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Indigenous communities in the United States have a wealth of cultural and social resources that can facilitate educational resilience among Native students. This article reviews the historical context, contemporary trends, and current challenges related to education of Indigenous students. The authors present an innovative middle school-to-high school-to-college bridge program as one example of many positive educational initiatives currently developing across the country.

"You who are wise must know that different Nations have different conceptions of things and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same as yours."

Canaassatego, 1744

Leader of the Six Nations, Lancaster, PA

The story of education of Indigenous Peoples in the United States is often told ". . . as though it were a tragedy . . . highlighting deficiency, failure, and negative trends . . . But this dismal view is only half the picture" (Wang & Gordon, 1994, p. ix). This article reviews the historical context, current challenges, and contemporary trends related to education of Indigenous Peoples, highlighting factors related to positive outcomes. The authors present examples of educational programs that foster educational resilience and describe one high school-to-college bridge program in detail. This program is one example of a school-community partnership that mobilizes and combines resources of a high school district and the surrounding community to facilitate educational resilience in Native students. Preliminary outcome data are elaborated.

Historical Context

Since first contact, the well-being of Indigenous Peoples has been continuously challenged by political, economic, social and cultural oppression. Nevertheless, Indigenous Peoples have survived, and are among the fastest growing population groups in the United States (Locke, 1992). In 1990, there were an estimated 2 million Indigenous people in the U.S. This is a 38 percent increase over the recorded 1980 population, and four times the 1960 population estimate (Lewis, 1995; Marger, 1994). There are 660 federally recognized tribes and an additional 200 tribes still struggling with legal and government agencies to gain federal recognition (Wright, Lopez, & Zumwalt, 1997). Indigenous Peoples are also one of the youngest population groups in the United States (Locke, 1992). With an average age of 16, the majority of Native people are, or soon will be, of age to enter college (Aguirre & Baker, 2000).

Educational Traditions among Indigenous Peoples

Every Indigenous nation has its own teachings and methods for educating children and adolescents. This has been true since long before contact with European colonizers. Hampton states,

“Generally, these traditionally Indian forms of education can be characterized as oral histories, teaching stories, ceremonies, apprenticeships, learning games, formal instruction, tutoring, and tag-along teaching . . . all of the traditional Native methods took place within cultural settings that were characterized by subsistence economies, in-context learning, personal and kinship relationships between teachers and students, and ample opportunities for students to observe adult role models who provided good examples of the knowledge, skills, and values being taught” (1993, p. 268).

Overcoming A Legacy of Miseducation

The legacy of political, economic, social and cultural oppression is inextricably intertwined with the experience of Indigenous Peoples in the United States educational system. European colonizers have attempted to use the educational system to remake Indigenous Peoples in the image of Europeans (Aguirre & Baker, 2000). Consequently, the high school drop out rate for Native people is estimated to be about 50% nationally. It is as high as 85% in some regions. Native Peoples are less likely to attend college than any other ethnic group (Brown, 1993). As late as 1932, only 52 college graduates from Indigenous communities could be identified in the U.S. Still, in 1966, only one percent of the Native population was enrolled in college.

The tide began to turn with a series of task force reports that led the Bureau of Indian Affairs Higher Education Program to begin financing Native People’s higher education. By 1979, the BIA was funding 14,600 Native undergraduates and 700 graduate students. Of these students, 1,639 received college degrees and 434 earned graduate degrees (Aguirre & Baker, 2000). Subsequently, with the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 and the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978, Indigenous Peoples began to take control of their own education. Today there are 24 tribally controlled colleges serving about 10,000 Indigenous students. The full-time equivalent enrollment of Native students is about 4,500.

Campus Climate

Hurtado (1992) defines campus climate as the product of four interrelated elements: (a) an institution's historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion of a given group, sometimes referred to as "critical mass," (b) its structural diversity in terms of numerical representation of the ethnic group, (c) perceptions and attitudes between and among groups, and (d) the behavioral dimension, characterized by intergroup relations on campus. The sometimes hostile social/psychological climate of campus environments can create a sense of alienation and discomfort for Native students. Similarly, encounters with non-Native students, faculty, and staff who romanticize, stereotype, or otherwise objectify Native students can be just as aggravating and distressing (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998).

Cultural Discontinuities

The discontinuity between Indigenous and dominant culture worldviews creates a sense of disorientation and distress for many Native college students. The challenge to well-being is compounded when long distances result in deprivation of accustomed social support from family, clan, and tribe (Wright, Lopez, & Zumwalt, 1997). Moreover, students from reservation communities may feel pressured to choose between traditional values and the values of the dominant culture (Everett, Proctor, & Cartmell, 1983). Given these cultural discontinuities, it is not surprising that many Native students report difficulty forging a positive ethnic identity (Dodd, Nelsen, & Hofland, 1994) and integrating their ethnic identities with their "college student" identities (Garnets & Kimmel, 1991).

Urban Native students face unique challenges. While they are subject to the same stereotyping and prejudices that challenge all Native students in mainstream schools, they are less likely to be protected by knowledge of and connection to their ethnic roots. Without a strong, positive ethnic identity, an adolescent is at increased risk relative to social and environmental risk factors (Wang & Gordon, 1994). Such students may feel alienated not only from their school environments, but from themselves as well (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993).

The following examples illustrate the many cultural discontinuities impacting Native students in mainstream schools:

Historically, teachings in many Indigenous cultures indicate that a person's primary education should be in traditional beliefs and practices, particularly with regard to the relationship between human beings and the natural world. By contrast, in mainstream American education, learners and the learning process are often dissociated from the natural world. Elders sometimes caution young people about the hazards of clouding their minds and hearts with dominant culture ideas. As one of the authors, a Lakota educator, puts it,

If I'm going into a sweat [sweat lodge ceremony] with elders, my [mainstream] education is a detriment to me. Sometimes that education will leave doubts in your head as to what we're doing. It's almost like a clouding of the mind. Traditional beliefs follow the natural world, a natural way of believing. European education separates the natural world from learning.

Accordingly, for some students, the spiritual, psychological, and physical distance between the learning environment and the natural environment can be a significant barrier to engaging with school.

Indigenous students who have been raised in traditional contexts may experience discontinuity between educational methods they are accustomed to and mainstream educational practices. For example, in many tribal societies, one is judged by one's contribution to the group rather than by individual achievement (Hynd & Garcia, 1979; Little Soldier, 1989). Hence, the focus on individual achievement, competitive testing, and grading systems that may encourage White, middle-class learners may be counterproductive with Native students (Hall, 1976). For Native students, role modeling and cooperative learning activities may be more appropriate teaching strategies (Dodd, et. al,1994).

European-Americans tend to reify being "on time" as they have allowed their lives to be dominated by the clock. Traditionally, Native Peoples have not organized their activities according to arbitrary time frames. Activities continue until they are complete. Accordingly, it may be difficult for a student to complete an assignment by an arbitrary deadline. Students may also experience a conflict of allegiances between schedules and

requirements related to traditional cultural roles and ways of life, and the rigid schedules and requirements of academia.

A great deal of verbalization is normative in the dominant culture. European-Americans tend to speak often and rapidly, whereas, many Native languages are spoken more slowly, with pauses for thinking and reflection (Hall, 1976). This way of speaking is related to belief that words are powerful and should be measured carefully. Given this cultural difference, a Native student's pause for reflection may be misconstrued as a non response. When the classroom pace is repeatedly out of sync with the student's pacing, and when there is an ongoing discrepancy in level of verbal participation between Native and non-Native students, a Native student may feel undervalued and/or invisible in the classroom setting (Dodd, Ostwald, & Rose, 1991).

In this era of self involvement, self disclosure is highly valued and strongly encouraged in many mainstream American classrooms. This can be problematic for a Native student who may have been raised to believe that one should avoid self disclosure to strangers (Dana, 1984; Stock, 1987) particularly European Americans who often distort the reality of Native Peoples with romanticizing, stereotyping, appropriating spirituality, or some other form of objectification.

Even the Native college student who has found ways to contend with all of these risk factors is likely to find it difficult to maintain interest and motivation in the many college courses in which the story of Indigenous Peoples is either entirely absent, distorted, or trivialized. Similarly, Native students are not likely to be inspired by the achievements of "heroic" European American colonizers (Dodd, et. al, 1994). All of these obstacles combine to contribute to the fact that high school and college drop out rates for Native students exceed those of any other group (Aguirre & Baker, 2000) .

Fostering Educational Resilience

Resilience, simply stated, is *positive adaptation in response to adversity* (Waller, 2001). The study of resilience arose from the study of risk. In examining the lives of 'at-risk' children, pioneering investigators recognized that some children thrive in the midst of

adversity and become healthy adults (Anthony, 1987; Garmezy, 1974; Matsen, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Murphy & Moriarty, 1976; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982). Resilience was initially conceptualized as the result of personality traits or coping styles that seemed to make some children continue to progress along a positive developmental trajectory even when confronted with considerable adversity (Anthony, 1987; Bolig & Weddle, 1998). However, over the past two decades, it has become increasingly clear that resilience is not the property of a privileged few, but a potential that every human being possesses. A recurring theme in resilience research is that most individuals who face adversity have more positive outcomes than one might predict based on their life circumstances (Bernard, 1994; Bleuler, 1984; Gabarino, Dubro, Kostolny, & Pardo, 1992; Garmezy, 1991, 1994; Hauser, Vieyra, Jacobson, & Wertlieb, 1985; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten, 1994; Rutter, 1979; Vaillant, 1993).

One factor contributing to educational resilience for Native students is a curriculum that students perceive as personally meaningful (Maton, 1990). Toward this end, the American Indian Program in the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory in Oregon develops textbooks written by and for Native people. The program also developed a reading series made up of stories about Native Peoples of the Northwest which is marketed nationwide (Brown, 1993).

Disconnection between the worlds of school and family life is a major risk factor undermining educational resilience (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1990). Therefore, involving families significantly increases the effectiveness of educational programs (Walberg, 1984). For example, in the southwestern region of the Navajo Nation, the Little Singer Community School took an innovative approach to involving the community in the children's education. School board members visited the homes of relatives of the students and personally invited them to bring their talents to the local primary school. School personnel observed the following results: (a) students' behavior has improved markedly since it is being observed by their relatives, (b) parents are more involved in the children's education, (c) children are more invested in their education, and (d) teachers felt supported and viewed parents more positively (T. Walker, personal communication, June 15, 2000).

Positive educational outcomes are even more likely when families, communities, and schools cooperate in setting high expectations and supporting students' efforts to meet them (Holtzman, 1991; Krist & McLaughlin, 1990; National Center on Education in the Inner Cities, 1990). For example, across the nation, schools are bringing elders from Native communities into schools to teach students traditional lifeways through storytelling and demonstration. These ways of teaching are traditional in many tribes and have the advantage of mirroring the ways that many children were taught by family members before entering school. Some schools employ the same traditional teaching strategies to help Native students master mainstream academic skills (Brown, 1993).

In some cases, Native educators have established alternative schools for urban Native students. One such program is the Heart of the Earth Survival School in Minnesota, which was founded on the premise that a culturally relevant curriculum delivered by Native teachers can promote educational resilience among Native students who have not been successful in public high schools (Brown, 1993). In Duluth, Minnesota, Native parents have petitioned the school district for a separate Native American high school (not necessarily limited to Native students). Parents advocating for this school believe that a separate school will foster educational resilience by eliminating the distractions related to the cultural discontinuities Native students experience in mainstream high schools. They also argued that a separate school would give them a greater voice in determining curriculum design making the school environment hospitable (Associated Press, 1989).

The Hoop of Learning

The Hoop of Learning Program was implemented in the summer of 1995 in response to concerns voiced by Native parents in an urban high school district in Phoenix, Arizona. The Indian Education Program Parent Executive Committee approached the director of the Indian Education Program with concerns that the local high schools were not offering culturally appropriate support or direction to prepare their children for higher education and career development. As a result, the parents, the high school

district, and a local community college formed a partnership committed to providing meaningful education for Native students. The Hoop of Learning program is the product of this partnership.

Program Concept

The Hoop of Learning is a middle school-to-high school-to-college bridge program designed to foster educational resilience and career development among Native students in a large metropolitan school district in the Southwestern United States. The primary objective in designing the Hoop of Learning Program was to counteract the long history of alienation and social isolation of Native students in American urban educational institutions by providing a culturally responsive educational environment rich in the critical elements of familiarity and comfort.

Program Design

The Hoop of Learning is an original design based on a traditional Native world view of a circle of lifelong development. In many Indigenous societies, junior high school age is the age of maturity. At this point individuals must begin preparing to make a living to contribute to the support of their extended family/clan/tribe, for the survival of their people. Accordingly, a basic tenet of the Hoop of Learning program is the belief in the importance of young people developing strong positive ethnic identities and realizing that their educational and career success is critical to the survival of their people.

The number of students enrolled in the program varies, but is generally about 65 in a given academic year. The "Hoop" is conceptualized as a continuous circle of support for students that includes parents/extended family, the school system and the community partners. The program offers a protected, culture-rich learning environment designed by and for Native people within the mainstream public high school system. In keeping with traditional education in many Indigenous cultures, a central focus of the program is nurturing the student's Indigenous worldview and spiritual understanding as the basis for development, and as protection from negative influences and self-destructive paths.

Collaboration of student families, program staff, and community partners replicates a traditional tribal community in which children's progress is monitored and facilitated by a broad net-

work of relations. In a traditional community, children have the sense of being looked after wherever they are. Similarly, at each level of education, the Hoop of Learning program has a readily accessible coordinator/counselor who establishes connections with students during monthly one-on-one academic/career counseling sessions. Further, students are not isolated, but rather, are embedded in a large network of supportive peers with whom they have much in common. They progress together, share the same classes, and facilitate one another's progress through the program. The "culture shock" of the college campus environment is mitigated by sharing the experience with supportive friends. Overall, the learning environment is based on personal connections and commitments rather than impersonal bureaucracy. For example, information about policies and procedures, curriculum, and requirements, is conveyed in face-to-face interactions rather than through paper documents alone.

Hoop of Learning staff also recognize that some Native students may have difficulty maintaining continuous enrollment in the program, because, for example, urban students' families may move frequently between school districts seeking better housing. Alternatively, students may move back and forth between the city and their home reservations. Because mobility is a reality for a significant number of Native students, the program is designed in such a way that students can re-enroll with a minimum of 'red tape.' In this way, it is difficult for Hoop of Learning students to get lost "in the cracks" as they might in a mainstream school setting.

Program Structure

Classes for 9th and 10th graders are limited to Hoop of Learning students, whereas juniors and seniors are mainstreamed according to their career interests. While continuing in mainstream schools (middle schools, high schools, or community college), Hoop of Learning students also belong to a rich, nutritive community (including family, faculty, staff, and fellow students, all of whom are Native) akin to a traditional communal tribal context in which each individual is supported by a wide network of extended family, clan, and tribal relations and, in return, is expected to contribute to the well being of the community.

From 7th grade through high school, students participate in five-week summer programs that include two courses as well as a variety of events aimed at community building and increasing students' confidence, familiarity, and comfort in new educational environments at new levels. At each level of education, students receive credit leading to advanced placement at the next level. Accordingly, junior high school students receive high school credit and high school students receive college credit. While still in high school, Hoop of Learning students can earn as many as 24 college credits, all transferable to the 2-year community college where they have been taking classes. When they graduate from community college, all credits earned are transferred to local four-year colleges.

The program's support network includes parents and extended family/clan relations, program coordinators/counselors at each educational level (junior high school, high school, community college, and four-year college), local industry, city government, and the local Native American community health center. This network is rich in resources for emotional, academic, and instrumental support. Parents, faculty, and Hoop of Learning staff set high expectations for students while providing continuous encouragement. Hoop of Learning staff provide day-to-day personal support, academic counseling, and instrumental support such as arranging for housing, job placement, and other forms of assistance as needed. Essentially, they operate as mentors, brokers, and advocates, and assume other roles as necessary to assist students with managing any barrier to educational resilience.

The local Native American Community Mental Health Center provides personal and family counseling. The elementary school district provides 7th and 8th grade Hoop participants with a coordinator/counselor, recruitment and retention support, specialized instructors, and transportation to the summer program. The high school district provides: (a) a coordinator/counselor, (b) high school credit for junior high school courses, (c) books and supplies, (d) classroom space for middle school students, and (e) transportation for high school students to the community college. The community college provides: (a) a full-time coordinator/counselor, (b) faculty, (c) tutoring, (d) college credit for

Hoop of Learning classes (e), testing to determine competency in mathematics, English, and reading, (f) career and financial counseling, (g) campus tours and orientation, (h) the opportunity to participate in the Native American student club, (i) tuition waivers, (j) classroom space, and (k) instructional technology, including a computer lab for weekend and summer classes.

Eligibility

Hoop of Learning students must fulfill academic and curriculum requirements and participate in program events to remain in the program. All students sign contracts affirming their commitment to meet these requirements. To be eligible for the program, students must be enrolled in school, must be in good academic standing, and must be registered with the district Native American Education Program. New students, accompanied by an adult family member, attend an orientation workshop. During this workshop, students take the ASSET Placement Test to place them in the appropriate math, English, and reading courses. The new participants are required to take a course that introduces them to college life (curriculum, registration, study skills, etc.). All students must commit to successfully completing two courses (one academic course and one Indigenous Peoples studies course) during their first summer of enrollment. They must also take at least two courses during subsequent summer sessions. Students receive books, supplies, and tuition waivers for any college courses taken during their enrollment in the Hoop of Learning program. In order to remain in the program, students must maintain a grade point average of 2.0 on a 4-point scale in Hoop of Learning courses as well as in all of their other middle school or high school classes. Additionally, they must pass each level of the program before advancing to the next level.

Junior high school students take courses in personal development, career planning, study skills, computer science, math, and language arts. High school students take courses in English, math, reading, sciences, communication skills, computer science, Native American Studies, and personal and career development. This curriculum includes learning strategies for balancing their identities as they move between Native and non-Native worlds. Students may choose one of five program tracks. These include:

health sciences, general education, law, Native American studies, and technology.

To assist students in becoming familiar and comfortable with subsequent steps in their education, the program arranges campus orientations and tours. Additionally, junior high school students must travel to a local high school campus to take Hoop of Learning courses, and high school students must travel to the community college campus to participate in the program. This greatly reduces the “culture shock” students experience when they become full-time students on unfamiliar campuses.

Preliminary Outcomes

Quantitative data. The Hoop of Learning Program has been evolving over the past six years. Preliminary outcome indicators suggest that the program has been successful in meeting the goal of educational resilience for Native students. Table 1 outlines the retention, transfer, and dropout rates for the years 1998, 1999, and 2000 for Native students participating in the Hoop of Learning Program, as compared to those not participating in the program.

The data indicate that Native students participating in the program had markedly higher rates of retention, lower rates of trans-

Table 1

Retention, Transfer, and Dropout Rates for Hoop of Learning Students Compared to Non-Hoop of Learning Students (1998, 1999, 2000)

	1998		1999		2000	
	<i>Native Non-Hoop Students</i> <i>n = 1118</i>	<i>Hoop Students</i> <i>n = 85</i>	<i>Native Non-Hoop Students</i> <i>n = 1134</i>	<i>Hoop Students</i> <i>n = 53</i>	<i>Native Non-Hoop Students</i> <i>n = 1094</i>	<i>Hoop Students</i> <i>n = 57</i>
Retention	686 (61%)	71 (84%)	693 (61%)	47 (89%)	727 (67%)	53 (93%)
Transfer	290 (26%)	13 (15%)	346 (31%)	4 (7%)	309 (28%)	3 (5%)
Dropout	142 (13%)	1 (1%)	95 (8%)	2 (4%)	58 (5%)	1 (2%)

Note: The number outside of parentheses is the number of students within that category; the number within the parentheses represents the percentage of the total number of students.

Table 2

Graduation Rates for Hoop of Learning Program Seniors Compared to Non-Hoop Seniors

<i>Year</i>	<i>Native Non-Hoop Seniors</i>	<i>Hoop Seniors</i>
1998	71/119 (60%)	16/16 (100%)
1999	73/153 (48%)	21/21 (100%)
2000	76/124 (61%)	26/26 (100%)

Note: The numerator is the number of graduating seniors; the denominator is the total number of seniors within the indicated year; and the number within the parentheses is the percent graduated.

fer to other schools, and lower dropout rates than Native students who did not participate in the program. Moreover, retention rates have increased each year with a total increase over three years of 9%. Transfer rates for Hoop of Learning students have decreased by 10% over the same three year period. Table 2 outlines the senior graduation rates for Native students participating in the Hoop of Learning Program as compared to those not participating in the program.

All senior Hoop of Learning students graduated from high school during the three years examined. By contrast, there were substantially lower rates of graduation for non-Hoop Native students (60, 48, and 61 percent respectively). Further, of the 63 Hoop students who graduated from high school between the years 1998–2000, 57 (90%) matriculated to college. Fifty-five of these matriculating students (96%) enrolled in the community college within the Hoop of Learning partnership. Future evaluation efforts will explore the impact of the Hoop of Learning program on other salient variables (e.g., disciplinary referrals and suspension rates in high school) and the longitudinal effect of the program (i.e., GPA's during college years and the number of students that graduate from college).

Qualitative Data. An analysis of students' written evaluations of the Hoop of Learning Program indicate particular factors that contributed to students' choosing to participate and having positive experiences in the program. Since most of the students have grown up in an urban environment removed from their tribal

communities, they value the opportunity to learn more about their history and their cultures. Having spent their prior school years as minorities in inner city classrooms, they are comforted by belonging to an all Native peer group in a program designed and staffed by Native people. In some cases, this program is the first time participants have experienced a “critical mass” of Native people in an educational setting.

For several participants, an important protective factor is the instrumental support they receive in the Hoop of Learning Program, including tuition waivers and funding for books, supplies, transportation, lunches. Without this support, many Hoop of Learning students would not have been able to continue in school. Students also value the opportunity to gain confidence in their ability to succeed in college. As one student put it, the program gives him a “. . . head start in college, while my friends and family never had a chance for this education, [this is] an opportunity I never dream [sic] of.” A second student expects to “increase my knowledge and gain self-confidence that I can complete something that I started.” Another student is seeking “. . . a chance to become a future role model through the education” that he will be receiving through the program. A fourth student hopes “. . . to get as much education as possible and learn about my heritage.” Generally, student comments reflect appreciation of the program for giving them a comfortable, familiar, yet challenging context in which they can meet their educational and career aspirations—opportunities that are typically lacking in mainstream educational settings.

Program staff have identified several additional factors contributing to the success of the Hoop of Learning program. They recognize that Native students encounter many psychological, sociohistorical, cultural, and economic barriers to educational and occupational resilience. The Hoop of Learning program helps students to surmount some of these obstacles by providing needed social and material support in a culturally familiar and comfortable context guided by Native staff. Program staff recognize the importance of family commitment and support to the creation and continuing success of the Hoop of Learning program.

Many Native families feel alienated from mainstream educational systems. Accordingly, it is difficult for them to take an active role in their children’s education. By contrast, the Hoop of

Learning staff respectfully acknowledges and responds to family concerns and suggestions and realizes that family support is vital to the program. Monthly multiple-family group meetings allow program staff to consult and inform families about every aspect of the program. These meetings reflect the traditional communal approach to community planning and problem solving. Another favorable condition for this kind of bridge program is supportive high school and community college districts. Without the on-site program coordinator/counselors, books and supplies, transportation, lunches, and other instrumental supports that the districts provide, many students would be unable to continue in school.

Future Directions

Areas for future development of the program include: (a) increasing the number of participating community colleges; (b) further program development to facilitate students' transition from community college to four-year institutions (e.g., tours and campus orientations, a support group for parents and students, a program coordinator/counselor, tuition waivers for Hoop of Learning graduates, career and financial counseling, access to campus Native American student organizations, and summer academies to help Hoop of Learning students transition from community college to the four-year college environment); (c) development of a tiered student-to-student mentoring program in which university students from Native American student clubs would mentor community college students; community college students would mentor high school students; and high school students would mentor junior high school students. In this way, every Hoop of Learning student would have a student mentor from the subsequent educational level who offers inspiration and demystifies upcoming educational challenges; (d) completing a comprehensive program.

Conclusions

Indigenous communities in the United States have a wealth of cultural and social resources that can be mobilized to facilitate educational resilience among Native students. The authors

reviewed the historical context, contemporary trends, and current challenges related to education of Indigenous students, and provided a detailed description of one inner city program that appears to be fostering educational resilience among Native students. The Hoop of Learning program is complex and multidimensional and depends on a holistic, multisystemic, culturally appropriate approach to fostering educational resilience. Preliminary outcome data from the Hoop of Learning Program confirm earlier findings (Hibbeler & Hibbeler, 1994) related to the relationship between a sense of comfort and familiarity and educational resilience for Native students. Findings corroborate earlier data suggesting that in order to be perceived by students as personally relevant, curricula must address "the historical realities of Native American education and incorporate the cultural principles that have an impact on a student's ability to learn" (Brown, 1993, p. 108). It appears that this kind of bridge program facilitates educational resilience by giving Native students an oasis of comfort and familiarity within dominant culture educational settings, and perhaps for the first time, giving them the opportunity to pursue their dreams without having to decide how much of their ethnic identity they will have to give up in order to succeed in the American mainstream.

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