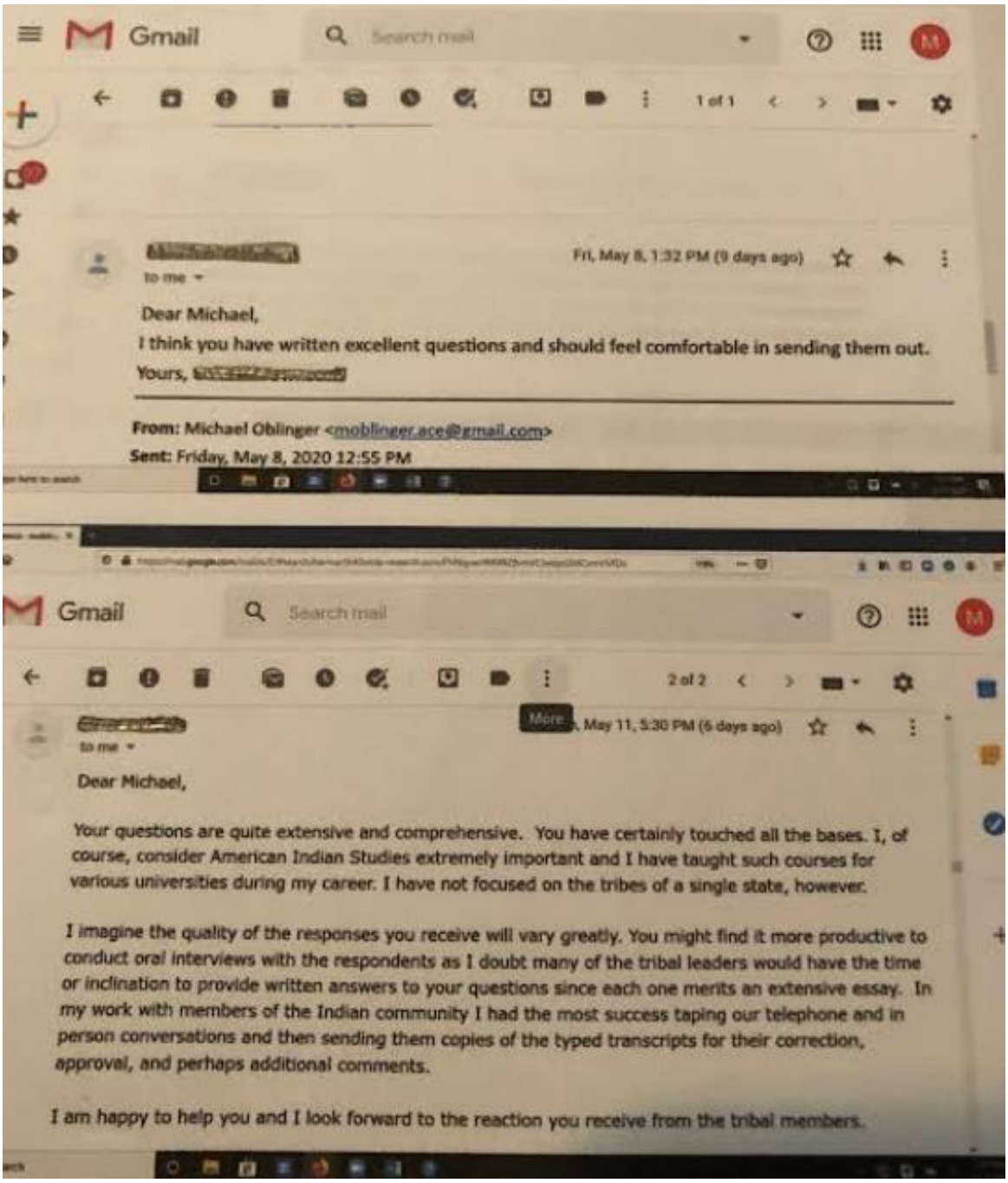
Procedures
Data from the documents will be collected, analyzed, and summarized.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be assured by assigning a non-identifying pseudonym to each document, corresponding to the information which has been collected. All data from the documents will be secured on my computer hard drive at a home office in a locked file cabinet. The data will be kept for ten years because the research will be published. All data will be destroyed after the 10-year period. A copy of the dissertation will be given to you upon request.

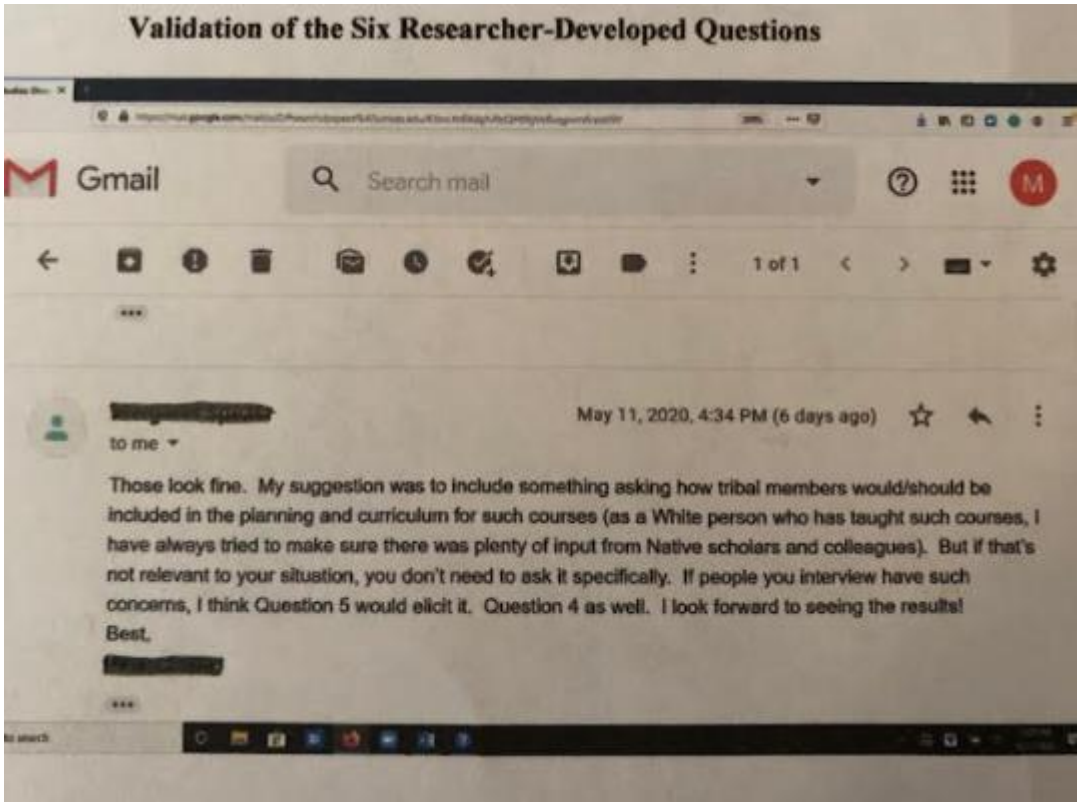
Sincerely,
Michael S. Oblinger
Doctoral Candidate
School of Education
American College of Education
[redacted]

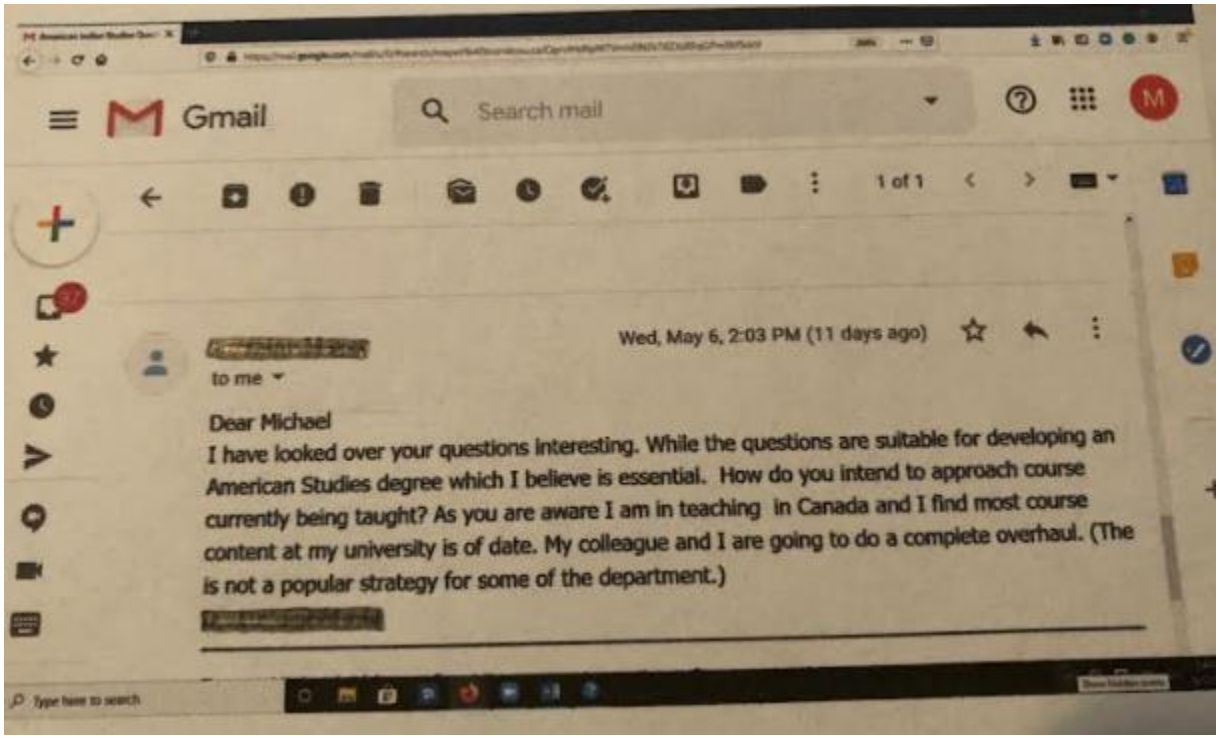
Appendix G

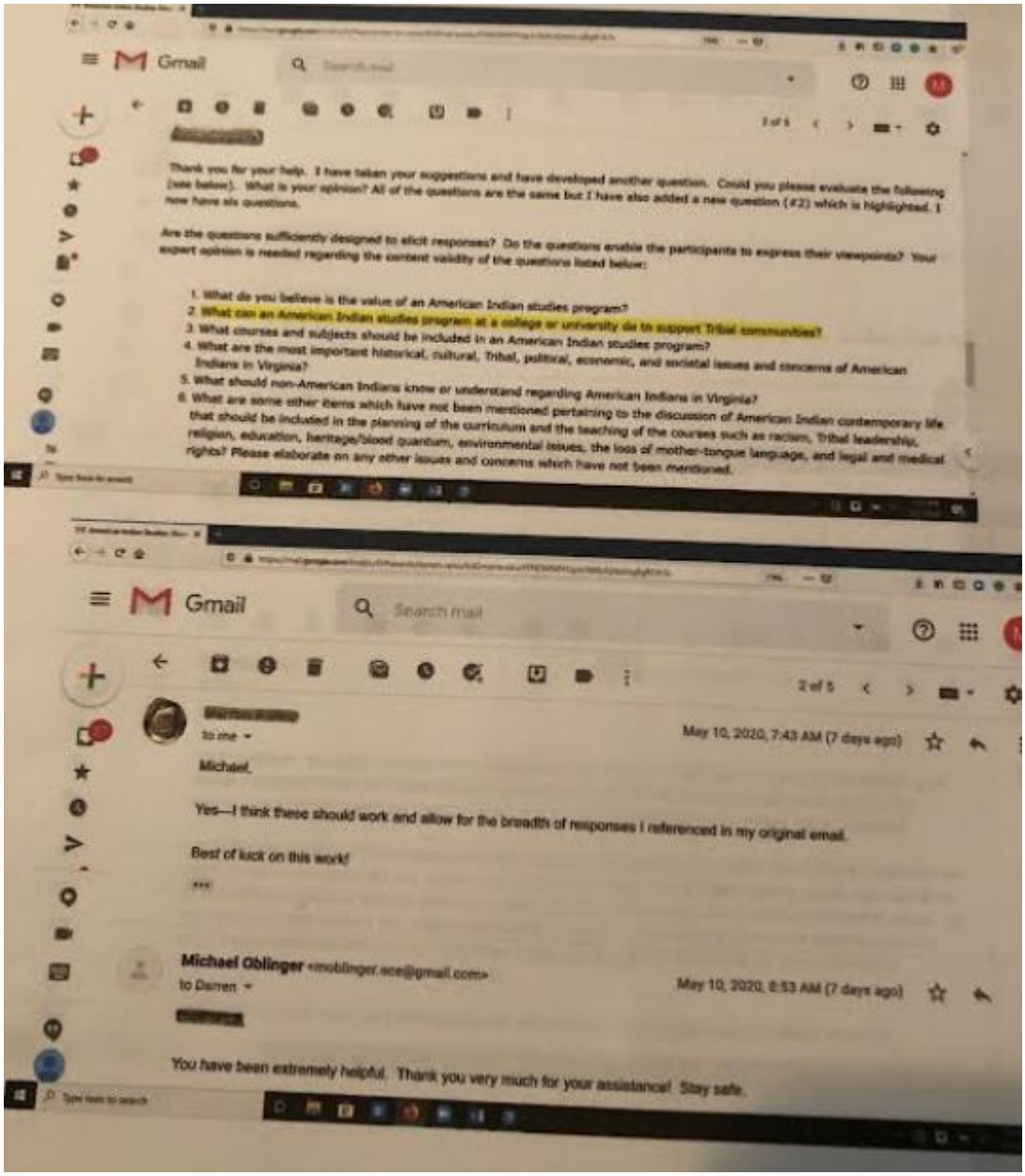
Validation of the Six Researcher-Developed Questions



Validation of the Six Researcher-Developed Questions






Gmail
Thank you for your help. I have taken your suggestions and have developed another question. Could you please evaluate the following (see below). What is your opinion? All of the questions are the same but I have also added a new question (#2) which is highlighted. I now have six questions.
Are the questions sufficiently designed to elicit responses? Do the questions enable the participants to express their viewpoints? Your expert opinion is needed regarding the content validity of the questions listed below:
1. What do you believe is the value of an American Indian studies program?
2. What can an American Indian studies program at a college or university do to support Tribal communities?
3. What courses and subjects should be included in an American Indian studies program?
4. What are the most important historical, cultural, Tribal, political, economic, and societal issues and concerns of American Indians in Virginia?
5. What should non-American Indians know or understand regarding American Indians in Virginia?
6. What are some other items which have not been mentioned pertaining to the discussion of American Indian contemporary life that should be included in the planning of the curriculum and the teaching of the courses such as racism, Tribal leadership, religion, education, heritage/blood quantum, environmental issues, the loss of mother-tongue language, and legal and medical rights? Please elaborate on any other issues and concerns which have not been mentioned.
Gmail
Search mail
2 of 5
to me
May 10, 2020, 7:43 AM (7 days ago)
Michael,
Yes—I think these should work and allow for the breadth of responses I referenced in my original email.
Best of luck on this work!
Michael Oblinger <moblinger.ece@gmail.com>
to Darren
May 10, 2020, 8:53 AM (7 days ago)
You have been extremely helpful. Thank you very much for your assistance! Stay safe.

Appendix H

Appreciation/Thank-You Letter to Participants

Dear (name of participant),

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study. I greatly appreciate your willingness to answer the research questions regarding American Indian history, culture, society, issues, and concerns. Your thoughts will be were extremely informative and useful in helping to redesign, create new courses, and creating a degree specialization in American Indian Studies in the Virginia Community College System. As stated previously all information will be held in confidence.

Any participant who would like a copy of the dissertation will be given one upon request. I have greatly valued your participation in this research study and your willingness to share your opinions and experience. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. Again, thank you so very much for your time and effort that made this research study possible.

With warm regards,

Michael S. Oblinger
Doctoral Candidate
School of Education
American College of Education
[redacted]