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DESIGNING A RUBRIC FOR EVALUATING CURRICULAR RESOURCES IN  
MONTANA'S *INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL REPOSITORY*:  
A DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH APPROACH

by

Megan M. Hamilton

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

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Logan, UT

2023

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## ABSTRACT

Designing a Rubric for Evaluating Curricular Resources in Montana's *Indian Education for All* Repository: A Design-Based Research Approach

by

Megan M. Hamilton, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2023

Major Professor: Mimi Recker, Ph.D.

Department: Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

There has been limited research investigating evaluative design-based research approaches and how they can be utilized in K-12 social studies and Indigenous education. The purpose of this research study was to create an initial rubric to evaluate lesson plans prior to their addition to Montana's online repository for *Indian Education for All* (IEFA) curriculum.

In the first phase of this study, I examined Montana's IEFA curriculum thematically to gain a better understanding of how Indigenous histories and perspectives are being represented using combined theoretical lenses of Tribal Critical Race Theory and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy.

In the second phase of this study, I used my thematic findings to inform the design of a theory-informed evaluative rubric rooted in critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies. The findings from this line of research have

implications for equity and inclusion in K-12 education as well as how educators and scholars think about evaluating Indigenous education curriculum across the U.S. and beyond.

(190 pages)

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Designing a Rubric for Evaluating Curricular Resources in Montana's *Indian Education for All* Repository: A Design-Based Research Approach

Megan Hamilton

The purpose of this research study was to create an initial rubric to evaluate social studies lesson plans prior to their addition to Montana Office of Public Instruction's online repository for *Indian Education for All* (IEFA) curriculum. In the first phase of this study, I examined Montana's IEFA curriculum thematically to gain a better understanding of how Indigenous histories and perspectives are being represented using combined theoretical lenses of Tribal Critical Race Theory and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy. In the second phase of this study, I used my thematic findings to inform the design of a theory-informed evaluative rubric. The findings from this line of research have implications for equity and inclusion in K-12 education as well as how educators and scholars think about evaluating Indigenous education curriculum.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my beloved brother, Jacob Rollins.

*Gigawabamin.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I could not have accomplished this academic endeavor without the guidance and mentorship of my distinguished dissertation chair, Dr. Mimi Recker. Thank you for challenging me and encouraging me throughout the peaks and passes of this journey. I also want to express my deep appreciation for my dissertation committee members: Dr. Jody Clarke-Midura, Dr. Jessica Shumway, Dr. Kristin Searle, and Dr. Kristy Bloxham. I remain extremely grateful for their insightful discussions, ideas, and feedback during this process. I will continue to pass on the same generosity you have extended to me.

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debates and encouraging me to be my best self.

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Last, I owe gratitude to my ancestors. It is their love, light, and resilience that continue to light the path before me. *Chi Miigwech*.

Megan M. Hamilton

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to thematically analyze Montana's *Indian Education for All* (IEFA) curriculum, specifically third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum, to gain a better understanding of what Montana's students are learning about American Indian histories and perspectives and how this content aligns with tenets of critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies. Next, using a design-based research approach (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014), my thematic findings led to the creation of an evaluative tool intended to increase users' capacity to determine the degree of alignment of IEFA curriculum with critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies. As illustrated in my review of literature, current trends in American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) education point to the need for colonial schooling practices to better align with Indigenous ways of knowing. Moreover, researchers' analyses of U.S. history state standards (e.g., Shear et al., 2015) and textbooks (e.g., Sanchez, 2007; Stanton, 2014) reveal how settler colonial ideals are often reinforced throughout K-12 and higher education. My review of literature also illustrated the absence of research pertaining to evaluation methods used in K-12 social studies education and how they intersect with AI/AN education. For the purposes of this study, my thematic analysis of Montana's IEFA curriculum informed the development of an evaluative rubric grounded in critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies to assess IEFA curriculum and pedagogies.

## Background and Context

On February 13, 2023, Superintendent Elsie Arntzen of Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) gathered alongside educators and community members at the state capitol to celebrate Montana's *IEFA*. As part of the celebration, the 2023 Making Montana Proud Poster series (Montana OPI, 2023a), which features prominent Indigenous educators from Montana's tribes, were unveiled. "This is a great opportunity to showcase our Montana Constitutional promise of *Indian Education for All* in action," stated Superintendent Arntzen (Montana OPI, 2023b). However, critics disagree whether there is cause for celebration at this time. Currently, there remains pending litigation against Montana's OPI, including Superintendent Arntzen, alleging their failures in meeting their constitution promise of *Indian Education for All*. The 2021 class action lawsuit states:

Despite over a decade of dedicated annual state appropriations, the Indian Education Provisions' goals and requirements remain largely unmet in many Montana public schools. In those schools, the cultural heritage and integrity of American Indians is not being preserved, and Indian and non-Indian Montanans are not learning about American Indian heritage in a culturally responsive manner (*Yellow Kidney, et al., v. Montana Office of Public Instruction, et al., 2021, p. 4*).

In 1999, delegates in the state of Montana passed a constitutional mandate for *Indian Education for All* (MCA 20-1-501) which encompasses the teaching of American Indian experiences, academic engagement with American Indian experiences, and cultural enrichment for all students (Juneau, 2006). In response to this mandate, Montana's OPI worked with Montana's tribes to establish the *Seven Essential Understandings*, which are agreed upon principles that all students should learn about regarding each of Montana's

tribes. The *Seven Essential Understandings* serve as the foundation for IEFA curriculum, teacher professional development opportunities, and various other resources to help educators and students learn and teach about Montana's tribes (Montana OPI, n.d.; Juneau, 2006).

Over the last few years, numerous U.S. states have passed laws and regulations banning the teaching of critical race theory (CRT) and what has been deemed "antiracist" programming in public schools (Bissell, 2023; Ray & Gibbons, 2021). The national debate regarding CRT in education has also reached the state of Montana (Sakariassen, 2021). Recently, Montana's attorney general issued a legally binding attorney general opinion stating that the "...law [Montana law] will not tolerate schools, other government entities, or employers implementing CRT and antiracist programming in a way that treats individuals differently on the basis of race or that creates a hostile environment" (Knudsen, 2021, p. 19). Conversely, members of Montana's American Indian Caucus have publicly disagreed with the attorney general's stance and issued a joint statement in issue of support of CRT stating that "challenges to the validity of critical race theory undermine the very core of IEFA" (Montana Legislative American Indian Caucus, 2021, p. 2). While the debate over CRT in education is not a new one (e.g., Dixson & Rousseau, 2018; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015), the current political context in Montana's public arena continues to present unique challenges for implementation of this research. Therefore, I will revisit the abovementioned political context in Chapter V as I discuss factors affecting the implementation of this research in greater detail.

As of the 2020-2021 school year, there were a total of 826 public schools



including 436 elementary schools, 217 middle schools, and 173 high schools spanning 402 school districts across the state of Montana (Montana OPI, 2021b). Some school districts are located in urban areas (e.g., Helena Public Schools in Helena, Montana) while other school districts are located in rural areas (e.g., Rosebud Schools in Rosebud, Montana). Approximately 40 public school districts are located on or near reservations across the state of Montana (Montana OPI, 2022-2023, p. 10). For example, Browning Public Schools district is located in Browning, Montana, near the Blackfeet reservation (Browning Public Schools, 2022). According to the OPI's American Indian Student Achievement (AISA) data dashboard, Montana's student population consisted of 20,819 American Indian (AI) students and 128,379 non-Native (persons who identify as any race or ethnicity other than American Indian) during the 2021-2022 academic year. In other words, AI students comprise approximately 13.9% of Montana's K-12 student population (Montana OPI, 2021-2022). Additionally, approximately 3.13% of Montana's K-12 educators identify as American Indian while 2.82% of Montana's K-12 educators identify as multi-racial<sup>1</sup> (Montana OPI, personal communication, March 17, 2023).

### **Problem Statement**

Montana's IEFA curriculum is currently housed in an online repository (<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources>) for free and accessible access for classroom educators.

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that many of Montana's educators who self-report as multi-racial also frequently identify as American Indian in addition to one or more races (Montana OPI, personal communication, March 17, 2023).

Montana's IEFA online repository contains general resources for remote learning, featured curriculum and publications, as well as sample lessons and units designed by Montana's OPI team as well as members of Montana's tribes. Within the repository, IEFA sample lessons and units are organized according to different discipline areas including art, health enhancement/family-consumer sciences, language arts, mathematics, music, science, social studies, and other cross-disciplines. In 2015, Bachtler conducted an evaluation of Montana's IEFA focused on OPI efforts to provide instructional resources and support implementation of *Indian Education for All*. As part of Bachtler's (2015) findings related to IEFA lessons and instructional resources, Montana's educators recommended the need for further resources, including additional exemplar materials and lessons. Moreover, educators recommended further need for "periodic reviews and updates of resources on the IEFA website" in addition to suggestions for "educators to participate in reviews to identify gaps in content coverage" (Bachtler, 2015, p. 11).

Presently, Montana's educators and administrators are tasked with evaluating Montana's IEFA curriculum to assess how well curriculum resources align with Banks and Banks' (2004) levels of multicultural education reform as well as Montana's *Seven Essential Understandings*, tribally specific content, and instructional best practices (Schmid et al., 2006). There are a few reasons why the current evaluative rubric is problematic. First, the process of vetting curriculum is time consuming and places additional responsibility on already overly burdened classroom educators (Bachtler, 2015). This evaluative process could be better streamlined by having OPI's educational specialists engage in pre-vetting curriculum resources prior to classroom use. Second, the

existing rubric checks for alignment with multicultural education. While Montana's IEFA efforts have been applauded for their strides in multicultural education reform (Carjuzaa et al., 2010; Elser, 2010), scholars argue that Montana's IEFA efforts "risks reproducing a colonizing, assimilative process that effectively undermines its own good intentions" (Hopkins, 2020, p. 9) because these efforts promote *inclusive conversations* rather than *decolonizing conversations*. Instead, Hopkins argues for decolonizing conversations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities that challenge and resist colonial schooling practices. One way to engage in decolonization practices is to utilize Indigenous-centered methodologies including Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit: Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) that (re)center Indigenous ways of knowing.

This demonstrates a need for an evaluative tool that identifies how well critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogical features are represented in Montana's IEFA curriculum. The use of this tool may allow for educational specialists to become more skilled at recognizing curriculum that is both decolonizing and culturally sustaining as well as inclusive of Indigenous histories and perspectives. To address the above-mentioned needs, I examined how Indigenous perspectives and histories are included in Montana's online curriculum repository, specifically third- through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans, and designed an evaluative rubric to explicitly describe criteria for including Indigenous perspectives and histories in critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing ways. My rationale for choosing the third- through fifth-grade IEFA online curriculum repository for this study was twofold: (1) Montana's IEFA repository has free

and accessible online curriculum resources for social studies educators and (2) Montana's IEFA policies legally require educators to teach about Indigenous histories and perspectives as well as require engagement in curriculum collaboration with local Indigenous communities (National Congress of American Indians, 2019). To my knowledge, no formal reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) of these lesson plans had been conducted as of May 2022.

### **Goals and Objectives**

For this study, I thematically analyzed Montana's IEFA curriculum, specifically grades 3-5 social studies lesson plans, to gain an understanding of how features of critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies are currently being taught. Next, I used a design-based research approach (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014) to develop the first iteration of an evaluative tool for educational specialists to use that has significant potential to support educational specialists as they evaluate IEFA curriculum for how well it includes Indigenous perspectives and histories as well as alignment with critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing practices. Subsequent iterations of my theory-informed rubric will be created after having collaborated with community stakeholders (including Montana educators and members of Montana's tribes).

### **Research Questions**

To accomplish the goals and objectives described above, my inquiry is guided by the following research questions and design objective.

RQ1: How are tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) represented in Montana's *Indian Education for All* repository for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum?

RQ2: How are tenets of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) represented in Montana's *Indian Education for All* repository for third-through fifth-grade social studies curriculum?

Design Objective: Synthesizing findings from RQ1 and RQ2, design an initial rubric for educational specialists to evaluate how well Montana's *Indian Education for All* curriculum align with tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

### **Significance of Study**

With the increased usage of online repositories to support Indigenous education efforts, there is need for further research to assist educators as they evaluate online K-12 curriculum and their representation of Indigenous perspectives and histories (Stanton, 2012). Moreover, existing IEFA rubrics (e.g., Schmid et al., 2006) incorporate multicultural education approaches, yet were not created in alignment with tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) as well as culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Hopkins (2020) argues that Montana's IEFA curriculum does not adequately address the "deep wounds of colonization" (p. 34). Therefore, the aim of this line of research is to revise and build upon Schmid et al.'s evaluative rubric as an approach to (re)center Indigenous ways of knowing and researching so that educators, specifically educational specialists assigned to create such online repositories, can effectively evaluate K-12 social studies lesson plans for critical and culturally sustaining portrayals of Indigenous peoples and their histories. The findings from this line of research have implications for how educators think about access and equity, specifically how they can include quality decolonizing lesson plans in their online Indigenous education repositories.

## Definition of Terms

*American Indian/Alaskan Natives (AI/ANs)* refers to “persons belonging to the tribal nations of the continental U.S. (American Indians) and the tribal nations and villages of Alaska (Alaska Natives)” (National Congress of American Indians, 2020, p. 11). Throughout this dissertation, I use American Indians/Alaskan Natives, AI/AN, Indigenous, and Native Americans interchangeably.

*American Indian/Alaskan Native Education* refers to the type of education designed for American Indians by American Indians (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018, pp. 1-2). This form of education encompasses the teaching of Indigenous cultures, languages, and knowledge systems (Brayboy et al., 2015; Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018).

*Colonial schooling* refers to the type of education designed for American Indians by colonizing nations (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018, p. 1). This form of schooling encompasses the “training” of Indigenous peoples to become “productive” members of western society (Brayboy et al., 2015; Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018).

*Curriculum* refers to the standards-based sequences of content deemed essential for students (e.g., Van den Akker, 2003). Curriculum is often associated with western, formal education. In terms of social studies education, “Curriculum is much more than subject matter knowledge—a collection of facts and generalizations from history and the social science disciplines to be passed on to students. The curriculum is what students experience” (E. W. Ross, 2014; p. xi).

*Decolonization* refers to the significant ways in which deeply embedded structures of colonialism, including the field of education, are transformed so that

Indigenous knowledges become (re)centered (Smith, 1999). Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us that “decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity” (p. 35).

*Indian Education for All (IEFA)* is a constitutional mandate in the state of Montana created to ensure all preK-12 students learn about AI/AN perspectives and histories. Other states are also moving to require *Indian Education for All*. For example, Wyoming’s state legislature passed standards “to ensure the cultural heritage, history and contemporary contributions of American Indians are addressed” (2014 Wyoming Social Studies Content & Performance Standards with 2018 Additions, p. 5).

*Indigenous peoples* is a collective term used to describe the peoples who occupied regions of the world (like the Americas) prior to European colonization. When writing about AI/ANs, it is preferable to use the name in which tribal members refer to themselves (Miheisah, 1998, 2005). As such, I will use each tribe’s preferred name (or what I refer to as “original names”) when I discuss individual tribes. However, when I refer to AI/AN tribes in a more general sense, I will use American Indian/Alaskan Native, AI/AN, Indigenous, and Native American interchangeably.

*Native American (NA)* refers to “All Native people of the U.S. and its trust territories (i.e., American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Chamorros, and American Samoans), as well as persons from Canadian First Nations and Indigenous communities in Mexico and Central and South America who are U.S. residents” (National Congress of American Indians, 2020, p. 11). Throughout this dissertation, I use American Indians/Alaskan Native, AI/AN, Indigenous, and Native American

interchangeably.

*Online repositories* refer to digital databases of knowledge resources (Carroll et al., 2003; Cross & Baird, 2000). Montana's *IEFA* resources are currently housed in an online database (<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources>). Montana's OPI vetted IEFA curriculum resources and stored them in their online database for educators to use in their classrooms.

*Settler colonialism* refers to the replacement of an Indigenous civilization by a new society of settlers attempting to acquire land (Rowe & Tuck, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Settler colonial ideals remain embedded in the U.S. educational system in various forms, including core standards (Shear et al., 2015) and textbooks (e.g., Stanton, 2014).

*Social studies education* refers to the teaching of content related to the social sciences as well as the humanities (National Council for Social Studies [NCSS], 2010). According to the NCSS, the main purpose of social studies education is "to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (National Council for Social Studies, 1994, p. 9).

### **Summary**

Montana's *IEFA* efforts represent important strides being made regarding the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and histories in K-12 curriculum. Yet, settler colonial ideals persist in existing K-12 curriculum (e.g., Sanchez, 2007; Shear et al.,



2015; Stanton, 2014). Considering that other states (e.g., Oregon, North Dakota, Washington, Wyoming, and Wisconsin) are also beginning to take important steps toward their own versions of IEFA, it is crucial that Indigenous education efforts also begin to decolonize existing and future curriculum in ways that (re)center Indigenous ways of knowing. The aim of this dissertation is to develop an understanding of how critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies are being used in Montana's IEFA curriculum. At the same time, this study uses design-based research (DBR) approaches to create an evaluative rubric for educational specialists to vet curriculum prior to addition to Montana's online IEFA repository.

### **Dissertation Outline**

My dissertation follows a five-chapter format including an introduction, a review of literature, methods, results, and a conclusion. In Chapter I, I introduce my study and explain why this study is being undertaken. In Chapter II, I provide a review of literature that surveys relevant sources in three key bodies of literature including (1) an overview of historical and current trends in American Indian/Alaskan Native education, (2) a summary and critique of Montana's IEFA efforts and (3) a review of current scholarship in K-12 social studies education involving the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives. At the end of Chapter II, I also provide an overview of literature on the theoretical frameworks of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/ revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) informing this study. In Chapter III, I explain the research methodologies I utilized in this study including reflexive thematic analysis

(Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) and design-based research (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014). In Chapter IV, I provide an overview of the results of my research, including findings from my thematic analysis of Montana's IEFA third- to fifth-grade social studies lesson plans as well as the first iteration of my theory-informed evaluative rubric. In Chapter V, I discuss the findings described in Chapter IV and further relate my findings to existing research and theoretical foundations discussed in Chapter II. Chapter V also includes my limitations, suggestions for future work, and conclusions.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

In the following pages, I provide an overview of three bodies of literature informing this dissertation including (1) an overview of historical and current trends in American Indian/Alaskan Native education, (2) a summary and critique of the instructional context for this study (Montana's IEFA efforts), and (3) a review of current scholarship in K-12 social studies education involving the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives. This literature helps inform the purpose of this dissertation, which is to lay the foundations for a rubric so that educational specialists can effectively evaluate K-12 social studies lesson plans for critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing portrayals of Indigenous peoples and their histories prior to adding lesson plans to Montana's online IEFA repository. Lastly, I provide my theoretical orientation for this research study which is informed by the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014). I utilize this combined theoretical orientation to offer educational specialists a theory-informed evaluative framework as they assess the extent to which social studies lesson plans incorporate elements of decolonizing education into Montana's IEFA lesson plans.

#### **American Indian/Alaskan Native Education**

The term *American Indian Education* remains largely contested. In some contexts,

American Indian education means “education of Indian people *by* Indian people” while in other contexts it means “education designed *for* Indian people by colonizing nations” (Lomawaima, 1999, p. 422). Brayboy and Lomawaima (2018) make the distinction between the two concepts by referring to the type of education designed for American Indians by colonizing nations as *colonial schooling* versus the type of education designed for American Indians by American Indians as *American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) education*. I adopt a similar distinction in this study. In the following section, I provide a brief history of AI/AN education as well as discuss current trends in AI/AN education, including ways scholars are working to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are included in colonial schooling and curriculum.

### **Historical Background of American Indian/ Alaskan Native Education**

After European contact, many settler colonials felt it was their duty to civilize the Indigenous peoples across North America. In the *Unnatural History of American Indian Education*, Lomawaima (1999) describes how colonial schooling was originally based on the following tenets.

1. that Native Americans were savages and had to be civilized;
2. that civilization required Christian conversion;
3. that civilization required subordination of Native communities, frequently achieved through resettlement efforts; and
4. that Native people had mental, moral, physical, or cultural deficiencies that made certain pedagogical methods necessary for their education (p. 3).

Over the past two centuries, colonial schooling has served as a mechanism to control and assert power over the Indigenous peoples (Lomawaima, 1999; Brayboy &

Lomawaima, 2018). According to Lomawaima, “Historically, the goals of the colonial education of American Indians have been to transform Indian people and societies and to eradicate Indian self-government, self-determination, and self-education” (p. 5). At first, colonial schooling was created as a system of colonial missionary schools with the shared purpose of converting Indigenous peoples to Christianity (e.g., Reyhner & Eder, 2017). Over time, Indigenous schooling transformed into the Indian residential (boarding) school system meant to further “civilize” (or assimilate) Indigenous communities into western society.

### **Current Climate of American Indian/ Alaskan Native Education**

The residential school system dissolved in Canada during the 1990s and in the U.S. during the 1960s under the Indian Civilization Act. In the U.S., forms of colonial schooling and AI/AN education practices persist today. In terms of colonial schooling, AI/AN students attend K-12 public and charter schools on and off reservations as well as colleges and universities across the U.S. In terms of AI/AN education, informal educational opportunities are provided to AI/AN children by their family members and community, usually in the form of intergenerational learning (Lomawaima, 2014; J. B. Ross, 2016). This form of Indigenous education has been ongoing for millennia. Both types of education are viewed as advantageous in AI/AN communities (Lomawaima, 1999). For example, colonial schooling often serves as a “training ground for successful relations with Euro-American governments and citizens” (Lomawaima, 1999, p. 423). AI/AN education also helps American Indian learners become more familiar with their

culture, traditions, and language.

While colonial schooling may be viewed as advantageous in AI/AN communities, there remains troubling statistics that point to AI/AN students not doing well in colonial schooling. After commissioning a comprehensive study of American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian students in colonial schooling, the Education Committee of the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators (NCNASL) stated: “The state of education in our nation’s K-12 schools for Native students is distressing” (2008, p. 5). Little has changed in U.S. colonial schooling since then. According to the annual report on *Condition of Education* in the U.S., AI/AN students experience the highest status dropout rates<sup>2</sup> (11.5%) as compared to any other racial/ethnic group (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). In comparison, the status dropout rate for Hispanic students is 7.4% and 2.4% for Asian students. The status dropout rates for those students who are Black or Hispanic has dropped since 2010 while those students who are AI/AN has stayed about the same. AI/AN students not only experience high status dropout rates, but they also experience high rates of disciplinary action in K-12 public schools. As an example, according to the 2017-2018 Civil Rights Data Collection (which were released in 2020), American Indian students were expelled in K-12 schools at higher rates than their percentage of enrollment (greater than 1.0%). More specifically, American Indian students without educational services were expelled at a rate of 1.8% when their total rate of enrollment was 1% (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). As such, scholars in the field of education are looking for ways to address such disparities.

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<sup>2</sup> Status dropout rates refer to the percentage of students ages 16 to 24 years old who have not enrolled in high school and do not possess a high school diploma and/or GED certificate.

One of the ways in which scholars have proposed to help American Indian students to succeed in colonial schooling includes combining, or “braiding,” aspects of colonial schooling with American Indian/Alaskan Native education (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018). Battiste (2009) similarly referred to this approach as “naturalizing” colonial schooling so that it includes AI/AN education (Battiste, 2009). A possible path forward for braiding the two areas is referred to as culturally responsive schooling (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Culturally responsive schooling (CRS) scholars maintain that:

...firm grounding in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular tribe is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally healthy students and communities associated with that place, and thus is an essential ingredient for identifying the appropriate qualities and practices associated with culturally-responsive educators, curriculum, and schools (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998).

In 2008, Brayboy and Castagno conducted a review of CRS literature for American Indian students. After examination of CRS over the past 40 years, they observed that many CRS efforts are quite superficial and “too easily reduced to essentializations, meaningless generalizations, or trivial anecdotes” (Brayboy & Castagno, 2008, p. 942). Furthermore, they argue that CRS efforts require a major shift in pedagogy and curriculum materials. Brayboy and Castagno also call for educational self-determination, or tribal control of education, toward educational sovereignty. More about educational sovereignty is discussed later in my theoretical orientation, namely tenets of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014). The push for true CRS requires significant attention to Indigenous knowledge systems which I detail in the next section.

## **Ensuring Indigenous Perspectives in Colonial Schooling and Curriculum**

It is currently estimated that over 90% of Indigenous youth attend K-12 public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020), often where the dominant culture's perspectives and histories are valued over their own. In 2019, the U.S. Department of Education released a report, the *2019 National Indian Education Study*, detailing the landscape of colonial schooling for AI/AN students. For the 2019 National Indian Education Study, AI/AN students in grades 4 and 8 were surveyed about their in- and out-of-school educational experiences. One particular survey question asked students how much they knew about their respective tribe (U.S. Department of Education, 2019, p. 11). According to their results, 31% of AI/AN students in grade 4 reported having at least "a little" knowledge of their AI/AN tribe. Seventeen percent reported knowing "nothing" and about 20%<sup>3</sup> of AI/AN students in grade 4 reported having "a lot" of cultural knowledge. One trend observed in this study was that AI/AN students in grade 4 who attended Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-led schools on reservations were more likely to report greater knowledge of their culture than their peers on public schools outside of reservations. Therefore, a productive strategy for ensuring AI/AN students have access to cultural knowledge is to shift toward colonial schooling models that align with Indigenous knowledge systems.

Barnhardt (2014) argues for an alignment between colonial schooling and

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<sup>3</sup> About 19% of grade 4 AI/AN students reported having "a lot" of cultural knowledge in public schools while about 23% of grade 4 AI/AN students reported having "a lot" of cultural knowledge in BIE schools. Altogether, about 20% of all grade 4 AI/AN students across school types reported having "a lot" of cultural knowledge.



Indigenous knowledge systems in order to benefit all students so that “knowledge streams can come together in mutually productive ways” (p. 7). Culturally, many Indigenous people value intimate understandings of their natural worlds, place emphasis on practical application of skills and knowledge, make sense of their world through oral traditions, and highly regard family and community relationships over individual ones (Barnhardt & Oscar Kawagley, 2005; Brayboy, 2005; Burkhart, 2004). Moreover, ensuring the survival of their communities is at the center of numerous Indigenous knowledge-making practices (Brayboy, 2005). Sustainability for future generations is reflected in the seventh-generation principle (rooted in the traditional Iroquois philosophy) used to describe the importance of everyday decisions and their impacts on the wellbeing of the community for the next seven generations (Clarkson et al., 1992). One way of attending to the next seven generations is to ensure Indigenous learners are being taught about their culture both inside *and* outside of colonial schooling.

In summary, AI/AN students continue to struggle in colonial schooling. As a result, many scholars argue for a shift of colonial schooling to be in better alignment with Indigenous perspectives, including Indigenous knowledge systems, as a way to help AI/AN students not only learn more about their own cultures, but also to help them succeed in colonial schooling.

This study takes place in the context of K-12 education in Montana. Specifically, Montana’s OPI analyzed their student data and found that many of their own AI/AN students are also struggling in colonial schooling, specifically in schools located on Montana’s reservations (Corbett, 2011). Additionally, Montana currently requires that

“every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner...” (Indian Education for All, 1999). As a result, I wish to focus on developing an evaluative rubric for K-12 social studies lesson plans that articulates ways for all Montana’s students, including both AI/AN students and their non-AI/AN peers, to learn more about AI/AN cultures. I discuss Montana’s *IEFA* efforts in the following pages.

### ***Montana’s Indian Education for All***

In 1999, Montana legislators passed House Bill 528 (MCA 20-1-501) to encourage all Montana citizens to learn about Indigenous perspectives and histories. Thereafter, Montana’s legislature appropriated funds in 2005 to support IEFA efforts in K-12 schools. In the following section, I provide an overview of Montana’s IEFA mandate and efforts to ensure students learn about Indigenous cultures in K-12 public schools. In the last part of this section, I address critiques of Montana’s IEFA efforts as well as include scholars’ recommendations for integrating decolonizing concepts throughout IEFA.

In AI/AN education, having the ability to share cultural knowledge is vital for increasing cultural sensitivity (Deyhle & Comeau, 2009). As an example, Montana’s IEFA program hopes to achieve the sharing of cultural knowledge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Ultimately, the Montana Supreme Court ruled in 2004 that the State’s constitutional guarantee of “a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools” must include educational programs to implement Article X, Section 1 (2), the provision that recognized Indians’ cultural heritage and

committed the State to making their cultural preservation a goal of our education system. The result was a new definition of quality education that includes what has become known as *Indian Education for All* and a 2005 legislative appropriation to help school districts meet this definition of a quality education (Juneau, 2006, p. 1).

As part of Montana's IEFA efforts, tribal leaders from Montana's 12 tribal nations gathered together in 1999 to form the *Seven Essential Understandings* (see Table 1), which serve as a foundation for teaching key concepts of tribal cultures, histories, and perspectives (Carjuzaa et al., 2010). The *Seven Essential Understandings* inform the topics of many of IEFA's lesson plans housed in their online repository (<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources>). Additional funding was also directed to OPI efforts such as hiring staff, creating professional development for educators, as well as creating an online repository of IEFA curriculum resources targeting specific grade levels and core disciplines (Montana OPI, n.d.). As an example, a lesson plan entitled, "1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving," includes activities that encourage students to examine the U.S. holiday of Thanksgiving more closely to account for differing perspectives and historical inaccuracies surrounding this contested time in history (Montana OPI, n.d.).

Elser (2010) developed a guidebook for teachers and administrators to further define and operationalize IEFA. Within their guidebook, Elser discusses the theoretical foundations of IEFA, namely multicultural education (Banks, 1996), as well as provide guidance for achieving high levels of IEFA implementation. For example, teachers are encouraged to become aware of Banks and Banks' (2004) four levels of integration of multicultural content, including the (1) contributions approach, (2) additive approach, (3) transformation approach, and (4) social justice approach, and utilize these approaches in

**Table 1***Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians*

Essential understanding	Key element	Guiding principle
Essential understanding 1	Tribal diversity	“There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana” (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 3).
Essential understanding 2	Individual diversity	“Just as there is great diversity among tribal nations, there is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined, and redefined by entities, organizations, and people. There is no generic American Indian” (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 7).
Essential understanding 3	Beliefs, spirituality, oral histories persist	“The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories predate the “discovery” of North America” (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 9).
Essential understanding 4	Reservations —land reserved by Tribal Nations	“Though there have been tribal peoples living successfully on the North American lands for millennia, reservations are lands that have been reserved by or for tribes for their exclusive use as permanent homelands. Some were created through treaties, while others were created by statutes and executive orders. The principle that land should be acquired from tribes only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions: I. Both parties to treaties were sovereign powers; II. Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land; III. Acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists or states” (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 12).
Essential understanding 5	Federal Indian policies	“There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people and continue to shape who they are today. Many of these policies conflicted with one another. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods: • Colonization/ Colonial Period, 1492-1800s • Treaty-Making and Removal Period, 1778-1871 • Reservation Period – Allotment and Assimilation, 1887-1934 • Tribal Reorganization Period, 1934-1953 • Termination and Relocation Period, 1953-1968 • Self-Determination Period, 1975-Present” (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 16).
Essential understanding 6	History from American Indian perspectives	“History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell” (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 22).
Essential understanding 7	Tribal sovereignty	“American Indian tribal nations are inherent sovereign nations and they possess sovereign powers, separate and independent from the federal and state governments. However, under the American legal system, the extent and breadth of self-governing powers are not the same for each tribe” (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 24).

*Note.* This is the abbreviated version of the *Seven Essential Understandings*. The extended version, which includes all of the necessary background information, can be found on Montana OPI’s website (Montana OPI, 2019).

order to better “focus on big ideas while working side-by-side with their students to explore important questions, delve into compelling topics, and build true understanding of challenging content” (Elser, 2010 p. 6). Montana educators are also encouraged to evaluate IEFA curriculum resources using a rubric (see Table 2) to determine the degree of alignment between Banks and Banks’ (2004) levels of multicultural curriculum reform, Montana’s *Seven Essential Understandings*, tribally specific content, and instructional best practices.

While certain advocates claim Montana’s IEFA efforts exemplify multicultural education practices (e.g., Carjuzaa et al, 2010), other scholars argue there remains much work to be done (e.g., Hopkins, 2020). For instance, in his critique of Montana’s IEFA, Hopkins argues for a shift in recent efforts toward Indigenous education reform: “What is needed is a reform that interrogates colonizing history and seeks to dismantle its ongoing structure that pervades public schools, even with reforms, like IEFA, that promote tribal cultures, voices, and sovereignty” (p. 9). Hopkins worries that settler colonial narratives perpetuate the myth of the vanishing American Indian. Alternatively, Hopkins argues that educators should engage in the counternarrative of “Indigenous struggle, survival, resilience, resistance, resurgence, and life” (p. xviii). Hopkins also argues for the need to privilege Indigenous knowledge and explicitly integrate decolonization concepts into teaching and learning. Rather than using the theoretical orientation of multicultural education (e.g., Banks, 2004), Hopkins proposes decolonizing solutions in AI/AN education in public schools that are informed by TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (CSRP: McCarty & Lee, 2014) instead. He

**Table 2**

*List Rubric for Evaluating Indian Education for All Curricula*

Criteria	Exemplary	Integrated	Included	Absent
<i>Essential understandings</i>	Lessons and curricula identify and are aligned to the <i>Essential Understandings</i>	<i>Essential Understandings</i> are identified	<i>Essential Understandings</i> are implied	<i>Essential Understandings</i> are not utilized
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Native American content is tribally specific</li> <li>b) Included content is developmentally appropriate</li> <li>c) Primary or authentic sources are identified</li> <li>d) Overall, lessons balance historic and contemporary content</li> </ul>	Tribally specific with resources identified	Some, but not specific or lacking resources	Native American content is not specified nor included in curriculum
Best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Lesson engages students in social construction of knowledge</li> <li>b) Lesson activates &amp; builds background knowledge</li> <li>c) Lesson requires students to apply reading strategies to construct meaning</li> <li>d) Unit requires students to write to represent their thinking</li> </ul>	Increased sophistication	Some evident	Instructional best practices are not evident
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) All essential lesson components are identified-content area, grade level, unit summary, time requirements, <i>Essential Understandings</i>, state standards, student learning targets, and complete resource citations</li> <li>b) Lesson employs well-sequenced instructional design</li> <li>c) Suggested support materials are identified</li> <li>d) Formative &amp; summative assessments are included</li> </ul>	More complete	Some development	Curriculum is sketchy, incomplete, and generally poorly presented
Banks' approaches	Social Action	Transformation	Additive	Contributions
SCORE	3	2	1	0

*Note.* Adapted from Schmid et al., 2006, p. 59.

argues that the use of both of these Indigenous-centered methodologies better helps schools to “privilege tribal knowledge and integrate decolonizing praxis into their curriculum and pedagogy” (p. 12). Thus, I utilize TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) in this study to inform the creation of an evaluative framework which supports the filtering of lesson plans that do not privilege tribal knowledge.

### **Indigenous Representations in K-12 Social Studies Education**

For the third body of literature, I discuss Indigenous representations across K-12 social studies education, including two key areas: K-12 social studies curriculum and settler colonialism and K-12 social studies evaluation. In the first section, I discuss how settler colonialism pervades social studies curriculum including curriculum standards and textbooks. In the last section of this body of literature, I discuss what I uncovered during my review of the literature relating to evaluation, namely evaluative rubrics, used in K-12 social studies education and how they intersect with AI/AN education.

#### **K-12 Social Studies Curriculum and Settler Colonialism**

In western K-12 education, the discipline of social studies evolved as an integrated study of multiple fields including history, geography, political science, culture, and anthropology. According to the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), the discipline of social studies education is “to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic

society in an interdependent world” (NCSS, 1994, p. 9). During recent years, the NCSS has acknowledged the need for social studies curriculum to recognize and affirm Indigenous peoples as sovereign and distinct nations in both a historical and present-day context (National Council for Social Studies Position Statement, 2018). Although many states include AI/AN education in their content standards, less than half require that it be taught in K-12 schools (National Congress of American Indians [NCAI], 2019, p. 20). According to a 2019 survey performed by the NCAI, key informants across states like Utah and Nebraska continue to experience a low level of implementation of an AI/AN education curriculum despite the ongoing historical and contemporary presence of Indigenous peoples (NCAI, 2019, p. 23).

The ongoing power of settler colonialism (e.g., Rowe & Tuck, 2017), or the replacement of an Indigenous civilization by a new society of settlers attempting to acquire land, remains embedded in the U.S. educational system, and Indigenous perspectives and voices remain frequently underrepresented and misrepresented (e.g., Anderson, 2012; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018; Shear & Krutka, 2019). For example, much of what is currently taught in social studies education is based upon the false narrative that the U.S. was “founded and built by immigrants” and does little to acknowledge the actual histories of existing Indigenous peoples of the Americas prior to European immigration (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2021, pp. 4-11). Settler colonialism is pervasive in K-12 history and social studies classrooms by means of curriculum. In social studies education: “Curriculum is much more than subject matter knowledge—a collection of facts and generalizations from history and the social science disciplines to be passed on to students.



The curriculum is what students experience” (Ross, 2014; p. xi). One way in which settler colonialist ideals infiltrate social studies education is that curriculum tends to focus on historical Indigenous experiences while contemporary Indigenous issues and perspectives remain elusive (Journell, 2009; Sanchez, 2007; Shear et al., 2015). For example, Shear et al. surveyed state standards and found that many standards portray Indigenous peoples in a historical sense, but are rarely referred to in a modern-day context. Another misconception that pervades K-12 social studies is that settler colonialism is largely justified to students as necessary singular events toward progress, rather than as a systematic process of settler privilege and erasure of Indigenous peoples (Masta, 2018).

Textbooks and curriculum standards are other ways in which settler colonialism manifests itself in K-12 history and social studies classrooms. After examining history textbooks, scholars found that AI/ANs are less frequently mentioned than their settler counterparts (Stanton, 2014) and when AI/ANs are mentioned, even less attention is paid to AI/AN women and their histories (Padgett, 2015). In textbooks, violent events between settlers and Indigenous peoples are also more frequently depicted than peaceful ones (Stanton, 2014). Furthermore, Sanchez (2007) performed an evaluation of history textbooks and found that lower-ranking textbooks commonly omitted and/or distorted historical events relating to Indigenous peoples. For example, all of the textbooks examined by Sanchez depict AI/ANs as crossing the land bridge of Beringia and then migrating down into the Americas. This is a common misconception about AI/AN history frequently challenged by Indigenous scholars because “...multiple migrations took place

over the next millennia, not only across the ice-free corridor but also along the coast by boat” (Dunbar-Ortiz & Gilio-Whitaker, 2016, p. 22). Moreover, the history of the U.S. Indian boarding school era and cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples is largely excluded from history curriculum standards and textbooks. For instance, Shear et al. (2015) analyzed U.S. history and social studies standards for each state and found that most standards are oriented to pre-1900 historic portrayals of Indigenous peoples rather than modern ones. Not only that, but the term genocide was found to be almost entirely absent from standards aside from being once mentioned in Washington’s states standards (Shear et al., 2015, p. 87).

In terms of this dissertation study, I confront settler colonialism in K-12 social studies education by designing an evaluative tool that provides educational specialists a pathway for identifying potential social studies lesson plans that perpetuate settler colonialism (as well as ones that do not) prior to their addition to Montana’s IEFA curriculum repository.

### **Evaluation in K-12 Social Studies and American Indian/Alaskan Native Education**

The purpose of this review of literature was to examine the current landscape of evaluation, specifically evaluative rubrics, used in K-12 social studies education and how they intersect with AI/AN education. I conducted a systematic literature review (Newman & Gough, 2020) related to evaluation in K-12 social studies and AI/AN education. First, I identified guiding questions for my systematic review including: (1) What is known about evaluation, specifically evaluative rubrics, in American Indian/Alaskan Native

education? (2) What is known about evaluation in K-12 social studies education in relation to the topic of American Indian/Alaskan Native education? I explored the following databases including Education Source, Academic Search Ultimate, ERIC, APA PsycInfo, and Google Scholar.

Search terms were created using the thesaurus feature for each database. I used the following search terms: “Indigenous or Native or Aboriginal or Indians or First Nations,” “social studies education or curriculum,” “evaluation or evaluation method or analysis or evaluation criteria or measurement or rubric,” “K-12 or elementary school or middle school or high school or secondary school,” and “North America or Canada or U.S.” My original search yielded 208 articles, books, and gray literature. Next, I narrowed my search to include peer-reviewed articles published in the last twenty years. Additionally, I included only articles written and/or available in the English language and removed duplicate articles. After applying these inclusion criteria (see Table 3 for my inclusion and exclusion criteria), my search was narrowed down to 42 articles. Next, I screened the titles and abstracts of each article to determine if they aligned with my guiding questions. Three studies were available under these criteria. I provide a description of each study below.

First, Miles (2021) performed an analysis of curriculum documents as well as conducted interviews with curriculum writers to identify how political and social movements influenced the development of British Columbia’s (BC) new K-12 social studies curriculum. He found that BC’s new social studies curriculum specifically focuses on historical injustices and reconciliation including topics like residential schools. Miles

**Table 3***List Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Guiding Questions 1 & 2*

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Guiding Question #1: What is known about evaluation, specifically evaluative rubrics, in American Indian/Alaskan Native education?	
U.S. & Canada	Outside of the U.S. & Canada
Published since 2002	Published prior to 2002
Full text available	No full text available
Available in the English language	Not available in the English language
Guiding Question #2: What is known about evaluation in K-12 social studies education in relation to the topic of American Indian/Alaskan Native education?	
U.S. & Canada	Outside of the U.S. & Canada
Published since 2002	Published prior to 2002
Full Text Available	No full text available
Available in the English language	Not available in the English language

explains that while there may be more curricular focus on such topics, BC's new social studies curriculum rather "reinforces the notion that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada occupy separate realities" (p. 48). Instead, Miles argues for curriculum that challenges both the settler colonial foundations of Canada as well as white supremacy.

Second, Warner (2015) conducted a document analysis of social studies standards from 14 states to determine what is considered essential knowledge regarding AI/AN education. His findings were organized into the following six themes: (1) identification/classification of tribes, (2) distinct tribal cultures, (3) contributions to mainstream U.S. culture, (4) tribal government, (5) connection to environment, and (6) economics/occupations. For the theme of identification/classification of tribes, Warner found that

states, including Montana, require students to identify and name the tribes located in their state. The next theme of distinct tribal cultures was the most prevalent theme to emerge across state standards and involves having students gain knowledge of individual tribal cultures. The theme of contributions to mainstream U.S. culture references state standards that require students to learn about how AI/AN cultures have influenced U.S. culture. Next, the theme of tribal government/sovereignty relates to state standards that require students to gain knowledge of concepts relating to tribal governments, including tribal sovereignty. The tribal government/sovereignty theme relates to the concept of connection to environment which refers to state standards that require student to gain knowledge of AI/ANs as environmental stewards, which Warner argues is a stereotype (albeit a positive label). The last theme of economics/occupations relates to state standards that require knowledge of economic enterprises of AI/AN societies, including agriculture, gaming, and commercial fishing (Bergeson, 2009). Warner states,

While standards have significant influence upon curricula, they are not the only influences; as such, future researchers may consider analyses of district, school, and classroom curricula in order to develop a broader understanding of what K–12 students are learning about living American Indians. (p. 129).

Therefore, one aim of this dissertation study is to thematically analyze Montana’s IEFA curriculum for grades 3-5.

Finally, Halagao et al. (2009) developed an evaluative framework grounded in culturally responsive and critical pedagogies to assess Filipina/x/o American K-12 curriculum and pedagogy. Their framework, entitled the “Critical Framework of Review” (Halagao et al., 2009) was created with three key areas in mind including:

A. Critical Content: Content and usage of resources that challenged historical and

cultural hegemony through the centralization of Filipina/o American resistance and counter-hegemonic narratives.

- B. Critical Instruction: Instruction that implemented critical praxis in Filipina/o American and underserved communities. Instruction that engaged in conscientization, “deepening awareness of the social realities which shaped their lives and discovered their own capacities to recreate them (
- C. Critical Impact: Impact that happened at the individual and community levels—the building of the capacity of youth to read and transform themselves, their communities, and the world in which they live (Tintiango-Cubales et al, 2020, pp. 28-29).

These three key areas informed the development of a 20-question evaluative rubric (see Appendix A for a detailed version of their evaluative rubric). Subsequently, Tintiango-Cubales et al. used their framework to evaluate 33 Filipina/x/o American K-12 curricula. Key findings in relation to critical content related to curriculum that addressed counternarratives and controversial topics. As they evaluated curriculum for critical instruction, they observed various instructional methods ranging from direct instruction to more collaborative learning. In terms of critical impact, they observed most curriculum taught about Filipina/x/o ethnic pride. Last, Tintiango-Cubales et al. summarize how their evaluative rubric can be adapted to assess other historically marginalized groups (e.g., AI/AN populations).

Only three studies were located throughout this systematic literature review. As a result, the dearth of evaluative research pertaining to K-12 social studies and AI/AN education points to the relevance of this dissertation study.

### **Theoretical Orientation**

I orient my dissertation by merging two theoretical perspectives, namely

TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally-sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014), as an interdisciplinary frame for understanding how inclusive and decolonizing forms of evaluation can be realized and used for evaluating online K-12 curriculum resources that promote Indigenous education for all students. At first, I detail the history of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and provide an overview of its tenets. Next, I provide an overview of culturally-sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) as well as describe recent studies in the field of culturally sustaining/revitalizing education. I conclude my discussion with my overall rationale for choosing this interdisciplinary frame to inform my dissertation.

### **Roots of Tribal Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework that helps scholars and educators examine systemic racism (e.g., Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995). Additional lines of research, like Latino Critical Race Theory (e.g., Bernal, 2002; Espinoza, 1990), Asian Critical Race Theory (Chang, 1993), and TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005), have since emerged in the field of education to build upon CRT to inform how racism relates to other ethnic/racial groups in U.S. society.

### ***Historical Overview of Critical Race Theory***

Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholarship emerged in the 1970s in the disciplines of anthropology and legal studies as a framework for understanding how racism is systemically embedded in U.S. policies and legal systems. At the time, many feared the civil rights movement was losing momentum after experiencing numerous setbacks

including the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., continued violence from white supremacists, and the enactment of Jim Crow laws enforcing legal segregation and limiting the rights of Black voters (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Jones, 2002). Moreover, many Black American communities continued to experience *de facto* (defined by practice rather than law) segregation and discrimination despite *de jure* (defining by law or policy) segregation via judicial rulings and legislation (including the *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling which established racial segregation in public schools as unconstitutional). As a result, CRT gained traction in the 1980s and 1990s as both an academic and legal theoretical perspective, but also as a social and political movement that sought to transform how race and racism shape public policies, structures, and systems.

### ***Definition of Critical Race Theory***

CRT was first theorized in legal scholarship to interrogate race and racism while also committing to social justice (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995).

CRT attends to the following basic tenets:

Tenet 1) “Ordinariness” of racism

Tenet 2) Interest convergence (or material determinism)

Tenet 3) Race as a social construction

Tenet 4) Intersectionality and anti-essentialism

Tenet 5) Unique voice or counter-narrative (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11).

The first tenet of CRT addresses how racism is endemic in our society. Racism is often thought of as discrimination that only occurs during extreme circumstances. However,



racism is conceived by CRT scholars as discriminatory practices experienced by historically marginalized communities as normal occurrences throughout their everyday lives (e.g., Bell, 1991). As an example, Black Americans' experiences with systemic racism frequently leave them with less access to educational, health, and employment opportunities than their white peers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; D. R. Williams, 1999). CRT scholars also argue that racism is exceedingly difficult to address because it is so deeply ingrained within our traditions, institutions, and relationships.

Interest convergence (or material determinism) was introduced by Bell (1980, 2004), who is considered one of the founding members of CRT. The theory of interest convergence explains how a group majority only agrees if their interests align with interests of the group minority. In CRT, interest convergence explains how advancements for Black equality are only made when white policymakers also benefit from such measures. Bell (1980) applied the theory of interest convergence in relation to the *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling, and used it to describe how this ruling benefitted those who viewed that maintaining the appearance of American equality would bolster the U.S.' foreign relations with communist countries.

The third tenet of CRT asserts that race is socially, not biologically constructed. In other words, race and racism are products socially created and accepted within a given society. Smedley and Smedley (2005) explain that race is a "means of creating and enforcing social order, a lens through which differential opportunity and inequality are structured" (p. 24). Historically, physical characteristics have often been correlated with psychological and behavioral characteristics. While such ideas have been proven

inaccurate time and time again (e.g., Goodman, 2008), CRT scholars are forced to accept the unfortunate tenacity behind such thoughts among certain communities. Furthermore, critical race theorists argue that because race is social constructed, thoughts about a given race have the ability to change over time.

The concept of intersectionality (or anti-essentialism) is another central tenet of CRT. Intersectionality refers to the multiple points of overlapping discrimination people experience because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, and class. Intersectionality also explains how discrimination materializes within a complex system. Critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) first proposed intersectionality when she examined the multiple layers of discrimination Black women experience in antidiscrimination law court cases. Another part of the construct of intersectionality addresses anti-essentialism. Essentialism is the concept that a group of people share common thoughts and experiences just because they belong to the same group (e.g., A. P. Harris, 1990). Therefore, CRT is anti-essentialist in that it asserts that all individual and group experiences are different.

The last tenet of CRT attends to the unique voice of those who experience oppression. Delgado (1989, 1995), one of CRT's founders, argued for the use of unique voice in CRT, namely storytelling and counter-storytelling, as being instrumental in changing the mind-sets of those who perpetuate oppression. Critical race theorists often use story to demonstrate the power of race of racism in our society as well as to (re)center the unique voices of the oppressed. According to CRT scholars like Ladson-Billings (2021), it is problematic when a "story does not advance larger concerns or help us

understand how law or policy is operating” (p. 42). Instead, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) argue for counter-storytelling as a way for the oppressed to share their authentic experiences while also challenging master narratives (or majoritarian stories).

CRT is still used by contemporary scholars to examine and interrogate the relationships between power, race, and racism. Following the 20-year anniversary of CRT, Crenshaw (2011) argued that scholars must continue to confront race and racism in our society:

At the end of the day, there are limits to the degree that racial justice can be finessed; while bridges to white opinion can be built through analogies and commonalities, at some point the rubber meets the road and the specific burdens of race must be addressed. Concessions made to occupy only the space that is pragmatically useful limits the ability to explore possibilities not yet discovered, to tell stories and counternarratives that hold the possibilities of broadening rather than constraining the terrain of social discourse. (p. 1346)

In other words, racism is the crucial point of contact we must examine if we are to make any progress against the systems and structures that works against historically marginalized communities. In this previous section, I provided a historical overview of CRT and its early beginnings in anthropology and legal studies. In the next section, I address how since been asserted in other disciplines, namely the field of education.

### ***Critical Race Theory in Education***

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were among the first to propose critical race theoretical perspectives as a strategy to examine educational policies and practices and their continued contributions to racial inequalities. According to Ladson-Billings and Tate, CRT in education is based upon three propositions (or assertions).

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the U.S.

2. U.S. society is based on property rights.
3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity. (p. 48)

The first feature of CRT in education asserts that race and racism are regular and ongoing patterns throughout educational systems. Prior to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, educational outcomes were most often explained by genetic characteristics (or physical traits). However, beginning in the 1970s, critical race scholars argued that it was not genetics that was to blame for these educational inequalities, but rather it was race and racism (and the resulting problems of opportunity) that played a significant role in determining educational inequalities instead. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explain that while gender and class differences account for certain disparities in academic performance, it is race that provides an even more powerful explanation.

Another prominent theme of CRT in education explains how the structures and systems of U.S. society are based on property rights rather than human rights. Obtaining property (including people and land) has played a central role in both historical and contemporary U.S. society. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that obtaining the property of knowledge has also shaped society. After segregation was deemed unconstitutional via the *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling, many whites fled from cities to suburban areas (also referred to as “white flight”). This resulted in *de facto* (defined by practice rather than law) segregation.

The last proposition of CRT in education combines race and property as a lens for analyzing social inequalities, especially school inequalities. This assertion combines elements of the first and second propositions of CRT in education as discussed above.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that the construct of whiteness (or the “cultural practices of Whites”) is also a desirable property, and that whites have the *absolute right to exclude* (C. I. Harris 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). It is further argued that resegregation has occurred as evidenced by educational inequalities in property-poor school districts versus property-rich school districts. For example, property-poor schools have less access to enriched programming (e.g., gifted and talented programs) and advanced placement courses.

Since its inception, CRT has been used as a framework to examine discrimination experienced by historically marginalized students and educators in educational research and practice. For example, CRT scholars have used CRT to examine Chicano/Chicana education. Solórzano and Yosso (2001) used the CRT tenet of counter-storytelling to examine discrimination experienced by Chicano/Latinx graduate students, and found that many students experienced issues like survivor guilt and imposter syndrome. Later, Solórzano and Ornelas (2004) used CRT to examine Chicana/Latina access to advanced placement (AP) courses and observed that Chicana/Latina students are far less represented in AP courses than their white peers even though they may attend schools where there is greater access to AP courses overall. CRT has also been utilized to examine the Black experience within educational systems. For instance, Lynn (2002) interviewed Black teachers using CRT methods to explain how Black teachers view themselves as agents of change in their communities. Howard (2008) performed a case study of Black males using the CRT tenet of counter-storytelling. Howard observed from first-hand accounts that the Black males he interviewed were very aware of race and

racism tensions throughout their educational experiences. Each of the abovementioned studies examine different aspects of discrimination experienced by students from historically marginalized students across K-12 and/or higher education, which is an important consideration for Indigenous students who are also from historically marginalized communities in Montana.

In the field of education, CRT has also been used as a framework to examine studies of whiteness in education. In particular, CRT has been utilized to analyze how white pre-service teacher candidates and licensed teachers oftentimes perpetuate racism in classroom settings. For instance, Matias et al. (2014) utilized CRT and a framework known as Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) to examine how white pre-service teacher candidates appeared emotionally disinterested in learning about race and racism in their teacher education program. For example, many of the pre-service teacher candidates “denied that their white identity had a role in their classrooms or life experiences” (Matias et al., 2014, p. 297). Additionally, Miller and Harris (2018) used CRT to examine commonly held beliefs of white teachers about their students of color. For example, white teachers frequently believe they are colorblind and purposely avoid the discussion of race in their classrooms. Instead, Miller and Harris argue that white teachers must become white allies who regularly confront white supremacy and white privilege in their classrooms, which “requires white educators to remain vulnerable, rejecting (their) white privilege and challenging the inequities when we recognize them” (Miller & Harris, 2014, p. 10). Another critical concept to arise in the field of CRT education is the notion of “whiteness as property” (Harris, 1993), which asserts whiteness as both a racial

identity and property interest. Gillies (2022) used CRT and whiteness as property as a lens to analyze 13 Métis teachers' experiences of racism in K-12 education. In their findings, Gillies described how white teachers and students treated Indigenous students more positively when the Indigenous students demonstrated characteristics representative of white culture (e.g., athleticism). These studies illustrate that white teachers, albeit oftentimes well-intentioned, can still perpetuate biases and racism in their classrooms. This is especially important to recognize when working with white teachers in the state of Montana as scholars work to create more equitable, inclusive, and decolonizing Indigenous education curriculum.

CRT continues to evolve and has been used by scholars across various educational fields, disciplines, and sub-disciplines. CRT has been utilized as an analytical framework in the discipline area of science. Mensah (2019) employed a longitudinal case study design to provide a detailed account of a Black female teacher in science education. One of the findings from this particular study pointed to how educational and emotional support provided to the Black teacher throughout her experience allowed for her to succeed in her teacher education program. Scholars in the discipline area of mathematics have also utilized CRT as a way of understanding how racism has shaped the field of mathematics education. Jett (2009) used CRT as a framework for examining mathematical experiences of Black students in undergraduate mathematics education and explored how each student had obtained access to college mathematics. Another discipline area in which CRT has been asserted includes English language arts education. As an example, L. L. Johnson (2018) used autoethnography and the CRT technique of

counter-storying to share his experiences as a Black ELA teacher in education.

Meanwhile, CRT has expanded to other forms of scholarship including social studies education.

### ***Critical Race Theory in Social Studies Education***

More recently, scholars have used CRT in education to critically examine discrimination in social studies education (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2003). In 2003, Ladson-Billings provided an overview of how CRT is being used in social studies research. Busey et al. (2022) performed a systematic review of how CRT has been used a theoretical framework in social studies education over a period of 15 years (from 2004 to 2019), and found that scholars have applied CRT perspectives in social studies educational research across three key areas (1) teaching race, (2) learning to teach race, and (3) race and curriculum.

**Teaching race.** According to Busey et al. (2022), the most popular focus of CRT scholars in social studies education is the examination of how race is taught in U.S. schools. Within this area of study, certain CRT scholars examined the perspectives and experiences of teachers from historically marginalized backgrounds who teach race and racism. For instance, Castro et al. (2015) performed a case study analysis of a social studies high school teacher and documented his experiences teaching race and racism in his elective courses, especially his class regarding African American history. Mr. Diego de la Viga, the teacher portrayed in Castro et al. case study, worked hard to establish a culture of trust in his classroom in order to create a safe space for critical racial dialogues, which composed a large percentage of his time with students. An important finding of



their study pointed to the lack of connectedness students and other teachers felt with one another, and that this also accounted for the lack of connectedness the school administrators demonstrated when they observed and interacted with his elective courses teaching about race and racism.

**Learning to teach race.** Additionally, Busey et al. (2022) found the least common focus of CRT scholars in social studies education is the examination of how pre-service educators learn how to teach about race and racism in their future classrooms. Of the 59 studies examined, only eight accounted for the teaching of race and racism in social studies classrooms. As an example, scholars like An (2018) and Buchanan (2016) studied how white pre-service teachers learned how to teach about racism. An explored how elementary pre-service teachers engaged in a model lesson about segregation while Buchanan performed a case study analysis of 17 pre-service teachers and how they examined counter-narratives of racism in documentaries. Other studies addressed how preservice teachers from historically marginalized communities learn about how to teach about racism. For instance, Rodríguez and Salinas (2019) conducted a case study of bilingual social studies methods course and identified how preservice educators engaged with the sharing of their experiences with regard to topics of immigration and biculturalism.

**Race and curriculum.** Less than half of the 59 studies examined by Busey et al. (2022) were found to address the intersection of race and curriculum ( $n = 20$ ). In their systematic literature review, seven studies were found to address race in textbooks while another seven studies addressed race in curriculum standards and supporting documents.

For example, one study that examined how race was addressed in historical textbooks was conducted by Pellegrino et al. (2013) who performed a textbook analysis of secondary history textbooks regarding the extent they covered African American segregation in education. As a result of their analysis, they found that while the majority of the textbooks they examined provided historical coverage of the African American educational experience, many of the textbooks did not attend to contemporary coverage of African American educational experiences. An example of how race was studied across curriculum standards was conducted by Bryant-Pavely and Chandler (2016) who examined Ohio's American history curriculum using a critical race theory lens. They found that Ohio's American history curriculum widely ignores the concepts of race and racism, but instead attends to the "American master narrative of progress" (Bryant-Pavely & Chandler, 2016, p. 25). Of the 59 studies examined by Busey et al. (2019), very few of the studies examined discussed how CRT has been utilized in relation to AI/AN histories and how they are being taught in social studies education.

***CRT and Teaching About American Indians/  
Alaskan Natives in Social Studies***

Chandler (2010) used CRT to examine race in social studies classrooms and argued that much of what CRT covers is the experiences of African-Americans. Instead, Chandler argues that educators who are discussing race-based thinking must first address the experiences of Indigenous peoples in American history. Chandler also calls attention to the fact that many history textbooks do not attend to the following critical questions.

1. What role did settler's ideas about race play in their actions against Native people?

2. What role did religion play in the construction of the racialized Other?
3. How did whites who committed atrocities against Natives justify their actions? Do these reasons for acting justify their actions? (Chandler, 2010, p. 44)

Moreover, Chandler discusses ways in which we can use CRT in the social studies classroom to teach about AI/AN history. For example, he often has students read about the *Indian Removal Act of 1830* so they can begin to understand how the federal government has historically treated AI/ANs. Krueger (2019) also offers suggestions for how teachers can teach about the experiences of Indigenous peoples in American history. For example, he provides a list of free online resources (including Montana's IEFA curriculum) available for teachers to use when teaching about AI/AN histories and perspectives. Most importantly, Krueger (2019, 2021) asserts that educators should use TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005), an offshoot of CRT, to inform how Indigenous histories and perspectives are taught in their social studies classrooms. He explains, "The use of TribalCrit means normative history can be taken to task by privileging Native American epistemologies and lived experiences to engage Indigenous perspectives" (Krueger, 2021, p. 85). Therefore, I investigate how Indigenous perspectives and histories are currently being represented in Montana's IEFA online curriculum repository using a TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) lens in order to combat normative social studies education practices and further privilege AI/AN epistemologies.

### ***Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education***

Many educators remain resistant to teaching Indigenous histories and perspectives in their classrooms (Scott & Gani, 2018). For example, educators may be resistant

because they are unaware of how to teach Indigenous histories and perspectives (Milne, 2017). One way in which educators can become less resistant is to have educators engage in professional learning opportunities where they can “re-conceptualize” their relationship with Indigenous individuals and their communities (Scott & Gani, 2018). For instance, Hopkins (2020) discusses the importance of having educators “learn how to become partners with tribal nations in the struggle to strengthen tribal sovereignty and promote cultural and linguistic revitalization strategies in their classrooms, schools, and districts” (Hopkins, 2020). Educators can also use TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) to privilege Indigenous epistemologies in their classrooms (Krueger, 2019).

Brayboy (2005) argued for TribalCrit as an analytic tool in the field of education for addressing the unique needs and epistemologies of Indigenous peoples and their intricate relationships with the U.S. federal government. Formal education has shifted among Indigenous communities to provide opportunities for Indigenous students to learn “how to combine Indigenous notions of culture, knowledge, and power with western/ European conceptions in order to actively engage in survivance, self-determination, and tribal autonomy” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 437). The nine tenets of TribalCrit focus on Tribal-specific issues such as colonization, the space of liminality, or “space of inbetweenness” (p. 432), AI/AN peoples occupy as political and racialized entities, and the need for Indigenous peoples to self-govern (p. 432). I further outline and define each of the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) in the following pages.

### **Tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory**

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (Brayboy, 2005; pp. 429-430)

The first tenet relates to colonization, or the act or process of settling and establishing power over Indigenous peoples. Colonization has become endemic as this process continues to dominate many aspects of U.S. society today including education (Battiste, 2002; Brayboy, 2005; Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). According to Lomawaima (1999), “Historically, the goals of the colonial education of American Indians have been to transform Indian people and societies and to eradicate Indian self-government, self-determination, and self-education” (p. 4). Brayboy (2005) describes how the use of colonial education is to make Indigenous peoples more like their colonizers. Therefore,

the use of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) as a theoretical framework in education is meant to challenge colonialism (Krueger, 2021).

The next tenet, tenet 2, refers to how U.S. policies, or the courses or principles of action adopted or proposed by the federal government, are based in imperialism. This means that many U.S. policies are based upon land acquisition and material gains (Brayboy, 2005; R. Williams, 1987, 1989). Imperialism serves as extension of an authority power over another entity (e.g., territory, colony, or nation), and the mechanisms of control are typically political, economic, and social in nature (Wright, 1967). In the case of American imperialism, the authority power is the U.S. and the territories are those of Indigenous communities like those located in the region of Montana (e.g., Burns, 2017; Ninkovich, 2001).

The third tenet refers to the liminality experienced by American Indians. The term liminality is often used to describe how an entity occupies a position on both sides of a predetermined boundary. In the case of American Indians, the concept of liminality relates to the state of being in between or “inbetweeness” American Indians experience as political/legal and racialized beings (Brayboy, 2005, p. 432). Brayboy (2005, 2021) describes how American Indians are often a part of American society, but never fully integrated:

In this instance, lack of citizenship and “tribal race” became factors that framed American Indians as separate and excluded from conversations of belonging and at the mercy of others’ decision-making. The resulting decisions come to dictate every aspect of our lives, including how we can/must live, eat, worship, and teach and educate our children, including the language we use to communicate with one another. (Brayboy, 2021, p. 90)

The lack of full integration of American Indians within American society also contributes

to the invisibility (or sometimes “negative visibility”) experienced by American Indians (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy & Searle, 2007).

The fourth tenet states that “Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). This tenet refers to the right of American Indians to govern themselves and make decisions regarding their own nations. Tribal autonomy is the right of American Indian tribes to self-govern over their lands and resources. Self-determination refers to when American Indian tribes exercise their rights of self-government and make their own decisions, while self-identification refers how a tribe determines citizenship. According to Cobb (2005), sovereignty encompasses “a nation's power to self-govern, to determine its own way of life, and to live that life—to whatever extent possible—free from interference” (p. 118) which is no different for tribal sovereignty. When tribes obtain and forge tribal autonomy, self-determination and self-identification, they are ultimately engaging in tribal sovereignty (Brayboy, 2005).

The next tenet, tenet 5, addresses the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power and how they are conceptualized among Indigenous societies. This tenet reflects a conscious shift away from dominant Eurocentric forms of culture, knowledge, and power in favor of Indigenous notions of culture, knowledge, and power. According to Brayboy (2005), culture is “like an anchor in the ocean,” as it is both dynamic and constant in an ever-changing environment (p. 434). TribalCrit addresses at least three different forms of knowledge including cultural knowledge, knowledge of survival, and academic knowledge. Cultural knowledge refers the understanding of customs and traditions for a

particular tribal nation. Knowledge of survival is the ability to sustain life. Academic knowledge is a form of knowledge acquired from learning in a more formal learning environment like school. Knowledge and power are directly related. Brayboy argues: “This strategic use of multiple forms of knowledge generates power that is situated, dynamic, and historically influenced” (p. 435). Indigenous power is oftentimes achieved through cultural survival and acquisition of multiple forms of knowledge within communities (Brayboy, 2005).

The sixth tenet relates to principles of action adopted by the U.S. government or educational programs which are assimilative in nature, meaning they are intended to force Indigenous peoples to adopt western practices. The boarding school era in the U.S. serves as an example of forced assimilation. The U.S. funded more than 400 Indian boarding schools from the 1800s until the 1960s (e.g., Adams, 1995; U.S. Department of the Interior, 2022). Federal boarding schools “were designed to separate a child from his reservation and family, strip him of his tribal lore and mores, force the complete abandonment of his native language, and prepare him for never again returning to his people” (U.S. Congress Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 1969, p. 12). However, boarding schools are only one mechanism for assimilating American Indians. There have been countless other policies meant to eradicate American Indian culture since before European contact.

The seventh tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) states: “Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and



adaptability among individuals and groups” (p. 429). This tenet acknowledges Indigenous peoples’ ability to adjust, survive, and thrive since time immemorial. American Indians also support individual and community diversity as they strive toward Indigenous futures. An example of a tribal philosophy might be that of nature-culture relations, or the interconnectedness of humans with their animal, plant, and ancestral relations. For example, Barajas-López and Bang (2018) describe the importance of having Indigenous youth attend to nature-culture relations when they participated in an Indigenous science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) program. In this study, one of their program facilitators, Miguel, expressed being able to interact with his ancestors while engaging in the practice of claymaking.

The eighth tenet recognizes Indigenous storytelling as legitimate productions of knowledge. For Indigenous societies, stories have the same explanatory power that theories do in western societies (Brayboy, 2005). The act of storytelling within Indigenous communities communicates shared knowledge. There is a significant difference between listening and actually “hearing” stories however (Brayboy, 2005; Battiste, 2002; Burkhart, 2004). Brayboy states: “Listening is part of going through the motions of acting engaged and allowing individuals to talk. Hearing stories means that value is attributed to them and both the authority and the nuance of stories are understood” (p. 440). Archibald (2008) explains the importance of using protocols when engaging in Indigenous storytelling. In her work, she developed a framework for engaging in storytelling called *storywork* which includes the principles of respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, holism, inter-relatedness, and synergy. For

example, the principle of reciprocity demonstrates the importance of giving back after receiving the gift of story. Sometimes the principle of reciprocity in relation to *storywork* has been referred to as intergenerational learning (Archibald, 2008; J. B. Ross, 2016).

The final tenet relates concepts of theory and practice and encourages scholars to be aware of their interrelatedness as they work with Indigenous communities. Scholars should also promote and realize tribal self-determination and sovereignty. Brayboy asserts that TribalCrit demands action or activism in which theory becomes change by stating: “TribalCrit must be praxis at its best” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 440). This tenet encourages educators to work in ways that also decenter colonization and assimilation.

### **Roots of Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy**

Currently, asset-based pedagogies are increasingly being used in classrooms across the U.S. to help educators and students understand the value of including diverse perspectives and histories as well as focus on the strengths (e.g., their own assets) they bring to the classroom. The frameworks for many existing asset-based pedagogies are built upon the key principles of culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995a) which promotes the academic success of students while also affirming their cultural identities and challenging institutional inequities. Additional lines of research, like culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002, 2010), culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), and culturally sustaining/revitalizing teaching (McCarty & Lee, 2014), have built upon essential criteria of culturally relevant pedagogy to inform the field of education over the past two decades. In the following pages, I provide

overviews of culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies and then define culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy and how I aim to use it in this study.

### ***Overview of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy***

Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995a) was conceptualized around the same time Ladson-Billings and Tate were also writing about critical race theory in education. Culturally relevant pedagogy urges the engagement of diverse learners who are not a part of the mainstream culture. Ladson-Billings proposed three tenets (or criteria) for culturally relevant pedagogy.

- a) Students must experience academic success;
- b) Students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and
- c) Students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160)

Ladson-Billings argues that culturally relevant methods of teaching must also allow for students to develop their academic skills while also helping them to, “recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 476).

Culturally relevant pedagogy encourages students to maintain their own cultural identity while also learning to become culturally competent (or culturally grounded) individuals. Additionally, culturally relevant pedagogy allows for learners to develop a critical consciousness (which refers to a student’s ability to think critically and dialogue about structural inequality).

Twenty years later, Ladson-Billings explained her rationale for her adoption of culturally sustaining pedagogy instead of culturally relevant pedagogy stating: “Despite the apparent popularity of culturally relevant teaching, I have grown increasingly

dissatisfied with what seems to a static conception of what it means to be culturally relevant” (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Ladson-Billings explained that just as culture is fluid and changes over time, so the does the very scholarship that examines culture. Therefore, I provide a brief overview of culturally-sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) in the following section.

### ***Overview of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy***

In 2012, culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) emerged as a key asset-based pedagogy in resistance to “dehumanizing deficit approaches to education” (Paris, 2012, p. 96). CSP is rooted in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies. Paris explains, “Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (p. 93). CSP further extends culturally relevant methods of teaching to attend to the languages and literacies of other cultures. CSP also encourages students to develop both static and evolving aspects of their own cultures (Alim & Paris, 2017).

Thereafter, McCarty and Lee (2014) argued that despite such resistance, acts of cultural and language revitalization are not always attended to when working with American Indian students. McCarty and Lee explain,

Western schooling has been the crucible in which these contested desires have been molded, impacting Native peoples in ways that have separated their identities from their languages, lands, and worldviews. (p. 103)

Consequently, culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (CSRPs) was developed as an extension of culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies when working with American Indian learners. CSRPs is grounded in CSP, but additionally points to the need to reclaim

and ensure the continuation of what has been previously colonized in Indigenous communities.

***Definition of Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy***

CSRP is grounded in culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP), but additionally points to the need to reclaim and ensure the continuation of what has been previously colonized in Indigenous communities. McCarty and Lee (2014) share two case studies after having conducted ethnographic studies of language learning in Indigenous communities in the U.S. Their studies were ethnographic and praxis driven. As a result, their findings led to the inception of CSRP. Culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP) includes three major strategies when working with American Indian learners: (1) attendance to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization, (2) reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultural practices, and (3) recognition of community-based accountability (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Another crucial aspect of CSRP is that diverse perspectives and histories must be centered across all curricula, rather than a single unit or lesson.

The first strategy of CSRP is the attendance to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization. McCarty and Lee (2014) argue that tribal sovereignty must include educational sovereignty. Tribal sovereignty refers to the rights of tribal nations to govern themselves (e.g., Brayboy, 2005) whereas educational sovereignty refers to the rights of tribal nations to define and determine what they deem as education for Indigenous students (e.g., Moll & Ruiz, 2005). Brayboy and colleagues (2015) describe: “Because of

their unique status and history, Indigenous peoples engage in education differently from other national and social groups” (p. 5). When American Indians engage in educational sovereignty, they reclaim their educational practices that were once colonized. As such, the first strategy of CSRP is to attend to power relations and decolonization.

The second strategy of CSRP is about reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultural practices. Moll and Ruiz (2005) argue,

Educational sovereignty requires that communities create their own infrastructures for development, including mechanisms for the education for their children that capitalize on rather than devalue their cultural resources. (p. 17)

A key cultural resource for children is their ability to speak Indigenous languages.

Therefore, we must include infrastructures that allow for students to utilize their Indigenous languages among other cultural resources.

Last, CSRP recognizes community-based accountability. Brayboy (2005) argues for scholars to work with Indigenous communities at the praxis of change. Attending to the 4 R’s of respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships when working with Indigenous communities serves as a mechanism for practicing accountability when working with Indigenous communities (Brayboy et al., 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). McCarty and Lee (2014) further explain that working with Indigenous communities in education requires a balance of maintaining local and federal requirements while also meeting the needs defined by the Indigenous community. In the following section, I provide my rationale for using tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014) as part of my theoretical framing for this study.

### **Rationale for Theoretical Orientation**

I chose to work with TribalCrit (2005) to answer my design objective and research questions because the tenets of this framework recognize Indigenous ways of knowing as central to conversations involving the teachings of their own perspectives and histories. More specifically, Indigenous ways of knowing should be central to teachings in U.S. classrooms, particularly in the discipline of social studies, as a means to challenge colonialism (Krueger, 2021). I also chose to work with culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) to answer my design objective and research questions because asset-based pedagogies have been utilized to focus on the strengths that other cultures bring to the classroom. Culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogical approaches (McCarty & Lee, 2014) are promising strategies for legitimizing and sustaining other ways of knowing, yet prevailing domination of Eurocentric cultural ideals across education also require further decolonization (Patel, 2015; Smith, 1999). Furthermore, many teachers remain unsure of how such culturally sustaining and decolonizing pedagogical practices are actualized in today's classrooms (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Stanton, 2019). Additionally, scholars are beginning to examine and articulate decolonization practices in social studies education (Shear & Krutka, 2019; Stanton, 2019) because settler colonialism continues to permeate K-12 education (e.g., Masta, 2018). Therefore, the combination of perspectives regarding culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) and TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) serve as a foundation to this study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

The focus of this chapter is twofold. First, I discuss the methods I used to thematically analyze (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) Montana's IEFA online curriculum repository for third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum. Second, I explain how I used DBR (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014) to design a TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSR; McCarty & Lee, 2014) informed rubric for evaluating social studies lesson plans in terms of how well they align with decolonizing and culturally sustaining pedagogies. This chapter is divided into two major sections including: (1) research design and (2) summary. In the first section, I detail each portion of my research design including the research context, data sources, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and researcher positionality. In the second section, I provide a summary of my overall research design.

#### **Research Design**

The present study used qualitative research methodologies to address my research questions (Glesne, 2016). The research design consisted of two phases (see Table 4). Phase 1 aligns with my first and second research questions while phase 2 aligns with my design objective. For the first phase, I utilized reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) to immerse myself in the data, find patterns, and make connections across the dataset. For the second phase, I utilized the findings from



**Table 4**

*Alignment of Research Questions/Design Objective, Data Sources, and Data Analysis*

Research questions	Constructs	Primary data sources	Data analysis	Phase
1. How are tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) represented in Montana's <i>Indian Education for All</i> repository for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum?	Tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005)	Montana's IEFA lesson plans for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum Reflexive journal entries (Braun & Clarke, 2022)	Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013)	Phase 1
2. How are tenets of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) represented in Montana's <i>Indian Education for All</i> repository for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum?	Components of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014)	Montana's IEFA lesson plans for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum Reflexive journal entries (Braun & Clarke, 2022)	Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013)	Phase 1
Design objective	Constructs	Primary data sources	Design methodology	Phase
1. Synthesizing findings from RQ1 and RQ2, design an initial rubric for educational specialists to evaluate how well Montana's <i>Indian Education for All</i> curriculum align with tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014).	Tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) Components of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014)	Findings from RQ1 and RQ2 Literature related to TribaCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) Montana's IEFA lesson plans for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum Rubric for Evaluating Indian Education for All Curriculum (Schmid et al., 2006, p. 59)	Design-based research (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014)	Phase 2

my research questions as well as design-based research methods (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014) to create a theory-informed evaluative rubric intended to identify criteria for how well critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogical features are represented across social studies lesson plans. Because this work takes place in the context of design-based research (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014), future iterations of my theory-informed rubric will be adapted and tested with community stakeholders.

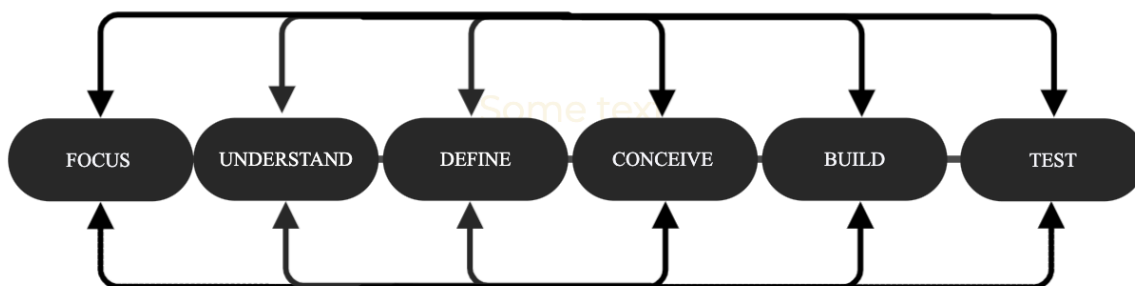
Reflexive thematic analysis (RTA; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) was used for the first phase of my qualitative research design to address my first and second research questions. RTA is a qualitative analysis technique that allows researchers to focus on text and meaning as they gain deep familiarity with the data, critically engage with the data, and identify patterns across the dataset while also participating in the reflexive journaling process (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The application of RTA permitted analysis informed by themes generated from TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and critically sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP; McCarty & Lee, 2014). Moreover, the practice of reflexivity encourages researchers to “consider the *politics* of our research process, and the knowledge we produce, as well as just interrogating our own positions” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, pp. 13-14). Reflexive journaling (Braun & Clarke, 2022) further prompted deep reflexivity as well as the interrogation of researcher positionality.

Design-based research methods (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al. 2014) were utilized for the second phase of my qualitative research design. DBR is an iterative and systematic research methodology frequently used to develop solutions to educational

problems while also informing theory (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014). Easterday et al. (2014) identified a six-stage iterative process for conducting DBR (see Figure 1) including: *focus* the problem, *understand* the problem, *define* goals, *conceive* the outline of the solution, *build* the solution, and *test* the solution. I engaged in these stages of DBR (Easterday et al., 2014) as a systematic way to create an initial rubric intended for educational specialists as they continue to evaluate, build, and refine Montana's IEFA online repository for social studies curriculum. In future work, I plan to work with Montana's IEFA community as well as Indigenous communities located across the state of Montana in designing future iterations of this rubric beyond the scope of this dissertation study.

**Figure 1**

*Six-Stage Iterative Process for Conducting Design-Based Research*



*Note.* This figure was adapted from the Easterday et al. (2014) DBR process.

## Context

States like Montana have started to create online repositories for their Indigenous education curriculum including lessons plans and other resources like videos and poster series. Montana's OPI was among one of the first states in the U.S. to create an online

repository of IEFA curriculum resources targeting specific grade levels and core disciplines (Montana OPI, n.d.). This form of knowledge repository (Carroll et al., 2003) was curated and vetted by Montana's educational specialists and posted online for educators to use in their classrooms. Since then, other states like Oregon and Washington have designed similar versions of their own Indigenous education curriculum repositories (e.g., Oregon Department of Education, n.d.). Additionally, a national level online repository of lesson plans and resources was created by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (Native Knowledge 360° Education Initiative, n.d.).

The focus of this study was primarily on Montana's IEFA repository for third-through fifth-grade social studies curriculum, namely lesson plans ([https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/ Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources#852719245-grades-3-5](https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources#852719245-grades-3-5)). My rationale for including the discipline area of social studies is because the NCSS acknowledges the need for social studies curriculum to recognize and affirm Indigenous nations as sovereign and distinct in both a historical and present-day context (NCSS Position Statement, 2018). Montana's IEFA website consists of featured resources like lesson plans, featured publications, and virtual professional development opportunities for educators. IEFA's curriculum resources are divided into categories based on core disciplines like mathematics, science, and social studies and grade levels. For example, social studies curriculum resources are broken down into grade bands spanning preK–2nd, 3rd–5th, 6th–8th, and 9th–12th grades. For this particular site, social studies curriculum resources consist of lesson plans, videos, links to websites, links to YouTube videos, and primary source documents

targeting each grade band. I focused solely on 3rd–5th grade social studies lesson plans within the context of this study.

To address my research questions, I utilized an existing dataset of third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum resources, specifically lesson plans, located in Montana’s IEFA online curriculum repository (Montana OPI, n.d.). As an example, a lesson plan entitled, “Histories of Montana Indian Tribes – Creating a Timeline,” encourages 4th grade students to conduct research of Montana’s tribal histories and develop a timeline based upon key events and time periods (e.g., pre-contact) described in the book *The People Shall Continue* (Ortiz, 1977). See Table 5 for a link to this lesson plan located on Montana’s IEFA website.

### **Data Sources**

Only lesson plans located in Montana’s IEFA repository for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum were analyzed. For my analysis, inclusion criteria were that IEFA lesson plans must be assigned to grades 3–5 social studies. IEFA lesson plans that were not assigned to grades 3–5 social studies were excluded from my analysis. IEFA lesson plans added to Montana’s IEFA online repository after May 15, 2022, were also excluded from analysis. The data sources consist of 34 total third- through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans (10 lesson plans for third grade, 9 lesson plans for fourth grade, and 8 lesson plans for fifth grade) located in Montana’s IEFA online curriculum repository. Seven of these lesson plans target multiple grade levels. See Table 5 for a detailed list of the lessons plans that were included for analysis in this study.

**Table 5***Montana's IEFA Third- Through Fifth-Grade Social Studies Lesson Plans*

Title of lesson plan	Grade level(s)	Link to lesson plan
A Cheyenne Community Calendar <sup>a</sup>	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/Bringing%20the%20Story%20of%20the%20Cheyenne%20People%20to%20the%20Children%20of%20Today.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/Bringing%20the%20Story%20of%20the%20Cheyenne%20People%20to%20the%20Children%20of%20Today.pdf</a>
Learning Steps in an Inquiry Process	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Steps%20Inquiry%20Process%20-%20g3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Steps%20Inquiry%20Process%20-%20g3.pdf</a>
Montana Indians Differ in Language and Culture	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Differ%20in%20Lang%20Culture%20-%20g3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Differ%20in%20Lang%20Culture%20-%20g3.pdf</a>
Montana Indians—Past, Traditions, and History	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Past%20Tradition%20%26%20Histy%20-%20g3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Past%20Tradition%20%26%20Histy%20-%20g3.pdf</a>
Montana Reservation Governments	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/MT%20Reservation%20Govment%20-%20g3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/MT%20Reservation%20Govment%20-%20g3.pdf</a>
Stereotypes	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Stereotypes%20-%20G3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Stereotypes%20-%20G3.pdf</a>
Strategic Reader: Making Decisions Every Day	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Making%20DecisionsEveryDay%20-%20g3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Making%20DecisionsEveryDay%20-%20g3.pdf</a>
The Reservations: Learning About Many Montana Indian Cultures	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/The%20Reservations%20learning%20about%20Many%20Cultures%20-%20G3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/The%20Reservations%20learning%20about%20Many%20Cultures%20-%20G3.pdf</a>
The Seven Indian Reservations of Montana	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Seven%20Reservations%20-%20G3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Seven%20Reservations%20-%20G3.pdf</a>
What Causes Conflicts Among People?	Grade 3	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/What%20Causes%20Conflicts%20-%20G3.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/What%20Causes%20Conflicts%20-%20G3.pdf</a>
Differences Among Montana Tribes—Cultures, Traditions, Government	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G4%20Diffnces%20Amng%20Mt%20Tribe.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G4%20Diffnces%20Amng%20Mt%20Tribe.pdf</a>
Governmental Responsibilities: Community, Tribal, State, Federal	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Government%20Responsibilty%20-%20G4.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Government%20Responsibilty%20-%20G4.pdf</a>
Histories of Montana Indian Tribes—Creating a Timeline	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Histories_Montana_Tribes_G4.pdf?ver=2022-04-04-161808-500">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Histories_Montana_Tribes_G4.pdf?ver=2022-04-04-161808-500</a>

*(table continues)*

Title of lesson plan	Grade level(s)	Link to lesson plan
Identifying Stereotypes and Countering Them	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Identify%20Stereotypes%20and%20Counter%20-%20G4.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Identify%20Stereotypes%20and%20Counter%20-%20G4.pdf</a>
Indian Heroes and Role Models	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Indian%20Heroes%20-%20G4.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Indian%20Heroes%20-%20G4.pdf</a>
Making Decisions Based on Best Information	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Make%20Decision_Best%20Info%20-%20G4.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Make%20Decision_Best%20Info%20-%20G4.pdf</a>
Strategic Skill: Evaluating Information Quality Using Electronic Sources	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Evaluating%20Info%20Quality%20using%20Elec%20Sources-%20g4.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Evaluating%20Info%20Quality%20using%20Elec%20Sources-%20g4.pdf</a>
Using Maps to Learn About Montana Reservations and Tribes	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Using%20Maps%20-%20G4.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Using%20Maps%20-%20G4.pdf</a>
What's in a Name? <sup>a</sup>	Grade 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/Bringing%20the%20Story%20of%20the%20Cheyenne%20People%20to%20the%20Children%20of%20Today.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/Bringing%20the%20Story%20of%20the%20Cheyenne%20People%20to%20the%20Children%20of%20Today.pdf</a>
Ancestral Lands and Places: The Sweetgrass Hills of Montana	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G5%20Ancestral%20Lands-Places.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G5%20Ancestral%20Lands-Places.pdf</a>
Effects of Fur Trapping on Tribes	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G5%20Effects%20of%20Fur%20Trapping.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G5%20Effects%20of%20Fur%20Trapping.pdf</a>
Geography of Montana Indian Reservations	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G5%20Geography%20MT%20Reservat.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/G5%20Geography%20MT%20Reservat.pdf</a>
Learning About American Indian Oral Traditions	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Learning%20about%20Montana%20Indian%20Oral%20Traditions%20-%20G5.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Learning%20about%20Montana%20Indian%20Oral%20Traditions%20-%20G5.pdf</a>
Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Sovereignty%20What%20does%20it%20mean_Northern%20Cheyenne%20Tribe%20-%20g5.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Sovereignty%20What%20does%20it%20mean_Northern%20Cheyenne%20Tribe%20-%20g5.pdf</a>
Symbols of Our People <sup>a</sup>	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/Bringing%20the%20Story%20of%20the%20Cheyenne%20People%20to%20the%20Children%20of%20Today.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/Bringing%20the%20Story%20of%20the%20Cheyenne%20People%20to%20the%20Children%20of%20Today.pdf</a>
The Purposes of Tribal Government	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Purposes%20of%20Tribal%20Government%20-%20G5.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Purposes%20of%20Tribal%20Government%20-%20G5.pdf</a>

(table continues)

Title of lesson plan	Grade level(s)	Link to lesson plan
Tribal Land Features and Tribal Connection to Land	Grade 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Tribal%20Land%20Features%20-%20G5.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Tribal%20Land%20Features%20-%20G5.pdf</a>
American Indians in the Military- A Warrior Spirit	Grades 4, 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Warrior_Spirit_Lesson_G4-5.pdf?ver=2021-11-03-142957-493">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/3-5/Warrior_Spirit_Lesson_G4-5.pdf?ver=2021-11-03-142957-493</a>
Sun and Moon <sup>c</sup>	Grades 3, 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Crow%20Astronomy.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Crow%20Astronomy.pdf</a>
The Woman Who Married a Star <sup>b</sup>	Grades 3, 4	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Blackfeet%20Astronomy.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Blackfeet%20Astronomy.pdf</a>
Scarface <sup>b</sup>	Grades 4, 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Blackfeet%20Astronomy.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Blackfeet%20Astronomy.pdf</a>
The Seven Stars: The Story of the Seven Bulls <sup>c</sup>	Grades 4, 5	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Crow%20Astronomy.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Crow%20Astronomy.pdf</a>
The Bunched Stars <sup>b</sup>	Grades 4, 5, 6	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Blackfeet%20Astronomy.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Blackfeet%20Astronomy.pdf</a>
The Twins and the Hand Star <sup>c</sup>	Grades 4, 5, 6	<a href="https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Crow%20Astronomy.pdf">https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Science/Crow%20Astronomy.pdf</a>

*Note.* This table contains the title and grade level associated with each lesson plan as well as the link to the lesson plan on the Montana IEFA website.

<sup>a</sup> Represents grade-level specific lesson plans located within a larger lesson plan entitled: “Bringing the Story of the Cheyenne People to the Children of Today” (pp. 42-55).

<sup>b</sup> Represents grade-level specific lesson plans located within a larger lesson plan entitled: “Montana Skies: Blackfeet Astronomy (pp. 7-35).

<sup>c</sup> Represents grade-level specific lesson plans located within a larger lesson plan entitled: “Montana Skies: Crow Astronomy (pp. 7-37).

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for each research question was guided by qualitative methods (Glesne, 2016). According to Glesne, one of the possibilities of qualitative inquiry is that the researcher’s “interpretations can point out significances, meanings, and critiques that, through your representation, can inspire others to perceive, value, or act in different ways” (p. 26). Hence, I drew upon select qualitative data resources to address my research questions as well as inspire others to critically engage with Indigenous education efforts in the state of Montana and beyond. In the next sections, I discuss the types of



data that I collected and analyzed as they pertain to each research phase.

### *Phase 1*

**Data collection.** During phase 1, I collected all of the classroom resources on the Montana's IEFA website that were located in the third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum repository. These resources consisted of lesson plans, teacher guides, and links to websites as well as YouTube videos. During data collection of this phase, I was able to primarily familiarize myself with the dataset as I examined each resource and selected only the data sources that met my inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 5 for a detailed list of lesson plans collected for this study). I then uploaded each of the 34 lesson plans as PDF documents to NVivo prior to beginning the coding process. NVivo is a professional qualitative analysis software program (see <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>) used by researchers employing qualitative and mixed-method research designs.

**Data analysis.** For phase 1, I addressed my first and second research questions by performing a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) of third- through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans located in Montana's IEFA online curriculum repository. This phase of the study consisted of a recursive process (see Table 6) where I immersed myself with the data, generated codes that "capture interesting features of the data (potentially) relevant to the research question" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297), and engaged in theme development. Throughout analysis, I captured my design decisions and researcher reflections using reflexive journal entries (Braun & Clarke, 2022, pp. 19-22). Peer review was also an ongoing process as I debriefed my

observations and sense-checked findings with other scholars. I detail each of the six stages I engaged in during reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) throughout the remainder of this data analysis section.

**Table 6**

*Six-Stage Guide for Conducting Reflexive Thematic Analysis*

Stage	Description
Stage 1	Familiarization with the data
Stage 2	Data coding
Stage 3	Initial theme generation
Stage 4	Theme development and review
Stage 5	Theme refining, defining, and naming
Stage 6	Writing-up

*Note.* This table was adapted from Braun and Clarke's (2006) and Clarke and Braun's (2013) thematic analysis framework.

***Familiarization with the data.*** Beginning May 2022, I began to immerse myself within the dataset by reading and re-reading the lesson plans and writing reflexive journal entries (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I also provided a descriptive summary of each lesson plan within my journal entries and wrote down any analytic insights that I had for each data item as well as across the dataset. For example, I spent time examining each lesson plan to document their alignment with Montana's *Essential Understandings* (Montana Office of Public Instruction, n.d.) and state level social studies standards. Akin to analytic memos (Saldaña, 2009), Braun and Clarke advocate for reflexive journal entries as ways to "facilitate insight and critical engagement" (p. 20) with the dataset. Some of the

questions Braun and Clarke encouraged me to ask myself during this stage included: (1) Why might I be reacting to the data in this way? (2) What ideas does my interpretation rely on? (3) What different ways could I make sense of this data? (p. 44).

**Data coding.** Systematic coding is vital for high-quality qualitative research (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2022). Codes are defined as any “analytically interesting idea, concept or meaning associated with particular segments of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 53). Any data item that could answer my first and second research questions was coded. At first, I used initial and *in vivo* coding to understand the range and variation of lesson plan content and familiarize myself with the data. Initial coding (sometimes referred to as “open coding”) is an exploratory and open-ended process that involves data being broken into distinct parts and assigned code labels (Saldaña, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). *In vivo* coding refers to the process of deriving codes from the data, sometimes using data verbatim (Given, 2008). This part of the process focused on reading each data item closely and applying a code label (a succinct phrase attached to a segment of data) using NVivo software. During this process, coding occurred at varying levels including semantic (explicit) codes in addition to latent (implicit) codes (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 35). Examples of semantic codes included codes like *contemporary Indigenous practices* and *tribal histories are oral histories*. Examples of latent codes included codes like *American Indians as liminal entities*. Both codes were refined later in analysis. During this process, I utilized the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014) as a theoretical lens to further make sense of the data and “interrogate patterns within personal or social meaning around a topic, and to ask questions about the

implications of these” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297).

Following two initial rounds of coding, I participated in more of a deductive orientation to coding where I conducted a more focused search using pre-defined, theory-driven codes derived from the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). I documented this process using reflexive journal entries as well as created separate files in NVivo for each round of coding. After my initial rounds of coding, I came to an impasse where earlier codes were too granular. Therefore, I decided to use a codebook (see Appendix B) aligned with tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) to answer my first research question. I also developed a second codebook (see Appendix C) aligned with components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014) to answer my second research question. Braun and Clarke (2022) advise that coding reliability approaches to thematic analysis, including the use of codebooks, “often result in themes that are relatively superficial and underdeveloped” (pp. 239-242). However, in this instance, the development of codebooks consisting of *a priori* theory-driven codes made sense to further distinguish between examples and non-examples of codes (Saldaña, 2016; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). Braun and Clarke recommend coding the dataset in different order during coding rounds. Therefore, I worked “backwards” during these later rounds of coding by changing the order of coding from the last dataset item working my way sequentially to the first dataset item. I also checked for alignment between the ‘big ideas’ of my initial rounds of coding and the pre-defined codes derived from the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

***Initial theme generation.*** This part of my analytic journey consisted of

identifying candidate themes and aggregating data relevant to each potential theme. Themes are “patterns of shared meaning organized around a central concept” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 77). During this stage, I described examples as well as non-examples of each candidate theme to further define the boundaries of each candidate theme (see Appendices B and C). Thematic mapping is a visual tool designed to help the researcher identify connections of patterns across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 86). I engaged in thematic mapping as I created initial themes and sub-themes after two rounds of initial coding (see Figure 3 in Chapter IV) as well as two rounds of coding using a deductive orientation (see Figure 4 in Chapter IV). A thematic map reflecting eight initial candidate themes after two rounds of initial coding answering my first research question can be viewed in Figure 2. A thematic map reflecting nine candidate themes after two rounds of coding using a deductive orientation answering my first research question can be viewed in Figure 3 in Chapter IV.

## Figure 2

### *Alignment of Design Objective, Purpose of Cycle, Primary Data Sources, and Methodology*

Cycle	Design objective	Purpose of cycle	Primary data sources	Methodology
First	Synthesizing findings from RQ1 and RQ2, design an initial rubric for educational specialists to evaluate how well Montana’s <i>Indian Education for All</i> curriculum align with tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining /revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014).	Create an initial version of a rubric for educational specialists to utilize as they evaluate the alignment of <i>Indian Education for All</i> lesson plans with critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing features.	Findings from RQ1 and RQ2 Culturally sustaining/revitalizing literature (e.g., CSRP)  Montana’s IEFA lesson plans for third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum  Rubric for Evaluating Indian Education for All Curriculum (Schmid et al., 2006, p. 59)	Design-based research (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014)

***Theme development and review.*** Next, I used these examples and non-examples to further refine my themes and sub-themes. I asked myself, “Does each theme tell a convincing and compelling story about an important pattern of shared meaning related to the dataset?” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 35). Some of the code labels were deleted if they did not answer either of my first or second research questions. Some of the code labels and candidate themes were renamed. For example, I renamed the code label of *portrayals of American Indians* to *countering stereotypes of American Indians* because the objective of the lesson was to counter such stereotypes. I also renamed certain code labels and candidate themes to be in more alignment with the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) as well as the components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). For instance, I renamed the candidate theme of *stories as knowledge* (see Figure 2 in Chapter IV) to *stories as legitimate sources of knowing and being* (see Figure 3 in Chapter IV) to better align with the eighth tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005).

***Theme refining, defining, and naming.*** During the stage of theme development and revision, Braun and Clarke (2022) explain how it can be useful for the researcher to ask oneself: “Is this pattern a viable theme—a pattern that has an identifiable central organizing concept, as well as different manifestations of that idea?” (p. 98). Therefore, I repeatedly asked myself whether a pattern served as a viable theme while writing an overview of each candidate theme. I developed a theme definition illustrating the scope and core concept of each candidate theme informed by the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). It was also during this stage that I further refined candidate themes, paying particular attention to theme names. I

revised candidate themes in order to capture my analysis in relation to a given topic (Braun & Clarke, 2022, pp. 111-112). For example, I added the candidate theme of *governmental and educational policies of assimilation* during my first round of coding using an deductive orientation. This was not a theme that was developed during initial coding as I did not find any data sources in relation to assimilation at that time. The candidate theme of *tribal activism* was changed to *connecting theory and practice toward social change* in order to capture the importance of bridging theory and practice to create change in Indigenous communities (Brayboy, 2005). I also retained the core concept of certain candidate themes. For instance, the candidate theme of *colonization is endemic* was changed to *colonization is endemic to society*. Only a few words were changed in this instance, while complete revision took place for others.

**Writing up.** The recursive nature of RTA allows researchers to both blur and repeat steps as needed (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As a result, writing about my analytic journey was an ongoing process often blurred with other stages, especially during the stage of theme development and revision. Writing reflexive journal entries guided by my first and second research questions took place regularly throughout my interpretative analytic process. Additionally, I performed a detailed analysis of each theme followed by “weaving together the analytic narrative and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature” (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Braun and Clarke remind us that the act of interpretation is highly politicized; therefore, researchers should remember to “not do harm” (p. 214). As a result, I paid careful attention to how my interpretative practices and language might affect Indigenous communities. The findings from my interpretative

analytic process can be found in more detail in Chapter IV of this dissertation.

### ***Phase 2***

**Design-based research cycle 1.** For phase 2, I addressed my design objective by drawing upon related literature related to TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) as well as the findings from the initial phases of my study to create an initial version of a rubric for evaluating the alignment of lesson plans with the TribalCrit framework and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies. I utilized design-based research (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014) because it captures the iterative processes designers use while creating solutions to educational problems. I adopted Easterday et al.'s (2014) six-stage iterative process for conducting DBR (see Figure 1) including steps to: *focus* the problem, *understand* the problem, *define* goals, *conceive* the outline of the solution, *build* the solution, and *test* the solution. I detail each of the stages I engaged in throughout phase two in the following section.

***Focus on the problem.*** Montana's OPI has an online repository containing their IEFA curriculum. This online repository is maintained by educational specialists who need to be able to properly vet curriculum resources prior to adding them to the online repository. This will also help educators so that the lesson plans they use in their classrooms are already pre-vetted by experts. A theory-informed evaluative rubric will help guide educational specialists as they assess curriculum resources to ensure their alignment with critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies.

***Understand the problem.*** There are two overarching problems to address for this



study. First, the existing rubric has educators evaluating Montana's IEFA curriculum prior to classroom usage. The current evaluative rubric (Schmid et al., 2006) used by Montana's OPI is meant for educators and administrators to evaluate curriculum resources (see Table 2) to see how well their curriculum resources align with Banks and Banks' (2004) levels of multicultural education reform as well as Montana's *Seven Essential Understandings*, tribally specific content, and instructional best practices. Montana's educators are not only responsible for integrating IEFA content across content areas, but they must also spend time locating and evaluating IEFA curriculum resources. Moreover, Montana's educators reported certain challenges when working with IEFA's curriculum resources (Bachtler, 2015). For example, educators reported they felt overwhelmed in "not knowing where to start" and that they didn't have enough time to review the curriculum resources prior to their usage in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers reported errors in the resources including expired links. Such challenges have led to the reduction of educator usage of Montana's IEFA curriculum repository (Bachtler, 2015). One agreed upon solution reported by Montana's educators would be to have educational specialists regularly review the curriculum resources within their repository (Bachtler, 2015). This would release already overly burdened teachers from having to review the curriculum beforehand.

The second problem is that the existing rubric is grounded in Banks and Banks' (2004) approaches to multicultural education reform. One of underlying issues of Montana's IEFA efforts is that multicultural education perspectives are used that lead to *inclusive conversations* between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members

rather than *decolonizing conversations* (Hopkins, 2020). Hopkins further explains that Indigenous education reforms (like Montana's IEFA) should be using more tribal-centered methodologies like TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) to privilege Indigenous ways of knowing in colonial schooling contexts.

**Define goals.** There are several goals for this evaluative rubric design. One of the goals for this evaluative rubric is to provide educational specialists with a tool for vetting curriculum resources before they can be added to the Montana's IEFA curriculum repository. Another goal is to design an evaluative rubric that helps educational specialists check curriculum resources for their alignment with critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies. A later goal for this evaluative rubric is to collaborate with key Montana stakeholders (including educators and members of Montana's tribes) to test and further refine future iterations of this rubric.

**Conceive the outline of the solution.** As discussed in my review of literature, Tintiangco-Cubales et al. (2020) used an evaluative framework to evaluate Filipina/x/o American K-12 curricula. Their framework consisted of three main dimensions including critical content, critical instruction, and critical impact. During this part of the process, I initially conceptualized an evaluative rubric spanning similar dimensions of critical content and critical instruction (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2020) that was instead tailored to the (re)centralization of Indigenous ways of knowing.

**Build.** The build phase consisted of identifying affordances and constraints of previously designed rubrics (e.g., Schmid et al., 2006, p. 59) as well as taking into

consideration my thematic findings of Montana's IEFA grades 3-5 social studies lesson plans to build a formative rubric. I also drew from critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing frameworks throughout this process. Additionally, key questions that I considered while building this rubric included: "What might an exemplary social studies lesson plan look like? What might a social studies lesson plan that does not meet critical and culturally sustaining criteria look like?" Next, I began building my rubric with the abovementioned key findings and questions in mind.

*Test.* The evaluative rubric produced in this inquiry is more formative in nature, and was developed after an initial cycle of DBR. Future iterations of this theory-informed evaluative rubric will be adapted and tested with additional subject matter experts and community stakeholders. Stakeholders will include educational specialists working for Montana's OPI, Montana's classroom educators, and members of Montana's Indigenous communities.

### **Trustworthiness**

Establishing trustworthiness and credibility is paramount to qualitative research (Glesne, 2016; Merriam, 2009). I ensured the trustworthiness of data collection and analysis in this study by utilizing strategies like the use of debriefing with peers and supervisors and close monitoring of subjectivity (Glesne, 2016). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) explain that researchers can make our interpretations more trustworthy and reflexive in nature by asking ourselves these questions: (1) What did you notice? (2) Why did you notice what you noticed? (3) How did you interpret what you noticed? and (4) How can you know that your interpretation is the 'right' one?

However, Glesne (2016) warns that while answering the questions posed by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) has the potential to increase the likelihood of trustworthiness, the researcher must also demonstrate reflexivity. Glesne (2016) explains: “Reflexive thought assists understanding ways in which your personal characteristics, values, and positions interact with others in the research situation to influence the methodological approach you choose, the methods you use, and the interpretations you make” (p. 156). Moreover, Braun and Clarke (2022) argue that researcher subjectivity is what sets reflexive thematic analysis practices apart from other qualitative methods. Consequently, I engaged in reflexivity by situating myself in relation to the dataset while engaging in researcher reflection via the use of reflexive journal entries (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

### **Researcher Positionality**

I am *anishinaabkwe*. I have both Anishinaabe and Swedish ancestors, and I was raised in European-American and Indigenous cultural environments. For the past decade, I have worked as a secondary educator in public schools and informal learning settings across the state of Utah, and I have often experienced how academic institutions privilege settler colonial perspectives and histories within their curriculum and policies. Hopkins (2020) states: “To engage in a reconciliation process requires state reforms to include tribal educators who are familiar with *both* Indigenous survivance *and* the dominant educational system” (p. 164). Thus, I wish to engage in this process as a “word warrior” (D. Turner, 2006) charged with working within dominant institutions while also asserting Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and researching.

Research has a troubling history in many Indigenous communities (e.g., Smith, 1999). Moreover, Indigenous communities are tired of “helicopter research,” or instances when researchers arrive in a community for a short duration of time and then leave when they have achieved their research goals (Davis & Keemer, 2002; Ferreira & Gendon, 2011; Hodge et al., 2000). In response, researchers like Brayboy et al. (2012) and Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) discuss the importance of utilizing the 4 R’s – including *relationality*, *responsibility*, *respect*, and *reciprocity* – when engaging in research with Indigenous peoples. *Relationality* refers to the relationships Indigenous peoples have with one another as well as the interconnectedness we experience between humans and our non-human relatives, including the spiritual realm. Indigenous peoples are also taught it is our *responsibility* to take the gifts of knowledge we have been given and pass it along to others. Acknowledging the contributions of others who have shared their knowledge and experiences is also a way we demonstrate *respect*. *Reciprocity* refers to how interactions between peoples can mutually benefit one another through our shared relationships and knowledge sharing practices. Thus, I employed *relationality*, *responsibility*, *respect*, and *reciprocity* throughout this study and will continue to do so as I engage in this research alongside members of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Prior to beginning this study, I anticipated certain tensions I was likely to experience as both *insider* and *outsider* to this line of research (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Smith, 1999). For instance, I anticipated that I would likely experience the unique tensions of being an *insider* as I navigated my involvement in both Indigenous and non-

Indigenous cultural environments. Smith (1999) explains,

Insider research has to be ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outside research. It needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position. (p. 139)

I am also aware that I am likely to be perceived as an *outsider* to this research as I am not a member of any tribes located in the region of Montana. Brayboy and Deyhle argue: “To understand context, local voices cannot be ignored” (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000, p. 168). Therefore, developing positive relationships with members of Indigenous communities in Montana and including their perspectives of this evaluative rubric is paramount during the next phases of my research.

### **Summary**

For this study, I critically examined how Indigenous perspectives and histories are being represented in Montana’s IEFA repository for third- through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans and used my findings to generate a rubric for evaluating such lesson plans. The overall study was broken down into two major phases. The first phase answered my first and second research questions as I engaged in the process of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) while the second phase addressed my design objective as I engaged in design-based research (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014) to create a theory-informed rubric for educational specialists to use to evaluate lesson plans for their Indigenous education curriculum repositories. Also, for this chapter, I highlighted the strategies I used to ensure trustworthiness and credibility while also asserting Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and researching.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The purpose this chapter is to discuss my results from a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) of Montana's IEFA online curriculum repository for third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum as well as provide the first iteration of my theory-informed evaluative rubric that incorporates critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogical features. First, I provide a brief overview of this study, including the context of the study as well as providing an overview of Montana's IEFA third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I discuss my findings as they relate to each research question and design objective as well as provide a summary of my findings. For my first and second research questions, my findings are organized into major themes derived from tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and components of CSR (McCarty & Lee, 2014). For my design objective, I discuss how findings from my first and second research questions shaped the dimensions and design of my theory-informed evaluative rubric.

#### **Overview of Study**

This study consisted of two phases. In the first phase of the study, data were analyzed using a qualitative analysis approach (Glesne, 2016), namely reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) to answer my first and second research questions. In the second phase of the study, I utilized the findings from my research questions as well as DBR methods (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al.,

2014) to develop a first iteration of an evaluative rubric for Montana's IEFA online curriculum repository for third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum.

Recognizing that additional iterations of this rubric are needed before it is usable by stakeholders, the ultimate goal is that this theory-informed evaluative rubric will be utilized by educational specialists as they evaluate lessons plans for their alignment with features of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

Montana's IEFA third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum, including social studies lessons, is located in an online repository (<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources#852719245-grades-3-5>). The IEFA lesson plans were created for K-12 students across the state of Montana to teach. There was a total of 34 social studies lesson plans dedicated to third- through fifth-grade students (10 lesson plans for third grade, 9 lesson plans for fourth grade, and 8 lesson plans for fifth grade) located in Montana's IEFA online curriculum repository lesson plans that met my inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 5 for a comprehensive list of lesson plans analyzed in this study).

An example of a third grade social studies lesson plan located in Montana's IEFA repository is entitled: "Montana Indians Differ in Language and Culture." This lesson targets IEFA Essential Understanding 1 and addresses concepts of language and diversity. For one of their learning activities, students engage in a trading activity using classroom supplies and food items. They are told that they need to obtain enough supplies to survive as a group. However, they are not allowed to speak a common language throughout the activity. At the end of the activity, students respond to the following



journal prompt: “What would be the best way for me to communicate with someone whose language I did not understand?” In another learning activity, each student gets a leather bracelet and four beads of the same color. During the activity, students are instructed to communicate with other classmates to trade back and forth until each student has one color of each bead on their bracelet. They are not allowed to speak during this activity. This is just one example of a lesson plan found in Montana’s IEFA online repository.

## **Findings of Thematic Analysis**

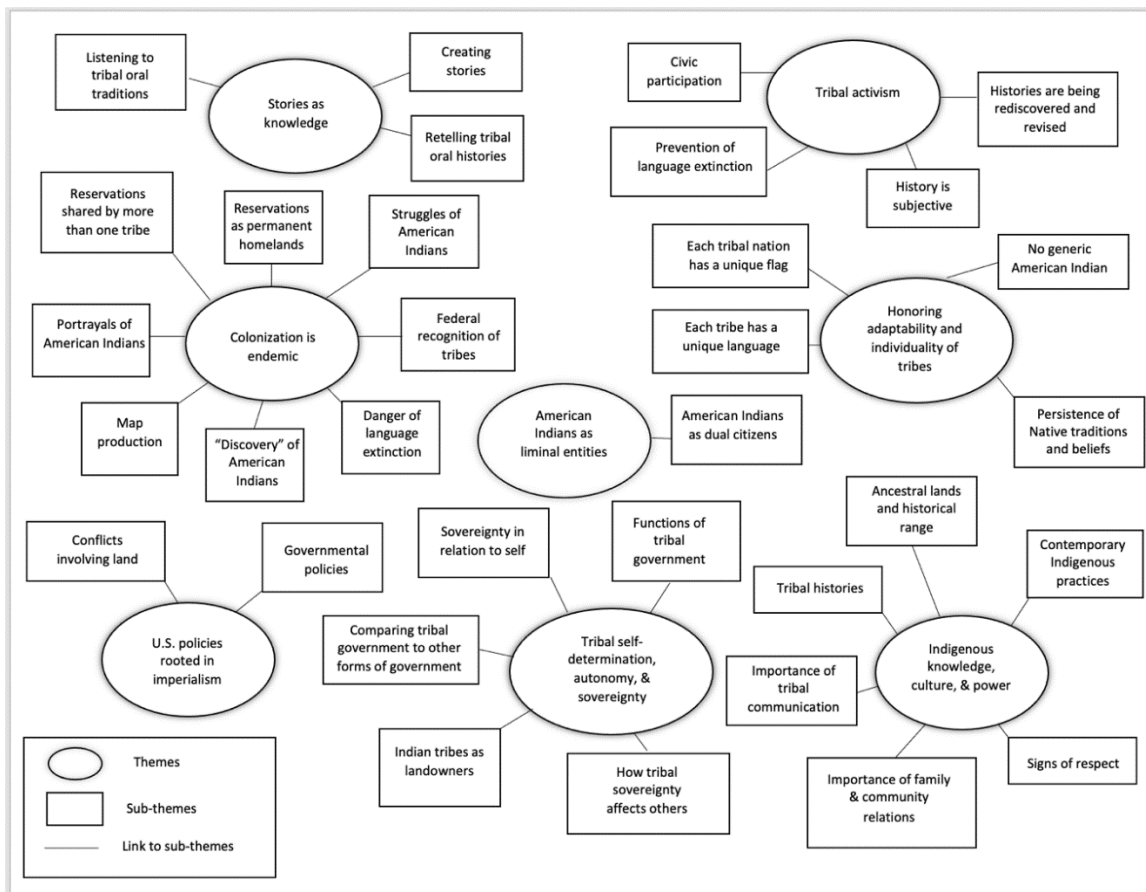
### **Findings Related to Research Question 1**

This section is organized into nine major themes related to each of the nine tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). third- through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans (34 in total) located in Montana’s IEFA online repository were thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) in order to answer my first research question. For this section, I detail my findings according to the following major themes distilled from my analysis: (a) colonization is endemic to society, (b) U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in imperialism, (c) Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space, (d) obtaining and forging tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification toward tribal sovereignty, (e) toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power, (f) governmental and educational policies of assimilation toward American Indians, (g) honoring traditions, tribal differences, and the adaptability of Indigenous peoples, (h) stories as legitimate sources of knowing and being, and (i) connecting theory and practice

toward active change. Figure 3 contains major themes and their corresponding subthemes after I conducted two rounds of initial coding while answering my first research question. Figure 4 contains major themes and their corresponding subthemes after I conducted two additional rounds of deductive coding while answering my first research question. See Chapter III for a more detailed discussion of my initial and deductive coding process.

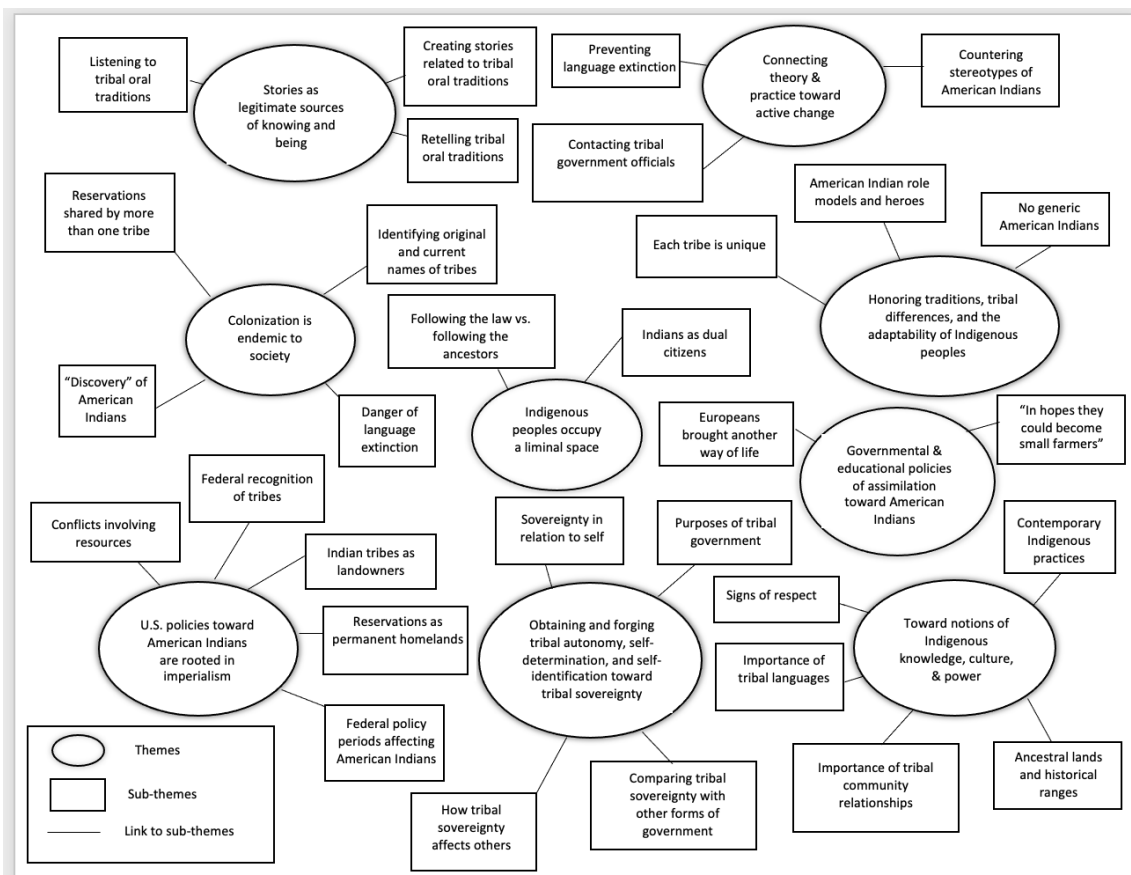
**Figure 3**

*Initial Thematic Map for Research Question 1*



*Note.* This figure is my initial thematic map consisting of eight candidate themes after two rounds of initial rounds of coding answering my first research question.

Figure 4

*Final Thematic Map for Research Question 1*

*Note.* This figure is my final thematic map consisting of nine candidate themes after two rounds of deductive coding answering my first research question.

***Theme 1: Colonization is Endemic to Society***

The theme of *colonization is endemic to society* relates to the act or process of settling and establishing power over Indigenous peoples (Rowe & Tuck, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Colonization has become endemic as this process continues to dominate many aspects of U.S. society today (Battiste, 2002; Brayboy, 2005; Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). The data related to the first theme of *colonization is endemic to society* includes the

following subthemes “*discovery*” of American Indians, *danger of language extinction*, *reservations shared by more than one tribe*, and *identifying original and current names of tribes*. Each subtheme related to this major theme is detailed in the following section.

Within the theme of *colonization is endemic to society*, Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans also addressed the subtheme of “*discovery*” of American Indians. The ancestral lands of American Indians were previously unknown to European settlers, and textbooks often portray European explorers and settlers as having “discovered” American Indians and the lands they occupied (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Williams, 1992). This colonial narrative of “discovery,” sometimes referred to as the Doctrine of Discovery, was first made legal by John Marshall’s decision in *Johnson v. M’Intosh* (1823), a U.S. Supreme Court decision which allowed for European settlers to dispose American Indians of their lands and make American Indians tenants of their own lands (e.g., Robertson, 2005). The concept of the “*discovery*” of American Indians is discussed in the Montana IEFA lesson plan entitled “Learning About American Indian Traditions,” where students are tasked with researching oral histories of American Indian tribes and examining how American Indians are portrayed in history textbooks. Students are then asked questions about their findings like, “How are American Indians written about in the section? Which specific tribes are discussed, or are any specific tribes discussed?” (Montana OPI, p. 2). Later in this same lesson plan, educators ask students to examine what the word “discovery” means as well as remind students that “discovery” is a contested term as American Indians have lived in North American for thousands of years.

Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans also addressed the subtheme of

*danger of language extinction*. Many Indigenous languages are in decline and in danger of becoming extinct as a result of colonization (e.g., Crystal, 2000; McMahon, 1994). In the Montana IEFA lesson plan entitled “Montana Indians Differ in Language and Culture,” students are tasked with learning about the importance of language and why language extinction is occurring amongst many American Indian tribes. Some of the essential questions addressed in this lesson include “Are there tribal languages that are in danger of extinction?” and “How could language extinction be prevented?” An extension of this lesson has students participate in a bead trading activity where they simulate a trading activity for beads without using the same language as a means to demonstrate how historical trading activities between Indigenous peoples and settlers might have occurred in the past.

In the theme of *colonization is endemic to society*, certain Montana’s IEFA lesson plans addressed the subtheme of *identifying original and current names of tribes*. Current names of tribes are usually derived from European languages, sometimes as transliterations (often mispronunciations occurring during the translation process), misinterpretations, and/or derogatory terminology (Bird, 1999; Moore, 1976). For example, the name Chippewa may derive from the term *ojiibwabwe*, which means “those who cook/roast until it puckers” (Warren, 1885). However, it remains unknown where the name Chippewa originates. Instead, many Ojibwe refer to themselves as “Anishinaabeg” which means “Original People” (e.g., Vizenor, 1984). According to Montana’s IEFA curriculum, students should be able to identify tribes in Montana by their original and “current” names by the end of third grade (The Reservations: Learning

About Many Montana Indian Cultures, p. 1).

The spellings and pronunciations of “current” names for Montana’s tribes are frequently used throughout Montana’s IEFA third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum. Five lesson plans lack any mention of Montana’s tribes. One lesson plan highlights Assiniboine (Nakoda) and Sioux (Očhéthi Šakówiŋ) code talkers and their service in the U.S. military. Six lesson plans pertain to the Northern Cheyenne (Tsétséhéstáhese) tribe. Three lesson plans focus on the Crow (Apsáalooke) tribe. Three lesson plans pertain to the Blackfeet (Niitsitapi/Pikuni) tribe. Several lesson plans have students research one-two tribes of their own choosing. For example, one lesson entitled “Differences Among Montana Tribes: Cultures, Traditions, Government,” has students research two tribes and then develop a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two tribes. Montana’s tribes are listed in Table 7 alongside their original (endonym) names and the pronunciation of each original name. Please note that I use the terms exonym instead of “current” and endonym instead of “original.”

As part of the theme of *colonization is endemic to society*, the subtheme of *reservations shared by more than one tribe* was also applied to Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans. As a result of executive orders and treaties, many tribes were forced onto smaller areas of land with one another. For example, the Assiniboine (Nakoda) and the Gros Ventre (A’aninin) tribes both currently reside on the Fort Belnap reservation in Montana. The forced sharing of tribal lands sometimes resulted in conflict amongst certain tribes. For example, in Montana’s IEFA lesson plan entitled, “Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?,” the Northern Cheyenne

**Table 7***List of Exonym, Endonym, and Suggested Pronunciation of Montana's Tribes*

“Current” name of Montana tribe (exonym)	Original name (endonym)	Suggested pronunciation of endonym
Salish	Séliš	SEH-leesh
Pend d’Oreille	Q’lispé	KAH-lee-speh
Kootenai	Ktunaxa	K-too-nah-ha
Blackfeet	Niitsitapi/Pikuni	Knee-tsit-da-be/pee-koo-NEE
Chippewa	Ojibwe/Anishinaabe	Oh-jib-way/A-nish-shin-nah-bay
Plains Cree	Ne Hiyawak	Neh-HEE-oh-wuk
Gros Ventre	A’aninin	Ah-ah-ne-nin
Assiniboine	Nakoda	Nako-da
Sioux	Očhéthi Šakówiŋ	Oh-chey-tee shah-koh-ween
Northern Cheyenne	Tsétséhéstáhese/Só’taeo’o	Zi-zis-tas/Su-tah
Crow	Apsáalooke	Up-saw-low-gah
Little Shell Chippewa	Anishinaabe/Métis	A-nish-shin-nah-bay/Maey-TEE

*Note.* The “current” (or exonym) name of a tribe does not necessarily mean this is the accepted or preferred naming of an individual tribe. Typically, “current” names of tribes originate from European transliterations of their names and/or derogatory terminology. Endonyms refer to the tribe’s self-designated names.

(Tsétséhéstáhese) tribe is described as engaging in conflicts with the Crow and Shoshone tribes as a result of being placed on the same tribal lands.

The westward movement of whites brought such things as guns, alcohol, and diseases such as smallpox and cholera. Cheyenne life was forever changed. They developed rivalries with Crow and Shoshone Indian tribes because they all were being pushed into the same lands. They developed alliances with the Sioux, the Arapahoe, and Apaches as a means to protect themselves. (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe? p. 3)

From this example, I observed that the Northern Cheyenne tribe’s way of life was never the same after the being forced onto lands with other tribes. Sometimes their forced cohabitation resulted in positive outcomes while other times it impacted their lives in a negative way. While closely related to the first theme of *colonization is endemic to society*, the next major theme of *U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in*

*imperialism* focuses on the concept of imperialism, specifically territorial and economic expansion usually enacted through violent displacement of Indigenous peoples.

***Theme 2: U.S. Policies Toward American Indians are Rooted in Imperialism***

The theme of *U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in imperialism* relates to the policies the U.S. used to take over lands occupied by Indigenous peoples (Brayboy, 2005; Williams, 1987, 1989). For instance, in his book *The Winning of the West* (1889), Theodore Roosevelt argued that American Indians had no right to ownership of their own territories and therefore had no right to fight U.S. expansion in their territories. During Roosevelt's tenure, he agreed the transfer of over 86 million acres of Indigenous ancestral territories to the national forest system (which were later to become the U.S.'s national parks). The data related to the theme of *U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in imperialism* includes *conflicts involving resources, federal policy periods affecting American Indians, federal recognition of tribes, Indian tribes as landowners, and reservations as permanent homelands*.

The subtheme *conflicts involving resources* is an offshoot of the theme of *U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in imperialism*. This particular subtheme is also located amongst Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans. Conflicts often arose between the U.S. and American Indian communities over resources (including land, gold, fur, et cetera). As an example, Montana's IEFA lesson plan entitled, "Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?" addresses how conflicts arose between the Northern Cheyenne and the U.S. as a result of miners entering the Black Hills area of



Montana to procure gold. As a result of this class discussion, students are encouraged to rethink about what it means to “own” land: “Use the ensuing discussion to aid students in thinking about and revising their understanding of land ownership and the conflicts that might come about as two different peoples claim the same land” (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe? p. 2).

I also identified the subtheme *federal policy periods affecting American Indians* amongst Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans. U.S. policies regarding American Indians, also known as Indian policies, were regularly enacted through laws and treaties, while others were created by statutes and executive orders. Oftentimes, scholars (e.g., Miller, 2010; Wilkins, 2016) divide the federal policy periods into eras including: Trade and Intercourse Era (1790 to 1830), Removal Era (1830 to 1850), Reservation Era (1850 to 1887), Allotment-Assimilation Era (1887 to 1934), Indian New Deal Era (1934 to 1945), Termination Era (1945 to 1965), Self-Determination Era (1965 to present day). For example, the Removal Era denotes the time period of roughly 1830 to 1850 when American Indians (including the Cherokee, Choctaws, Creeks, and other tribes) were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands. During this era, Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act of 1830 into law thus forcing eastern Indigenous peoples to move to reservations west of the Mississippi River (Cave, 2003; Wallace & Foner, 1993). The concept of *federal policy periods affecting American Indians* is addressed in a lesson plan entitled, “Histories of Montana Indian Tribes—Creating a Timeline,” p. 1) where one of the essential questions asked is: “In general, how have historical events impacted American Indians? Do all tribes have the same experiences?” Moreover, students should

be able to develop an understanding of timelines and how they can be used to describe eras in history (p. 1).

Montana's IEFA lesson plans for third- through fifth-grade social studies frequently address the subtheme *federal recognition of tribes*. *Federal recognition* is a legal term that acknowledges American Indian or Alaskan Native tribes as sovereigns with the ability to engage in government-to-government relations and become eligible to receive federal funding and services as a tribal nation (Code of Federal Regulations 83.7). There are a total of 574 federal recognized tribes across the U.S. as of July 2022 (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2022). Many of Montana's IEFA lessons include objectives that relate to the federal recognition of Montana's tribes and encourage students to be able to identify Montana's 12 federally-recognized American Indian tribes. For instance, one Montana IEFA lesson plan contains an essential question that asks students: "Why is the Little Shell Band of Chippewa not located on a reservation?" (Geography of Montana Indian Reservations., p. 2). This distinction is further elaborated upon in the lesson called, "Using Maps to Learn About Montana Reservations and Tribes," where the Little Shell Chippewa are described as being "landless but headquartered in Cascade County" (p. 1).

Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans also account for the subtheme of *Indian tribes as landowners*. American Indians have different beliefs regarding land acquisition and land ownership than Europeans (e.g., Brayboy, 2005). Prior to settler colonization, American Indians occupied ancestral territories and migrated freely throughout regions of North America. Yet, the concept of "land ownership" is different for many Indigenous societies in that many American Indians see themselves as stewards

of the land (Brayboy, 2005; Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). European settlers thought of the land as not being previously owned and claimed it for themselves as a result of Manifest Destiny and other similar land policies. In Montana’s IEFA lesson plan, students read an excerpt (see “Inhabitants and Settlers: Different Perspectives About and Ownership”) about settlers visiting a new planet and attempting to take over the land already inhabited by *The People* (who do not see themselves as owners of their land, but instead use it cooperatively as groups). After reading the excerpt, students then summarize the different perspectives of land ownership between the settlers and *The People* of the new planet.

The last subtheme related to *U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in imperialism* points to *reservations as permanent homelands*. As a result of executive orders and treaties, many tribes acquired land reserves or reservations. Not all tribes have reservations however. For example, the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa do not have a reservation. One of the performance tasks in the lesson “Geography of Montana Indian Reservations” has students locate geologic features of the reservation land and describe how such geologic features affect the culture of the tribes located in that area (p. 2). An essential understanding, specifically EU4, described in the same lesson also designates reservations as *permanent homelands* (p. 1). As a result of such U.S. policies (including land policies like reservations), American Indians tend to have a complicated relationship with the federal government. This complicated relationship is further elaborated upon in the following section.

***Theme 3: Indigenous Peoples Occupy a Liminal Space***

The next major theme I identified amongst by Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans is *Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space*. Liminality refers to a position occupied “betwixt and between” two spaces or categories (e.g., V. Turner 1969). It is argued that American Indians occupy a liminal space in terms of their identities and how the federal government recognizes them (Brayboy, 2005, p. 432). For example, AI/AN tribes cannot be federally recognized unless they go through a formal and rigorous process (often referred to as the “Federal Acknowledgement Process”). During this process, AI/AN tribes must not only “appear as un-assimilated” but “must also be politically organized under western standards of governance” (Drake, 2018, p. 3). In this respect, AI/AN tribes must exist as integrated “enough” in western society to adopt western standards of governing, but not so much integrated they lose their unique identity as an AI/AN tribe (Drake, 2018). The data related to the third theme of *Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space* includes *following the law vs. following our ancestors* and *Indians as dual citizens*.

In the theme of *Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space*, the Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans addressed the subtheme *following the law vs. following our ancestors*. This subtheme relates to the unique tensions that many American Indians experience as liminal entities. Laws created by the federal government are sometimes in direct contradiction with teachings from their ancestors (Murphy, 2007; Treglia, 2013). As an example, in the lesson plan “Making Decisions Based on Best Information,” students are instructed to read about Maria Tallchief, a member of the Osage nation and

ballerina (p. 2). Following their reading, students engage in a class discussion where they discuss the tensions members of Maria's tribe experience when they are forced to decide between giving up traditional dancing and ceremonies according to the laws of the federal government or choose to break the laws and follow the ways of their ancestors instead:

Maria and her people have to make an important decision – do they follow the law and give up traditional dancing and other native ceremonies or do they follow the way of their ancestors? Ask groups to use the list of ideas to help make a good decision and write up what decision they think Maria and her people made. Remind them to use information in the story to help them make their decision and be ready to support their decision. (Making Decisions Based on Best Information, p. 2)

From this excerpt, we can see that students are encouraged to take part in a perspective taking exercise while also in engaging in critical decision-making practices. While liminality is not specifically addressed in this lesson, it does address the tensions many American Indians feel when traditional ceremonies and dances are banned by the U.S government and they have to decide which path to take as both citizens of the U.S. and citizens of their tribal nation(s).

The concept of *Indians as dual citizens is another subtheme* that I recognized amongst Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans. American Indians often encounter liminality as they navigate tensions of dual citizenry. In the case of Montana's tribes, American Indians are often citizens of their tribal nations as well as citizens of the U.S. This concept is addressed in the IEFA lesson plan entitled, "The Purposes of Tribal Government." In this lesson, students are asked to compare the structures of tribal governments with those of Montana's state government. Moreover, students are asked the

essential question, “Why does it matter that Montana Indian people are tribal citizens in addition to being Montana and U.S. citizens?” This guiding question potentially allows for students to recognize the tensions many American Indians experience as liminal entities. Next, I discuss how American Indians are working to establish their identities as tribal nations.

***Theme 4: Obtaining and Forging Tribal Autonomy, Self-Determination, and Self-Identification  
Toward Tribal Sovereignty***

The theme of *obtaining and forging tribal autonomy, self-determination, self-identification, toward tribal sovereignty* refers to the right of American Indians to govern themselves and make decisions regarding their own nations. Cobb (2005) explains:

At base, sovereignty is a nation's power to self-govern, to determine its own way of life, and to live that life—to whatever extent possible—free from interference. This is no different for tribal sovereignty, which by and large shares the attributes and characteristics of sovereignty as contextualized above. Native nations are culturally distinct peoples with recognizable governments and, in most cases, recognizable and defined territories. The sovereignty of Native nations is inherent and ancient. For Native nations within the boundaries of the U.S., the underscoring of the inherent nature of sovereignty is critical because of the colonial process—a process that continues to dramatically diminish our ability to fully exercise tribal sovereignty. (pp. 118-119)

It is argued that because tribal nations have been granted the authority to self-govern (tribal sovereignty), then tribal nations should also be free to make decisions for themselves as independent nations (tribal autonomy). In the *Johnson vs. McIntosh* (1823) ruling, AI/ANs were described as “wards of the government.” To this day, AI/AN tribes continue to be thought of as “wards” (or dependents) of the U.S. However, AI/AN tribes who exercise their rights to self-govern and outwardly “reject” the “guardian/ward

relationship” mentality are described as engaging in self-determination (Brayboy, 2005, p. 434). Last, the term “self-identification” refers to the need for AN/AN tribe’s ability to determine tribal membership rather than the federal government (who instead currently determines the federal recognition status of AI/AN tribes). The data related to the fourth theme of *obtaining and forging tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification toward tribal sovereignty* includes *comparing tribal sovereignty with other forms of government, purposes of tribal government, how tribal sovereignty affects others, and sovereignty in relation to self.*

During analysis, I identified the subtheme *comparing tribal sovereignty with other forms of government* as another branch of the major theme *obtaining and forging tribal autonomy, self-determination, self-identification, toward tribal sovereignty*. Some of Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans focused on comparing tribal sovereignty with other forms of government including the federal government, Montana’s state government, and local governments (such as city and county governments). For example, one performance task has students complete a Venn diagram in order to compare and contrast their local government with one Montana tribal government using a worksheet provided at the end of the lesson plan (Governmental Responsibilities: Community, Tribal, State, Federal, p. 2). In another lesson, students are tasked with comparing and contrasting all three levels of government including state, local (county or city), and tribal governments (Montana Reservation Governments, p. 2).

Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans also include the subtheme *purposes of tribal government*. Part of the Montana’s IEFA curriculum focuses on having students

explain the reasons and purposes for tribal governments. One of the objectives for Montana's IEFA lesson plans includes that "Students will know...tribal governments have authority to do such things as establish police forces and tribal courts, make laws, decide how tribal property can be used, decide who can be a member of a tribe, and ensure that tribal culture is preserved (Purposes of Tribal Government, p. 1). Later, in this same lesson, students are divided into groups and instructed to write a summary describing the main features of a tribal government.

Additionally, I identified the subtheme *how tribal sovereignty affects others*. One of the Montana's IEFA lesson plans entitled, "Governmental responsibilities: Community, Tribal, State, Federal," asks students the essential question "In what ways do sovereign tribal nations affect people in Montana?" (p. 1). This question encourages students to think beyond the purposes of tribal government to describe how tribal sovereignty affects other communities throughout the state of Montana. Interestingly, one would expect questioning regarding how tribal sovereignty is affected by others and vice versa.

The last subtheme to be identified in relation to the 4<sup>th</sup> major theme includes the subtheme *sovereignty in relation to self*. In other Montana IEFA lessons, the functions of tribal government are discussed in addition to how tribal sovereignty might affect other communities in the state of Montana. In the lesson, "The Purposes of Tribal Government," teachers are directed to download a copy of a tribal constitution and prepare themselves to discuss tribal sovereignty with their class. Prior to writing a summary about the functions of tribal government, students are instructed to prepare



themselves by reviewing what sovereignty means, especially what it means for them as an individual.

Prepare students by reviewing the concept of sovereignty in relation to oneself. What types of power does a student have over herself in school? What rights and responsibilities do students have at school? What rights and responsibilities do students have as Montana citizens? (The Purposes of Tribal Government, p. 2)

This portion of a lesson plan illustrates how students need to learn what sovereignty is and what it means for themselves before they can begin to understand what tribal sovereignty means for tribal nations. The next major theme demonstrates how Indigenous communities are moving away from European notions of culture, knowledge, and power.

***Theme 5: Toward Notions of Indigenous Cultures, Knowledges, and Power***

The theme of *toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power* refers to efforts by Indigenous peoples to resist assimilation and engage in the preservation of their own conceptions of culture, knowledge, and power. Brayboy (2005) equates culture to an “anchor in the ocean” that is tied to a given place and people, but can change and stay fixed at different points in time (p. 434). While the concept of culture has been widely debated (e.g., Borofsky et al., 2001), Castagno and Brayboy (2008) argue that there are components of Indigenous cultures that have remained stable over time including “components of belief systems and behaviors” (p. 944). Indigenous knowledge systems refer to the unique worldviews, beliefs, and understandings of Indigenous peoples (Barnhardt & Oscar Kawagley, 2005; Smith, 1999). Barnhardt and

Oscar Kawagley describe how Indigenous knowledge systems are traditionally tied to a particular place and have been sustained by their people for millennia. Indigenous power is different than western notions of power. For example, Brayboy describes Indigenous power as community based. Indigenous power is exerted when tribal nations engage in tribal sovereignty. The data related to the fifth theme of *toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledge, and power* is comprised of subthemes including: *ancestral lands and historical ranges, contemporary Indigenous practices, importance of tribal community relationships, importance of tribal languages, and signs of respect.*

Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans also attend to the *ancestral lands and historical ranges* of American Indians. Ancestral lands and historical ranges refer to the territories occupied by American Indians prior to settler colonization and their subsequent removal by the U.S. government. Not only do American Indians have cultural and historical connections to their ancestral territories, but oftentimes they possess a deeply spiritual connection to such space.

Facilitate a discussion regarding their responses and point out how many of the tribal seals contain images of geographical features such as mountains and rivers. Reaffirm the fact that tribes have cultural, historic, and spiritual connections with their environment. (Geography of Montana Indian Reservations, p. 2)

This lesson activity helps students develop an understanding that lands were taken away from American Indians, and potentially leads to a conversation of problematizing this concept. Besides that, it also demonstrates the significance of American Indians' spiritual connections to ancestral lands and land-based activities (e.g., hunting, gathering food, etc.).

In the theme of *toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power,*

the lesson plans addressed *contemporary Indigenous practices*. Many American Indians and Alaskan Natives are invisible to other Americans (National Congress of American Indians, 2019; Reclaiming Native Truth, 2018). Unfortunately, this is often because American Indians are seen as primarily historical figures (Shear et al., 2015). One way to address the ‘invisibility’ of American Indians is to discuss them in present-day context as vibrant and thriving communities (National Congress of American Indians, 2019). A Montana IEFA lesson plan entitled, “A Cheyenne Community Calendar” (pp. 42-45) provides students with an opportunity to examine present-day tribal events taking place within Northern Cheyenne community. For this particular lesson(s), students are encouraged to create their own calendars and use Cheyenne names for the months instead of English names. For the exploration phase of this lesson, teachers are directed to write the Cheyenne seasons on the board. During a class discussion, teachers will then ask students to list common community events that take place each season. Next, students are provided with a calendar template and have them construct their own calendar including their both personal (e.g., birthday) and community events (e.g., local powwows, rodeos, and other tribal events). An important next step in recognizing the significance of tribal knowledge and culture is to discuss the importance of community relationships amongst Montana’s tribes.

Within the major theme of *toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power*, I also found that lesson plans addressed the *importance of tribal community relationships*. Family and community relationship are critical for tribe’s community wellbeing. Within tribal communities, tribal Elders are viewed as highly respected

leaders and teachers. One of Montana's IEFA social studies lessons has students listen to a tribal Elder in two YouTube videos. The lesson "Symbols of Our People," instructs 5<sup>th</sup> grades students to watch YouTube videos of an Elder discussing the history of the Northern and Southern Cheyenne flag songs as well as singing the flag song in the Cheyenne language. The Elder sings while playing a one-sided drum. Some of the lyrics include "Manhood you have obtained" and "your flag is waving." As a follow-up to this activity, teachers are encouraged to "Invite an elder to speak about traditional military societies" (Symbols of Our People, p. 54). This lesson plan has the potential for students to witness the importance of tribal Elders for themselves during a classroom visit. However, little is done in the lesson to help students understand the historical or contemporary significance of tribal Elders in Indigenous communities. Nor is the process of how a member of an Indigenous community becomes a tribal Elder addressed.

Additionally, I identified the subtheme *importance of tribal languages* as part of the larger theme *toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power*. Unfortunately, many American Indian languages have become extinct or at risk for extinction (e.g., Boseker, 1994). However, there are also many myths about American Indians that persist in present-day society. For example, there is a common myth that "only real Indians are full-bloods, and they are dying off" (Dunbar-Ortiz & Gilio-Whitaker, 2016, pp. 76-81). Scholars like Dunbar-Ortiz and Gilio-Whitaker argue that such myths about American Indians can be "traced to narratives of erasure" (p. 3). Only discussing the threat of language extinction amongst American Indian communities does little to account for the rich language diversity still thriving in AI/AN communities today

and could lead to further misconceptions. Therefore, discussing the importance of tribal languages and providing examples of tribal languages used today potentially counters common myths born from narratives of erasure. One way in which Montana's IEFA lesson plans address the importance of tribal languages is by asking students the question: "Why is it important that each tribe has its own language?" (Montana Indians Differ in Language and Culture, p. 1). Another way lesson plans address this subtheme is by explaining to students that although tribal members speak English, they may also speak one or more tribal languages.

The final subtheme found in relation to the major theme *toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power* includes *signs of respect*. One way to acknowledge and actively counter "narratives of erasure and disappearance" (Dunbar-Ortiz & Gilio-Whitaker, 2016) is to show students that American Indians are real and that they and their cultures demand respect. For example, in the lesson plan, "Symbols of Our People," students are asked to stand and remove their hats while a Northern Cheyenne Elder sings a flag song. Teachers are then instructed: "After it is over and students sit down, ask them (students) why we stand and remove our hats during a flag song." (Symbols of Our People, p. 53). It is important to have students demonstrate respect for American Indians just as many teachers require students to remove their hats during the Pledge of Allegiance and the playing of the U.S. national anthem. For the next major theme, I discuss U.S. policies of assimilation toward American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

***Theme 6: Governmental and Education Policies of Assimilation Toward American Indians***

In the following section, I discuss *governmental and educational policies of assimilation toward American Indians* as the next major theme identified during my analysis. For many years, the federal government forced Indigenous peoples to adopt European American culture (typically through colonial schooling practices). Over time, such policies of assimilation have led to the “cultural genocide” of many Indigenous peoples (e.g., Davidson, 2012). Within this theme, I identified the subthemes of “*in hopes they could become small farmers*” and *Europeans brought another way of life* as relatives to the major theme *governmental and educational policies of assimilation toward American Indians*.

In a Montana IEFA social studies lesson plan entitled, “Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?,” educators are instructed to discuss how the Northern Cheyenne were provided with animals and land from the U.S. government as an attempt to assimilate American Indians and have them become small farmers.

The Northern Cheyenne group was recognized separately, and shared land with the Brule Lakota Sioux (today, in South Dakota), including the Black Hills, which was the Cheyenne’s spiritual home. They were also to be given seeds and a plow with two well-broken oxen and one cow, in hopes they could become small farmers like white settlers who were moving westward. (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe? p. 3)

This part of the lesson plan describes the spiritual significance of the Northern Cheyenne’s ancestral lands while also introducing students to concept of assimilation without technically using that term. In the same lesson, students are introduced to other aspects of the Cheyenne historical timeline including the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868

and the Battle of Little Bighorn (including General Custer and the U.S. army's defeat).

The next subtheme that addresses the concept of assimilation is *Europeans brought another way of life*. As a result of participating in Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plan "Effects of Fur Trapping on Tribes," students should be able to describe includes the disruptive effects fur trapping and other settler practices had upon Indigenous ways of life. For example, an essential understanding of this lesson is that students should be able to recognize that: "Missionaries brought another way of life, disrupting traditional ways of living, even as they brought implements and mills" (Effects of Fur Trapping on Tribes, p. 1). Missionaries and other settlers may have brought with them modern conveniences (e.g., clothing mills), but they also disrupted tribes and their traditional ways of life during this process. Missionaries also presented religious conversion which is a form of assimilation. The next major theme I discuss helps to counter some assimilative practices experienced by American Indians.

***Theme 7: Honoring Traditions, Tribal Differences, and the Adaptability Of Indigenous Peoples***

The next major theme addressed by Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans includes *honoring traditions, tribal differences, and the adaptability of Indigenous peoples*. This tenet aligns with the seventh tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and points to the importance of acknowledging Indigenous traditions while also recognizing that each AI/AN tribe is has their own unique identities and traditions. This tenet also highlights the resilience and adaptability that have enabled Indigenous peoples survive, as well as thrive, over millennia (e.g., Fixico, 2013). During analysis, I identified the

following subthemes: *American Indian role models and heroes, each tribe is unique*, and *no generic American Indians*.

The next subtheme *American Indian role models and heroes* has the potential to inspire students to make good life decisions and work toward goals. Showing students positive role models of American Indian heritage may also help to counter negative stereotypes. For example, in one Montana IEFA lesson, students learn about American Indians who have served in the U.S. military, particularly those who have served as code-talkers in World War II.

There were 49 identified enrolled members of the Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation who were WWII Code Talkers. Our Code Talkers were members of Company B, 163rd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Division, Poplar, MT. (American Indians in the Military—A Warrior Spirit, p. 3)

This example of American Indian role models and heroes not only shows positive role models, but it also demonstrates the important of learning and maintaining American Indian languages.

Montana’s IEFA lesson plans also address *how each tribe is unique*. People tend to label American Indians as a single ethnic/racial group, paying little attention to their cultural and language differences (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2016; Mihesuah, 2010). Moreover, history content standards across the U.S. often depict American Indians as a single group (Journell, 2009). Certain IEFA lesson plans address these issues by discussing how tribes are unique with regard to their cultures, languages, and histories. For instance, in the lesson plan called “Montana Indians: Past, Traditions, and History” provides an essential understanding of “Students will be able to...state that each tribe has its own language and culture” (pp. 1-2). Later in the same lesson, the teacher is encouraged to work with a



librarian to learn more about Montana's tribes. Additionally, language from another lesson plan warns teachers and students to avoid resources that "mix and match tribal attributes without distinction" (Identifying and Stereotypes and Countering Them, p. 3).

The last subtheme related to the seventh major theme is called *no generic American Indian*. This subtheme differs from the subtheme how each tribe is unique is because it denotes American Indians as individuals with their own identities. As an example, a Montana IEFA lesson plan entitled, "Identifying Stereotypes and Countering Them," discourages educators from using course materials that "imply there is a generic 'American Indian' identity or that suggest American Indians are mono-cultural or mono-linguistic" (p. 2). A learning activity in the same lesson has students research a present-day individual from one of Montana's tribes and describe their accomplishments as well as provide a rationale for why the student chose that person. For the next theme, I discuss how American Indians traditions are passed on through oral histories.

### ***Theme 8: Stories as Legitimate Sources of Knowing and Being***

The theme of *stories as legitimate sources of knowing and being* acknowledges that "knowledge and story are inseparable" (Kovach, 2009, p. 98). Indigenous storytelling and storying practices demonstrate ways in which Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power are shared. Brayboy (2005) points to the distinction between listening and hearing. Listening denotes a more passive process in that it allows participants to go "through the motions of acting engaged" while hearing denotes a more active process in that it allows participants to "ultimately understand the nuances in

stories” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 440). In the following section, I describe how Montana’s IEFA lesson plans address the major theme of storytelling and its related subthemes (*creating stories related to tribal oral traditions, listening to tribal oral traditions, and retelling tribal oral traditions*) and how they all attend to the eighth tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005).

Montana’s IEFA lesson plans have students *listening to tribal oral traditions*. There are three levels to storytelling demonstrated across Montana’s IEFA lesson plans. The first level is to have students listen to tribal histories with the intent of having them “hear” (Brayboy, 2005) the teachings provided by stories. This subtheme relates to activities where students are encouraged to listen to tribal oral histories. For example, teachers show a clip called “Buffalo and Porcupine - Northern Cheyenne Trickster Story,” which is a story told by a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe. As a way to demonstrate their understanding of this story, an extension of this lesson has students conduct research on additional tribal histories from Montana’s tribes (which is further addressed in the next subtheme).

The second level related to *stories as legitimate sources of knowing and being* has students *retelling tribal oral traditions*. Having students retell is a good way to have them demonstrate that they not only “heard” but also “felt” the teachings provided to them (e.g., Brayboy, 2005, p. 440). For example, in a lesson plan entitled, “Learning about American Indian Oral Traditions,” students research an oral tradition, story, and/or history, of their choice and provide a written summary. Students are then instructed to retell the story during a class discussion and use their written summary as talking points

throughout the discussion.

Finally, and also importantly, the next level demonstrated across Montana's IEFA lesson plans has students *creating stories related to tribal oral traditions*. In the first two levels, students are listening and retelling stories while in the third level students are encouraged to create their own stories. For example, in a lesson plan entitled, "Montana Skies: Crow Astronomy," students write their own stories using characters from a story told by the Crow nation about constellations. The next major theme I analyzed within Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans deals with the importance of working with Indigenous communities to promote actual change.

***Theme 9: Connecting Theory and Practice  
Toward Active Change***

The theme of *connecting theory and practice toward active change* is aligned with the ninth tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). Connecting theory and practice requires conscious efforts to promote political and social change. Activism in Indigenous communities should also be done *alongside* (or with) Indigenous communities rather than *for* Indigenous communities (Brayboy, 2005). While Brayboy mainly points to the ways in which scholars and researchers can bridge theory with practice, I also include the ways in which educators and students can promote active change in their educational communities. Therefore, during my analysis, I found that Montana's IEFA lesson plans accounted for the ways in which we can all promote active change with Indigenous communities including: *contacting tribal government officials, countering stereotypes of American Indians, and preventing language extinction*.

Within the theme *connecting theory and practice toward active change*, Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans had students practice *contacting tribal government officials*. Showing students how to identify and contact their nearest tribal government officials not only teaches them to how to navigate different tribe’s websites, but potentially lead students to meaningfully interact with tribal appointees from the grassroots level. One lesson plan even takes this activity to next level by inviting tribal officials to their classroom.

At this point in their study, students should be able to use their reservation maps to identify the closest tribal government, contact that tribal chairperson, or a local tribal member, and invite that person to the classroom for a discussion of tribal government, operations, policies, and responsibilities. (Montana Reservation Governments, p. 2)

This excerpt shows us that students can engage with the topic of tribal government in active ways. While it does not necessarily promote active change *per se*, it does allow students to engage in a critical first step in doing so.

In the theme of *connecting theory and practice toward active change*, the lesson plans addressed *countering stereotypes of American Indians*. In the lesson plan called, “Identifying Stereotypes and Countering Them,” fourth-grade students are instructed to define what a stereotype is and then provide examples from school and books they have read. Montana’s IEFA lesson plans also reaffirm that students should be able to provide examples of stereotypes, especially as they relate to Montana’s tribes, by the fourth grade. In this same lesson, Montana students not only have to be able to provide examples of stereotypes, but they also need to be able to answer the essential question: “How do stereotypes affect cross-cultural understanding?” This question allows for

students to think about how the ways they perceive others can affect cross-cultural interactions and perspectives. As a learning activity, students then also research online sources to create a portrait of modern-day American Indians. As part of this activity, they must also check the online sources they use for accuracy.

Finally, I identified the subtheme *preventing language extinction* during my thematic analysis of Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans. In one of the lesson plans, specifically "Montana Indians Differ in Language and Culture," teachers have students discuss the importance of tribal communication and how each tribe has its own unique language. More importantly, teachers then ask students to explain why they think languages are going extinct as well as: "How could language extinction be prevented?" (p. 1). I will discuss my conclusions regarding the analysis of my first research question in Chapter V of this dissertation. In the next section, I provide my analysis as it relates to my second research question where I ask how culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) are utilized among Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans.

### **Findings Related to Research Question 2**

This section is organized into three major themes related to the components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Third- through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans (34 in total) located in Montana's IEFA online repository were thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) in order to answer my second research question. In this section, I detail my findings according to the following major themes: *attending to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization, reclamation and revitalization toward*

*Indigenous futurities*, and *community-based accountability*. Table 8 contains a list of major themes as well as a description associated with each theme.

**Table 8**

*List of Major Themes, Subthemes, and Theme Characteristics for Research Question 2*

Major theme	Subtheme(s)	Theme characteristics
1. Attending to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization	Addressing stereotypical portrayals of American Indians; history is subjective	Working to transform colonization and sustain Indigenous education sovereignty
2. Reclamation and revitalization toward Indigenous futurities	Traditional name giving	Indigenous revivals and cultural continuity operating in resistance to colonization (e.g., language revitalization)
3. 3. Community-based accountability	Signs of respect	Attending to the 4 R's--respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships when working with Indigenous communities

*Note.* This table contains major themes and subthemes as they relate to components of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

The theme of *attending to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization* relates to the first component of CSRP which points to the importance of confronting and transforming colonization (decolonization) in classrooms and working to sustain Indigenous education sovereignty. Indigenous education sovereignty refers to the Indigenous peoples' right to determine what education means for them and how it is practiced within their communities (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; McCarty & Lee, 2014). McCarty and Lee remind us that "Regardless of whether schools operate on or off tribal lands, in the same way that schools are accountable to state and federal governments, so too are they accountable to the Native American nations whose children they serve" (p. 102). In the following section, I share my analytic findings as they relate to subthemes

*addressing stereotypical portrayals of American Indians and history is subjective.*

During analysis, I identified the subtheme of *addressing stereotypical portrayals of American Indians*, which refers to ways in which students can negate harmful generalizations, assumptions, or ideas held about AI/ANs. This subtheme is related to the ninth tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and the subtheme of *countering stereotypes of American Indians* as discussed previously in my findings related to the first research question. In one of Montana's IEFA lesson plans, entitled "Stereotypes," third grade students learn about the definition of stereotype and participate in a learning activity where they relate characteristics of cookie-cutters (or molds) to grouping/stereotyping. There is a section in the lesson that has students explain what a stereotype is and provide examples of people who are often stereotyped (including teachers, Italian cooks, doctors, etc). One of the objectives for this lesson is to have students become aware of the "negative impacts of stereotyping regarding American Indian people" (Stereotypes, p. 2).

The subtheme of *addressing stereotypical portrayals of American Indians* is further illuminated in Montana's IEFA lesson plans in grade 4. In particular, in a IEFA 4th grade lesson, entitled "Identifying Stereotypes and Countering Them," students participate in a learning activity where they draw a scientist and analyze their image with a partner by asking themselves three questions including: (1) What is going on in this image? (2) What do you see that makes you see that? (3) What more can we find? Students are then instructed to do a preliminary Google search for the term "Native American" and use their findings to participate in a class discussion related to stereotypes and AI/ANs. This activity then leads into an assignment where students brainstorm a list

of notable AI/ANs. Afterward, students conduct a research activity where they investigate the lives of present-day members of Montana’s tribes. In particular, students are encouraged to “avoid stereotypes/bias in their reports” (Identifying Stereotypes and Countering Them, p. 2).

The next subtheme identified within the theme of *attending to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization* was *history is subjective*. This subtheme relates to Montana’s sixth *Essential Understanding*.

History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell. (Montana OPI, 2019, p. 22)

Understanding the subjective nature of history is an important skill for Montana students to acquire. In a lesson plan entitled, “Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?” educators introduce learning objectives for the lesson (e.g., Students will be able to tell the significance of land ownership for Montana tribes) and read a story to the class while students take note. The story is called, “Inhabitants and Settlers: Different Perspectives About Land Ownership.” Within the story, students imagine themselves as explorers of a new planet who soon begin to settle the planet for its land and other resources. Later in the story, the settlers run into the original inhabitants of the planet who have their own ideas about what land ownership means.

They don’t seem to homestead or “own” the land, as you might expect. They don’t regard this as a ‘New Planet’ and are puzzled by the name you are using for it. They call it The Land; they have names for places they traditionally travel to, and they respect the rights of other bands as they all gather food, hunt, and fish. They tell you they have always lived on The Land, and they have always used certain places for their hunting, fishing, and food gathering.... They expect to



continue to use The Land as always, with no changes. (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?, p. 5)

After reading the story, students complete a worksheet where they compare and contrast central ideas of land ownership from the both perspectives of the settlers as well as the original inhabitants (“the People”) of the new planet. This particular activity not only helps students gain a better understanding of the differing perspectives of land ownership by many Indigenous peoples, but it also provides an opportunity for students to become involved in a “knowingness of the colonizer” (Smith, 1999, p. 7).

The second theme of *reclamation and revitalization toward Indigenous futurities* is related to the second component of CSRP. McCarty and Lee (2014) argue that “CSRP recognizes the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization. Indigenous education sovereignty (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; McCarty & Lee, 2014) includes “the right to linguistic and cultural expression according to local languages and norms” (McCarty & Lee, 2014, p. 101). In this sense, Indigenous reclamation and revitalization of language not only seeks language revitalization, but also encourages learners to gain an understanding of how language connects to culture, place, and relations (including human, plant and animal relatives) in Indigenous societies.

The subtheme of *traditional name giving* relates to the practice of name giving practices in AI/AN communities. It is common in many Indigenous societies for members to acquire both a common name and a spiritual name during certain ceremonies (e.g., Exner & Bear, 2007). In Northern Cheyenne society, warriors often receive a new name after returning from battle (What’s in a Name? p. 52). *Traditional name giving* was a subtheme identified in the fourth grade IEFA social studies lesson plan entitled,

“What’s in a Name?” In this lesson, students are instructed to categorize names into four distinct groups (such as masculine/traditional, masculine/contemporary, feminine/traditional, and feminine/contemporary groups). Students are asked how they received their names (e.g., some students may have received their names in honor of their relatives or someone famous). Next, students are assigned to research possible origins and meanings of their names. Students write down their findings on a worksheet, which is taken home with them so they can ask family members about how they were named. Upon bringing their information back to their classroom, students are asked to place a flag pin showing the country of origin for their name and share their findings with the class during a class presentation. After each student presents their findings, the teacher leads a class discussion related to traditional Northern Cheyenne name giving protocols.

Within the Northern Cheyenne community today, traditions of name giving are still practiced. The individual or the parents identify someone in the community that is admired for their personal qualities such as bravery, honesty, integrity, etc. Then the individual or the parents go to the namesake and the parents. (What’s in a Name? p. 52)

This lesson allows for educators and students to become more familiar with Northern Cheyenne norms and naming practices.

The next theme of *community-based accountability* was derived from the third component of CSRP. McCarty and Lee (2014) explain that “...Indigenous CSRP recognizes the need for community-based accountability” (p. 103). Brayboy et al. (2012) discuss the need for attending to the 4 R’s--respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships when working with Indigenous communities. The data related to the third theme of *community-based accountability* includes the subtheme of *signs of respect* and

relates to instances when students engage in respecting beliefs and actions for Indigenous cultures. In the IEFA lesson entitled, “Learning About American Indian Oral Traditions,” students research the histories and stories of at least one of Montana’s tribes. One of the objectives for this lesson discusses respectful ways to research.

Students will know the etiquette involved in politely researching and respecting a tribe’s traditions. For example, prior to researching, the class will discuss how to research and how to ask about oral history when interviewing tribal members. (Learning About American Indian Oral Traditions, p. 1)

I discuss my conclusions regarding the analysis of my first research question in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. In the next section, I provide the results from my first cycle of DBR and explain how my findings from my thematic analysis of Montana’s IEFA social studies lessons informed the design of a theory-informed evaluative rubric.

### **Theory-Informed Rubric Design**

In this section, I provide the results from my first cycle of DBR and discuss how findings from my first and second research questions shaped the dimensions (criteria) and indicators of my theory-informed evaluative rubric. The purpose of this first cycle of DBR was to create an initial version of a rubric for evaluating the alignment of Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans with tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and components of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

First, I identified the affordances and constraints of a previously designed evaluative rubric created by Schmid et al. (2006). Some of the affordances included the dimension of *Essential Understandings*. Within this dimension, there are quality indicators related to the absence of *Essential Understandings* and whether they align with

other parts of the lesson (e.g., lesson activities). One of the constraints of Schmid et al. (2006) includes its alignment with Banks' (2004) approaches to multicultural education. Scholars (e.g., Hopkins, 2020) instead argue for Indigenous education solutions informed by TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) because they are more Indigenous-centered approaches.

Secondly, I identified the affordances and constraints of the critical evaluation framework developed by Tintiangco-Cubales et al. (2020) to evaluate Filipina/o/x K-12 curriculum. Their framework consists of three dimensions including (1) *Critical Content*, (2) *Critical Instruction*, and (3) *Critical Impact*. One of the affordances of their framework is that each of the three dimensions were developed to include culturally responsive and critical pedagogies as well as decolonizing and feminist pedagogies and methodologies (p. 28). There are a total of 20 questions spanning these dimensions. Some constraints of their rubric include that lack of a detailed scoring guide as well as lack of revisions during the development process. If revisions did occur, Tintiangco-Cubales et al. did not elaborate on that process. Another affordance of Tintiangco-Cubales et al.'s (2020) framework is that it could be adopted by other community-based evaluators.

Next, I began to design an evaluative rubric with each of the affordances and constraints of each rubric described above in mind. The initial evaluative rubric I created to evaluate Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans is located in Table 9. The four dimensions assigned to this rubric include: (1) *Essential Understandings*, (2) *Critical Content*, (3) *Critical Instruction*, and (4) *Community-Based Accountability*. The first dimension, *Essential Understandings*, refers to the lesson plan's presence (or absence) of

the guiding principles of Montana's IEFA as well as their alignment with the learning objectives and activities. The second dimension, *Critical Content* (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2020), refers to lesson plans that challenge historical and cultural hegemony through the centralization of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) experiences. The third dimension, *Critical Instruction* (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2020), refers to lesson plans that incorporate culturally sustaining/revitalizing practices that attend to asymmetrical power relations as well as engage students in reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous ways of knowing. The last dimension, *Community-Based Accountability* (McCarty & Lee, 2014), refers to whether lesson plans attend to the 4 R's including respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships (Brayboy et al., 2012) when teaching about and/or working with Indigenous communities.

Additionally, I created questions to consider related to each dimension (see *Dimension Definitions Aligned with Key Questions to Consider* in Table 9) for a comprehensive list of questions). For the dimension of *Critical Content*, I created questions informed by each of the tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). For instance, the question of "Are the influences of colonization on AI/ANs discussed?" was created to be in alignment with the first tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). For the dimensions of *Critical Instruction*, I created questions informed by the pedagogical practices of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies. For instance, the question "Are asymmetrical power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples challenged?" was created to be in alignment with the first component of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

**Table 9**

*Initial Rubric to Evaluate Montana's IEFA Social Studies Lesson Plans Including Dimension Definitions with Key Questions to Consider*

**Dimension Definitions Aligned with Key Questions to Consider**

- **Essential Understandings** refers to the seven guiding principles of Montana's *Indian Education for All* (IEFA). Key questions to consider include:
  - Are the *Essential Understandings* identified?
  - Is there alignment between the lesson objectives, learning activities, and *Essential Understandings*?
- **Critical Content** refers to curriculum resources that challenge historical and cultural hegemony through the centralization of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) experiences. Key questions to consider include:
  - Are the influences of colonization on AI/ANs discussed?
  - Are the original and current names of each tribe identified?
  - Are U.S. policies toward AI/ANs discussed in terms of land acquisition and materials gains?
  - Are AI/ANs recognized as liminal entities?
  - Is tribal sovereignty discussed?
  - Is tribal autonomy and/or self-determination discussed?
  - Are AI/AN's unique cultures and traditions acknowledged?
  - Are contemporary AI/AN issues discussed?
  - Are AI/AN stories being recognized as legitimate productions of knowledge?
- **Critical Instruction** refers to culturally sustaining/revitalizing practices that attend to asymmetrical power relations as well as engage students in reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous ways of knowing (e.g., Indigenous languages). Key questions to consider include:
  - Are asymmetrical power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples challenged?
  - Are connections to Indigenous ways of knowing strengthened?
  - Are Indigenous languages being used?
- **Community-Based Accountability** refers to attendance to the 4 R's including respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships (Brayboy et al., 2012) when teaching about and/or working with Indigenous communities. Key questions to consider include:
  - Are Indigenous knowledge systems, traditions, values, and/or cultures recognized?

(table continues)

- Is respect for AI/AN peoples demonstrated?
- Is the practice of reciprocity demonstrated?
- Is the practice of responsibility (accountability to others) demonstrated?
- Are ethical relations with others (including humans, plants, and animals) demonstrated?

### Initial Rubric to Evaluate Montana's IEFA Social Studies Lesson Plans

	Absent	Marginal	Integrated	Exemplary
<b>Essential Understandings</b> refers to the seven guiding principles of Montana's <i>Indian Education for All</i>	<i>Essential Understandings</i> are missing	<i>Essential Understandings</i> are implied, but do not demonstrate alignment	<i>Essential Understandings</i> are identified, but do not demonstrate alignment	<i>Essential Understandings</i> are identified and demonstrate alignment
<b>Critical Content</b> refers to curriculum resources that challenge historical and cultural hegemony through the centralization of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) experiences	Criteria for critical content is missing	Some criteria for critical content are present	Many criteria for critical content are present	Most criteria for critical content are present
<b>Critical Instruction</b> refers to culturally sustaining/revitalizing practices that attend to asymmetrical power relations as well as engage students in reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous ways of knowing	Criteria for critical instruction are missing	Some criteria for critical instruction are present	Many criteria for critical instruction are present	Most criteria for critical instruction are present
<b>Community- Based Accountability</b> refers to attendance to the 4 R's including respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships when teaching about and/or working with Indigenous communities	Criteria for community-based accountability are missing	Some criteria for community-based accountability are present	Many criteria for community-based accountability are present	Most criteria for community-based accountability are present

*Note.* This figure is my initial evaluative rubric developed for educational specialists to utilize as they evaluate Montana's IEFA social studies lesson plans to check for their alignment with Montana's *Essential Understandings*, *Critical Content* (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2020), *Critical Instruction* (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2020), and *Community-Based Accountability* (McCarty & Lee, 2014).

The rubric was designed to be utilized by Montana’s OPI educational specialists as they evaluate curriculum resources, namely K-12 social studies lesson plans, located in the IEFA online repository. The intended purpose of this rubric is to determine the level of alignment IEFA’s social studies lesson plans have with critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies. Currently, Montana’s educators and administrators are offered training and professional development opportunities (e.g., “Building Your IEFA Mindset: Culturally Responsive and Informed Teaching for All”) provided by OPI educational specialists and IEFA instructional coaches to help them in building their background knowledge and teach them strategies for implementing and integrated IEFA in their curriculum (<https://learninghub.mrooms.net/course/index.php?categoryid=105>). As part of this research, it is recommended that Montana’s educational specialists would also receive ongoing training and/or professional development opportunities related to building of their background knowledge (especially with regard to critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogies) as well as teaching OPI specialists how to successfully utilize the *Rubric to Evaluate Montana’s IEFA Social Studies Lesson Plan* (Table 9) as they evaluate IEFA social studies lesson plans.

### ***Utilizing the Evaluative Rubric***

Part of fulfilling my design objective included adding evaluation criteria that encourages curriculum that provokes both *inclusive* and *decolonizing conversations*. *Inclusive conversations* involve communication and engagement in perspective taking in order for parties to reach understanding while *decolonizing conversations* (Hopkins, 2020; Tuck & Yang, 2012) involve critical dialogue and interrogation of settler



colonialism between AI/AN and non-AI/AN parties. As a result, I included four dimensions of this rubric: (1) *Essential Understandings*, (2) *Critical Content*, (3) *Critical Instruction*, and (4) *Community-Based Accountability* as dimensions in my evaluative rubric to hopefully include curricular content and resources that provoke decolonizing and inclusive conversations. The dimension of *Essential Understandings* attends to the use of curricular content (e.g., lesson plans) in alignment with the *Seven Essential Understandings* which are agreed upon principles in which all Montana citizens should be able to understand about Montana's AI/AN cultures, histories, and perspectives. I detail how each of the dimensions provoke decolonizing conversations in the following sections.

Attending to the dimension of *Essential Understandings* requires that IEFA social studies lesson plans not only refer to the *Seven Essential Understandings*, but also there needs to be demonstrated alignment meaning what students are doing (learning activities) work together with the learning outcomes (which are the *Seven Essential Understandings*). One of the reasons this particular dimension is decolonizing in nature is because Montana's tribes engage in the practice of self-determination as they created and evaluated the *Essential Understandings*. In other words, Montana's OPI team has engaged Indigenous leaders and educators regarding important curricular decisions (Montana OPI, 2019). For example, educators from Montana's tribes and tribal Elders have also engaged in curricular development (e.g., Montana Skies: Crow Astronomy).

The dimension of *Critical Content* (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2020) refers to curricular content and resources that challenge historical and cultural hegemony through

the centralization of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) experiences. IEFA social studies lesson plans that attend to the dimension of *Critical Content* include elements of decolonization like AI/AN community activism and countering settler colonialism (Smith, 1999; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The element of AI/AN community activism is prominent in lesson plans created by Montana's tribes themselves especially as tribes are able to share and dialogue about their integral relationships with land. For instance, in a Montana IEFA social studies lesson plan entitled, "Tribal Land Features and Tribal Connection to Land," students research multiple Cheyenne cultural perspectives regarding land and the environment.

*Critical Instruction* (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2020) attends refers to culturally sustaining/revitalizing practices that attend to asymmetrical power relations as well as engage students in reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous ways of knowing. Some questions that an educational specialist could ask about the lesson plan during evaluation might include: (1) Are asymmetrical power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenoua peoples challenged? (2) Are connections to Indigenous ways of knowing strengthened? and (3) Are Indigenous languages being used? An example of a IEFA lesson plan, "Symbols of Our People," that utilizes Indigenous languages has an activity where students watch a video about the Northern Cheyenne flag song which includes a Tribal member playing a drum and singing in his native language.

The last dimension of *Community-Based Accountability* (McCarty & Lee, 2014) attends to the 4 R's including respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships when teaching about and/or working with Indigenous communities. Some of Montana's IEFA

social studies lesson plans maintain Elders as experts. In terms of the respect, the lesson entitled, “Symbols of Our People” reminds students to remove their hats and stand while the Northern Cheyenne flag song is played. Moreover, students are also asked after the experience why they think they should stand and remove their hats while the flag song is being played. An example of a lesson plan called, “Governmental Responsibilities: Community, Tribal, State, Federal,” helps students to potentially develop relationships with members of Montana’s tribal government. An extension of this lesson has students contact a speaker from a local Tribal government to see if they would visit their class and discuss governmental duties and responsibilities.

### **Summary of Findings**

In Chapter IV, I discussed the findings from my first and second research questions in addition to the results from my first cycle of DBR. For my first research questions, my findings were organized into major themes and subthemes derived from tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). For instance, I derived a second major theme, *U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in imperialism*, from the second tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). One of the subthemes related to this major theme, *conflicts involving resources*, was identified amongst Montana’s IEFA social studies lesson plans. Some of the conflicts discussed in Montana’s IEFA lesson plans include conflicts that arose between the Northern Cheyenne peoples and miners prospecting gold in the Black Hills area (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?). For my second research question, my findings were organized into major themes and subthemes

derived from components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). For example, I derived a major theme, *reclamation and revitalization toward Indigenous futurities*, from the second component of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). One of the subthemes related to this major theme, *traditional name giving*, was identified amongst Montana's IEFA lesson plans. In one of the lesson plans, warriors are discussed as receiving new names after returning from battle (What's in a Name?). Lastly, for my design objective, I discussed how thematic findings from my first and second research questions shaped the dimensions and indicators of my theory-informed evaluative rubric.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In 1999, Montana passed House Bill 528 into law creating *Indian Education for All* (MCA 20-1-501), which requires citizens to learn about Indigenous peoples and their cultures. Since then, Montana's OPI has continued their efforts to bring AI/AN education to all K-12 and higher education students. An evaluation conducted by Bachtler (2015) commended Montana's OPI for their development of a "multi-faceted program and support system for implementation of IEFA" (p. 1). Over the past two decades, OPI efforts have included the offering of professional development opportunities for educators and administrators, the development of instructional resources, and continued policy development (as discussed in Chapter II). However, whether Montana's OPI has successfully implemented IEFA (MCA 20-1-501) remains a matter of debate. As an example, a recent lawsuit filed by Montana's tribes (*Yellow Kidney, et al., v. Montana Office of Public Instruction, et al.*, 2021) argues that Montana's OPI has "failed to establish minimum standards and outcomes necessary to determine whether school districts and schools are complying with the Indian Education Provisions (*Yellow Kidney, et al., v. Montana Office of Public Instruction, et al.*, 2021, p. 19). Perhaps one of the reasons that OPI's efforts have been deemed unsuccessful by numerous Indigenous communities (e.g., *Yellow Kidney, et al., v. Montana Office of Public Instruction, et al.*, 2021) is that they continue to only use multicultural education approaches (e.g., Banks, 1996; Banks & Banks, 2004) at the foundation of their work, rather than utilizing Indigenous-centered methodologies and ways of knowing in conjunction with

multicultural education approaches.

The guiding framework (Elser, 2010) for Montana educators implementing IEFA is largely rooted in Banks and Banks' (2004) dimensions for multicultural education. However, Hopkins (2020) explains that use of such strategies only leads to *inclusive conversations* between AI/ANs and non-AI/ANs which are insufficient in addressing the "deep wounds of colonization" and continue to build distrust (Hopkins, 2020, p. 24). In addition to *inclusive conversations*, Hopkins additionally argues for *decolonizing conversations* between AI/ANs and non-AI/ANs. Such conversations "refuse to situate colonization in the past" while potentially helping parties to build trust with one another (p. 34). Hopkins further argues, "IEFA needs to rethink its inclusive reforms to establish explicit learning centered on tribal knowledge" (p. 127). Moreover, Hopkins recommends ways for IEFA to (re)center tribal knowledge through the use of methodologies and theoretical foundations that frame Indigenous ways of knowing, including TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSR (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Currently, the existing evaluation rubric (Schmid et al., 2006) used by educators to evaluate IEFA curriculum is largely based on content integration and Banks and Banks' dimensions for multicultural education. I argue that we must take this evaluation process a step further by adding evaluation criteria that encourages curriculum to take a more decolonizing and inclusive stance (rather than a purely inclusive stance).

Settler colonialism (e.g., Rowe & Tuck, 2017) continues to pervade social studies education. One example of how settler colonialism persists is through textbooks. For instance, Stanton (2014) performed a discourse analysis of five common historical

textbooks and found that settler colonial perspectives and histories are far more represented than Indigenous perspectives and histories. Moreover, while Indigenous perspectives and histories may be represented in textbooks, they are often presented through a settler colonial lens (Stanton, 2014). Settler colonialism also persists across state standards. For example, Shear et al. (2015) conducted a survey of U.S. history standards and found that Indigenous peoples were primarily portrayed as historical figures (in a pre-1900 context) rather than contemporary beings.

Therefore, the purpose of this thematic study was to gain an understanding of how Indigenous perspectives and histories were being addressed in Montana's IEFA lesson plans and using the findings from this analysis as well as existing rubrics to inform the creation of an evaluative rubric for such lesson plans. The first purpose of the evaluative rubric is to help educational specialists vet curriculum because many of Montana's educators do not have the time to review lesson plans prior to classroom use (Bachtler, 2015). The second purpose of the evaluative rubric is to draw on foundations of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014) as a way to (re)center Indigenous ways of knowing in Montana's IEFA lesson plans. The use of TribalCrit and CSRP also helped me to conduct a thematical analysis to find out how Indigenous perspectives and histories were being represented across Montana's IEFA social studies curriculum, specifically lesson plans designated for grades 3 through 5.

In the first phase of this study, I performed a thematic analysis of 34 total third-through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans (see Table 5 for a comprehensive list of lesson plans analyzed) to identify how tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSRP

(McCarty & Lee, 2014) were represented. In the second phase of this study, I used my thematic findings related to my first and second research questions in order to create a theory-informed evaluative rubric using a design-based research approach (DBR Collective, 2003; Easterday et al., 2014). The findings from this line of research have implications for equity and inclusion in K-12 education as well as how educators and scholars think about evaluating Indigenous education curriculum across the U.S. and beyond. In the following section, I summarize and discuss the findings of my research pertaining to each research question and design objective. Next, I discuss the limitations of this work as well as directions for future work. Last, I close with a discussion of my conclusions and overall summary.

## **Summary of Findings and Discussion**

### **Research Question One**

For my first research question, I asked, “How are tenets of TribalCrit represented in Montana’s *Indian Education for All* repository for 3rd–5th grade social studies curriculum?” In order to answer this research question, I utilized reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) to develop nine major themes related to the nine tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). For my findings related to the theme of *colonization is endemic to society*, which relates to the first tenet of TribalCrit, I observed that many of IEFA’s lesson plans either lack any mention of Montana’s tribes or only use “current” names for Montana’s tribes rather than their original names. This is an interesting tension because one of Montana’s history content standards (SS.H.3.1)



states that students should be able to identify tribes in Montana by both their original and “current” names by the end of the third grade (Montana OPI, 2021a, p. 6).

Another finding relates to the theme of *Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space*, which relates to the third tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005). From this theme, I identified the subtheme *following the law vs. following our ancestors*. In one of the IEFA lesson plans entitled “Making Decisions Based on Best Information,” students read about Maria Tallchief, a member of the Osage nation and a ballerina, and the tensions she and her tribe experience when they are forced by the government to give up their traditional dancing and ceremonies. Tribal members are forced to either follow the law or break the law (and follow the teachings of their ancestors instead). While the term liminality is not used directly in this lesson, students are able to hear about some of the unique tensions tribal members experience as liminal entities.

### **Research Question Two**

For my second research question, I asked, “How are tenets of culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP) represented in Montana’s *Indian Education for All* repository for third- through fifth-grade social studies curriculum?” In order to answer this question, I utilized reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) to develop three major themes in alignment with major components of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). I identified the major theme of *attending to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization* to be in alignment with the first component of CSRP. Within this particular theme, I identified the subtheme of *history is subjective*. Montana’s sixth *Essential Understanding* points to the subjectivity of historical events and how

AI/AN perspectives are often different from the depictions of others (e.g., mainstream historians). In a lesson plan entitled, “Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe?” students read a story about settlers inhabiting a new planet that is already inhabited by “the People.” In this story, students are introduced to differing perspectives regarding land ownership.

### **Design Objective**

For my design objective, I synthesized findings from my first and second research questions to design a rubric to evaluate how well Montana’s *Indian Education for All* curriculum align with tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). I engaged in one cycle of design-based research to create an initial version of evaluative rubric for determining the alignment of Montana’ IEFA social studies lesson plans with the tenets of TribalCrit and components of CSRP. First, I identified the affordances and constraints of previous evaluative frameworks including one created by Schmid et al. (2006) as well as another created by Tintiangco-Cubales et al. (2020). Next, with these affordances and constraints in mind, I created a first draft of a theory-informed evaluative framework for OPI’s educational specialists to use to pre-vet curriculum prior to placement within Montana’s IEFA repository. Additionally, I discussed how each dimension of the rubric could be utilized to determine whether a given lesson plan takes both an inclusive and decolonizing stance.

## **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Work**

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to consider in relation to this study. One limitation to take into consideration relates to the number of lesson plans thematically analyzed for this study. A total of 34 third- through fifth-grade social studies lesson plans were thematically analyzed for this study. Of these, 10 lesson plans targeted students in third grade, 9 lesson plans targeted students in fourth grade, and 8 lesson plans targeted students in fifth grade. Seven of these lesson plans targeted multiple grade levels. Future studies could examine additional lesson plans targeting older audiences or other disciplinary areas located within Montana's IEFA online repository. Another limitation is due to the lack of literature I found related to evaluation and AI/AN education efforts. Due to this, there is little prior research related to this area. Researcher bias is another limitation, especially as I am the only coder for this particular study. Another limitation relates to the generalizability of this study. This study relates to the thematic analysis of only Montana's *IEFA* curriculum. Therefore, the findings might only be specific to this particular context. Another limitation relates to the lack of community stakeholder input during the design of my evaluative rubric. I discuss suggestions for future work in the following section.

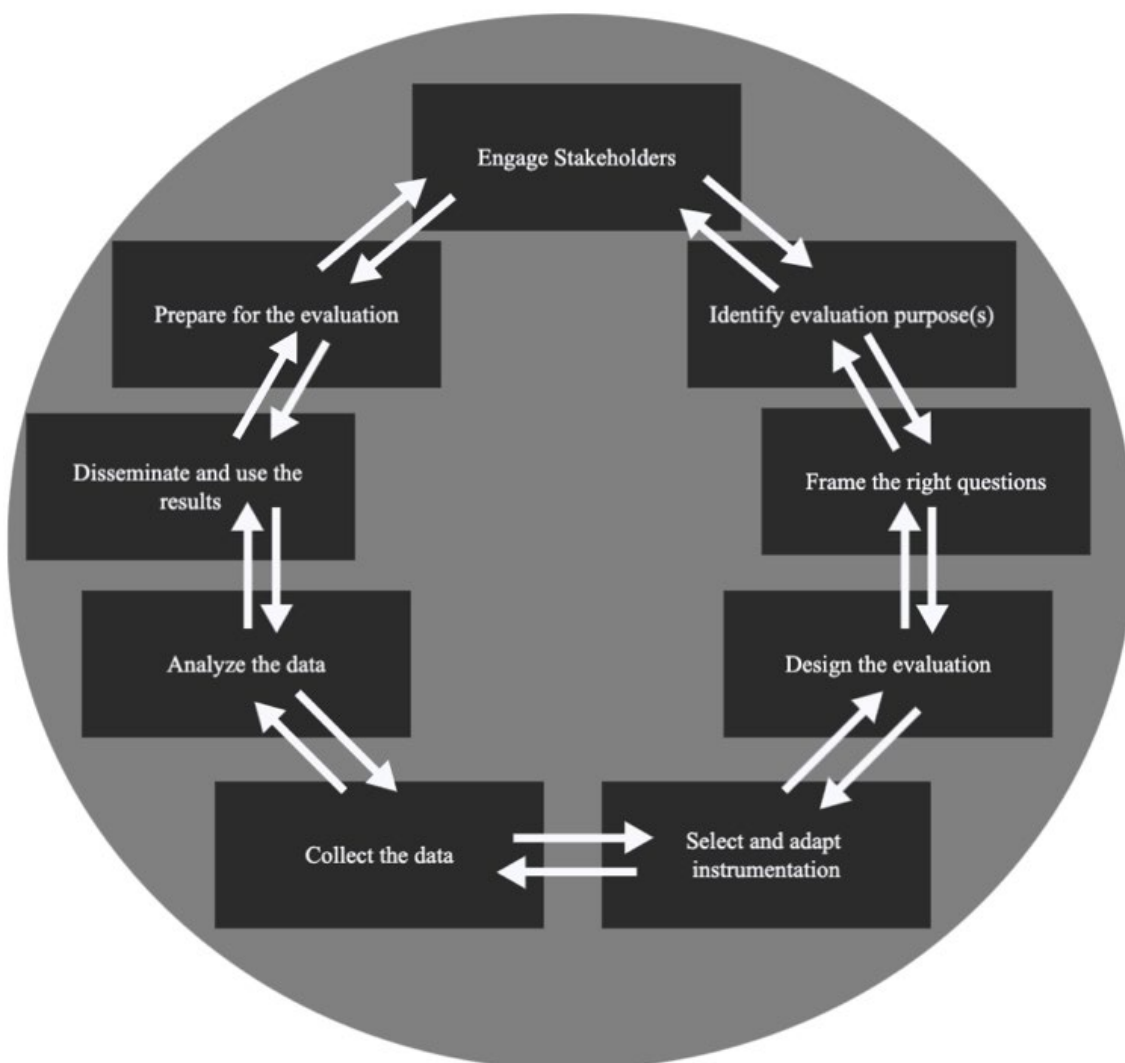
### **Suggestions for Future Work**

As mentioned previously, one limitation of this study relates to the lack of community stakeholder input of the initial evaluative rubric generated during this study.

Hood (1998) merged aspects of asset-based pedagogies (e.g., culturally relevant and responsive teaching) and education assessment (Gordon, 1995; S. T. Johnson, 1998) to develop culturally responsive evaluation (CRE). CRE focuses on evaluative practices when working with historically marginalized stakeholders and consists of nine steps during implementation (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5**

*Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework (adapted from Hood et al., 2015)*



Engaging community stakeholders is a critical component of culturally responsive evaluation (Hood et al., 2015). Moreover, Bowman et al. (2015) suggest culturally responsive evaluation in an Indigenous context requires working with communities to solve problems.

Therefore, in these situations, the evaluator for an Indigenous project in an Indigenous context becomes responsible not only for designing the evaluation, but for being a trusted teacher who can help facilitate capacity building with the community being evaluated and the project members carrying out the grant or program being evaluated. A culturally responsive evaluator has the knowledge, skills, and abilities for evaluation but also is intentional and inclusive when selecting and implementing evaluation design and methods based on the cultural and contextual needs of the project, context, participants, and stakeholders. (p. 343)

As a result, the engagement of community stakeholders in the state of Montana will be a part of future design cycles related to this study.

In future work, my intention is to become a *trusted teacher* when working with Montana's educators and Indigenous communities. One way in which I will do try to become a trusted teacher is by engaging in cultural protocols. For instance, I will provide a traditional gift (or offering) to community stakeholders for their consideration of working with me in this evaluative process of IEFA curriculum. I also have to remain aware of my experiences as *insider* and *outsider* to this research (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Smith, 1999). While I may be considered an *insider* to this research in that I am an enrolled member of an Indigenous nation (White Earth Nation), I am also aware that I am likely to be perceived as an *outsider* to this research as I am not a member of any tribes located in the region of Montana. Additionally, future research could also include further thematic analyses of different lesson plans targeting upper grade levels (grades 6 and

above) and content areas beyond social studies (e.g., languages arts and science) within Montana's IEFA repository. Another possibility for future work includes thematic analyses of additional online repositories such as the Native Knowledge 360° Education Initiative (<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>), which houses educational resources created by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

While carrying out this research, it is also important to be aware of the possible challenges to the implementation of Montana's IEFA in K-12 education. One particular challenge resides in the continued national (Bissell, 2023; Ray & Gibbons, 2021) and regional (e.g., Sakariassen, 2021) debate regarding race-based education and 'antiracism' movements. Recent anti-CRT efforts by Montana's attorney general have attempted to limit conversations of CRT and racism in public K-12 classrooms (Knudsen, 2021). Given these events and the ongoing controversy of CRT in schools, the implications for basing this study in CRT could potentially impact how my proposed evaluative framework (Table 9) is adopted. One potential way to navigate this process could be to explore how Montana's educators are currently navigating the teaching of history and IEFA in the state of Montana where the teaching of CRT and race-based education remains highly contested. In a recent study, Abraham-Macht (2022) interviewed American history secondary teachers to explore how CRT debates impacted their teaching. While many of the educators in Abraham-Macht's (2022) study were from so-called "battle-ground" states (where the teaching of CRT remains a controversial issue), none of the educators who were interviewed were from the state of Montana. Therefore, I propose performing a more regionally-based version of this study to explore how

Montana's educators and IEFA stakeholders are navigating CRT controversies, especially in relation to IEFA implementation, as an additional future area of study related to this work. The results from this proposed work could help to better shape future iterations of my initial evaluative rubric.

An additional consideration for future research recommended by Stanton et al. (2015) relates to the investigation of how IEFA implementation relates to non-AI/AN teachers' pedagogy. As mentioned in the introduction, only a small percentage of Montana's educators identify as AI/AN (less than 4%) while the majority are white (Montana Office of Public Instruction, personal communication, March 17, 2023; U.S. Department of Education, 2017-2018). This is an important consideration for this study because many of Montana's educators may lack the cultural knowledge, personal experiences, and/or training necessary to adequately support IEFA implementation (Carjuzaa, 2012). Also mentioned in the review of literature was the concept that even well-intentioned white educators can perpetuate biases and racism (Gillies, 2022; Miller & Harris, 2018). Carjuzaa (2012) explains how IEFA implementation can lead to educator empowerment that can also be passed on to their students: "Teachers who take on the difficult work of self-examination, critical analysis, and deep reflection transmit this empowerment to their students" (p. 14). Therefore, future areas of this research will include ways to incorporate professional development and/or training activities where Montana's educators can critically reflect on their own cultural knowledges and pedagogical practices as they learn how to utilize my proposed evaluative rubric effectively.

Another suggestion for future work is the elaboration of the dimension referred to as “*Community-Based Accountability*” (McCarty & Lee, 2014). As discussed in Chapter I, only about 13.9% of Montana’s student population identify as AI/AN (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2021-2022). Therefore, because many of the intended learners of Montana’s IEFA curriculum are non-AI/AN, there may be curricular content present in lesson plans that is not culturally-appropriate for all students to learn. With this design consideration in mind, I suggest that tribal leaders and educators also have the ability to review lesson plans at multiple intervals utilizing multiple applications of the rubric over time. As a result, future iterations of this evaluative rubric will allow for tribal leaders and educators to engage in the evaluation process of Montana’s IEFA lesson plans.

### **Conclusion**

This study helped to gain an understanding of the content being taught in Montana’s *IEFA* social studies curriculum and how that content relates to tenets of TribalCrit and components of CSRP. As of the time when this study was being conducted, I found that very few studies relating to evaluation in K-12 social studies education and AI/AN education had been conducted. Additionally, the results of this study helped to confront settler colonialism in K-12 social studies and AI/AN education through its development of an evaluative tool for checking curricular alignment with tenets of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005) and CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014). This evaluative tool is intended to be used by educational specialists to vet curriculum prior to adding it to Montana’s IEFA repository. In this way, curriculum that is chosen by curriculum



specialists to be in Montana's IEFA online repository is more likely to privilege Indigenous ways of knowing and uphold Montana's *Essential Understandings*. Furthermore, other states (e.g., Washington, Wyoming, and Oregon) are looking to IEFA scholarship as an example as they develop their own Indigenous education curriculum and resources. As a result, this evaluative tool could potentially be used by content developers as they engage in the process of vetting curriculum and developing their own online repositories.

### **Summary**

This study adopted a design-based research approach to develop a theory-informed evaluative rubric aligned with critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing approaches. In this chapter, I provided a summary of my findings and discussion as they related to my research questions and design objective. I also discussed the limitations of this study and directions for future work, including how I will develop future iterations of my evaluative work with Montana's IEFA community stakeholders. In sum, this dissertation study adds new insights into the development of critical and culturally sustaining/revitalizing forms of K-12 curricular evaluation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A  
Critical Framework of Review

### Critical Framework of Review

Adapted from the published work of Tintiango-Cubales et al. (2020)

		Yes	No	Unsure
Critical Content	1. Does the content include counter-narratives?			
	2. Does the content reflect micro and macro levels of analysis of Filipina/o American experience?			
	3. Does the content grounded in the growing body of historical, literary, and multimedia resources on Filipina/x/o Americans?			
	4. Does the content utilize community based research and sources of knowledge?			
	5. Does the content include primary sources?			
	6. Does the content include multiple subjectivities?			
	7. Does the content address controversial topics?			
	8. Does the content promote dialogue and critical thinking about Filipina/o Americans?			
	9. Does the content engage students in constructing new knowledge about Filipina/o Americans?			
	10. Does the content reflect connections to universal themes, issues, concepts, events?			
	11. Does the content meet or exceed respective state or national standards?			
	12. Does the content engage students in critically reflecting on themes of 1) identity; 2) the struggle for justice; 3) giving back to the community; 4) contributions to humanity? (Cordova, 2003)			
Critical Instruction	13. Do the methods encourage the sharing of counternarratives?			
	14. Do the methods implement inquiry-based cyclical processes of critical praxis?			
	15. Do the methods of instruction encourage a process of decolonization, the liberatory praxis of unlearning colonial mentality?			
	16. Do the methods promote empathy and perspective-taking?			

		Yes	No	Unsure
	17. Do the methods engage students to connect Filipina/o American history to their personal experiences?			
	18. Do the methods of instruction provide spaces, projects, assignments, and dialogue that “encourage(s) students to become social agents and develop their capacity to confront real-world problems that face them and communities?” (Duncan-Andrade & Morell, 2008, p. 25)			
Critical Impact	19. Does the curriculum impact one’s identity? If so, how?			
	20. Does the curriculum impact the community and society? If so, how?			

Appendix B

Codebook for Research Question One

### Codebook for Research Question One

Code	Tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005)	Definition	Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)	Non-Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)
Colonization is endemic to society	Tenet 1	The act or process of settling and establishing power over Indigenous peoples dominates U.S. society (Battiste, 2002; Brayboy, 2005; Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014)	“The westward movement of whites brought such things as guns, alcohol, and diseases such as smallpox and cholera. Cheyenne life was forever changed. They developed rivalries with Crow and Shoshone Indian tribes because they all were being pushed into the same lands. They developed alliances with the Sioux, the Arapahoe, and Apaches as a means to protect themselves” (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe? p. 3).	Social Studies Content Standard 4 Benchmark 8 (1)(g) summarize major issues affecting the history, culture, and current status of the American Indian tribes in Montana . . . (one tribe) (Ancestral Lands and Places, p. 3).
U.S. policies toward American Indians are rooted in imperialism	Tenet 2	Courses or principles of action adopted or proposed by the U.S. government are based in land acquisition and material gains (Brayboy, 2005; Williams, 1987, 1989)	“Use the ensuing discussion to aid students in thinking about and revising their understanding of land ownership and the conflicts that might come about as two different peoples claim the same land” (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe? p. 2).	“I can identify a tribe’s ancestral lands, migration routes, historic range, and ancestral lands for two or more Montana tribes.” (Geography of Montana Indian Reservations, p. 2).
Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space	Tenet 3	State of being in between or “inbetweenness” (Brayboy, p. 432) as political/legal and racial beings (Brayboy, 2005;	“Maria and her people have to make an important decision – do they follow the law and give up traditional dancing and other native ceremonies or do they follow the way of their ancestors? Ask groups	Understandings—Montana Indian people are citizens of their tribes/nations, the state of Montana, and the U.S. with each reservation (including Little Shell) having a tribal



Code	Tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005)	Definition	Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)	Non-Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)
Obtaining and forging tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification toward tribal sovereignty	Tenet 4	Brayboy & Searle, 2007)  Refers to the right of American Indians to govern themselves and make decisions regarding their own nations (Brayboy, 2005; Cobb, 2005)	to use the list of ideas to help make a good decision and write up what decision they think Maria and her people made. Remind them to use information in the story to help them make their decision and be ready to support their decision” (Making Decisions Based on Best Information, p. 2).  “Prepare students by reviewing the concept of sovereignty in relation to oneself. What types of power does a student have over herself in school? What rights and responsibilities do students have at school? What rights and responsibilities do students have as Montana citizens?” (The Purposes of Tribal Government, p. 2).	government. (The Purposes of Tribal Government, p. 1)  Understandings—Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers (Governmental Responsibilities: Community, Tribal, State, Federal (p. 1).
Toward notions of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and power	Tenet 5	Shifting away from dominant Eurocentric forms of culture, knowledge, and power toward Indigenous notions of culture, knowledge, and power (Brayboy, 2005)	“Facilitate a discussion regarding their responses and point out how many of the tribal seals contain images of geographical features such as mountains and rivers. Reaffirm the fact that tribes have cultural, historic, and spiritual connections with their environment” (Geography of Montana Indian Reservations, p. 2).	IEFA Essential Understanding 3: The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practices by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. . . .
Governmental	Tenet 6	Principles of action	“The Northern Cheyenne group was	The history content standards

Code	Tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005)	Definition	Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)	Non-Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)
and educational policies of assimilation toward American Indians		adopted or proposed by the U.S. government or educational programs that are intended to have Indigenous peoples adopted Western practices (Adams, 1995; Brayboy, 2005)	recognized separately, and shared land with the Brule Lakota Sioux (today, in South Dakota), including the Black Hills, which was the Cheyenne's spiritual home. They were also to be given seeds and a plow with two well-broken oxen and one cow, in hopes they could become small farmers like white settlers who were moving westward" (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe? p. 3).	for fourth grade are that each student will (b) identify events and policies that have impacted and been influenced by tribes in Montana (Histories of Montana Indian Tribes, p. 1)
Honoring traditions, tribal differences, and the adaptability of Indigenous peoples	Tenet 7	Acknowledging Indigenous peoples' ability to adjust and continue to exist and thrive in the U.S. as well as celebrating their individual and community differences toward Indigenous futurities (Brayboy, 2005)	There were 49 identified enrolled members of the Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation who were WWII Code Talkers. Our Code Talkers were members of Company B, 163rd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Division, Poplar, MT." (American Indians in the Military—A Warrior Spirit, p. 3).	"IEFA Essential Understanding 1: There is a great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana" (Montana Indians Differ in Language and Culture, p. 1).
Stories as legitimate sources of knowing and being	Tenet 8	Recognizing oral traditions and their significance within Indigenous communities as well as acknowledging the differences between	"Next, show the following clip called Buffalo and Porcupine - Northern Cheyenne Trickster Story. This traditional trickster story provides students with an opportunity to hear a tribal specific story told by a tribal member"	"Each tribe's oral history and traditions include ways in which the tribe came to be – its origin (GLE 3.4.2).

Code	Tenet of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005)	Definition	Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)	Non-Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)
Connecting theory and practice toward active change	Tenet 9	Listening and hearing oral traditions (Brayboy, 2005; Battiste, 2002; Burkhart, 2004)  Working with Indigenous communities to promote and realize tribal self-determination and sovereignty (Brayboy, 2005)	(Learning about American Indian Oral Traditions, p. 2).  “At this point in their study, students should be able to use their reservation maps to identify the closest tribal government, contact that tribal chairperson, or a local tribal member, and invite that person to the classroom for a discussion of tribal government, operations, policies, and responsibilities” (Montana Reservation Governments, p. 2).	“IEFA Essential Understanding 6: History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians and Counterring Them, p. 1).

Appendix C

Codebook for Research Question Two

## Codebook for Research Question Two

Code	Component of CSRP (McCarty & Lee, 2014)	Definition	Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)	Non-Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)
Attending to asymmetrical power relations and decolonization	Component 1	Working to transform colonization and sustain Indigenous education sovereignty (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy et al., 2015; McCarty & Lee, 2014)	“They don’t seem to homestead or ‘own’ the land, as you might expect. They don’t regard this as a ‘New Planet’ and are puzzled by the name you are using for it. They call it <i>The Land</i> ; they have names for places they traditionally travel to, and they respect the rights of other bands as they all gather food, hunt, and fish. They tell you they have always lived on <i>The Land</i> , and they have always used certain places for their hunting, fishing, and food gathering... They expect to continue to use <i>The Land</i> as always, with no changes.” (Sovereignty: What Does it Mean for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe? p. 5)	“Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of unique tribal perspectives regarding the environment” (Tribal Land Features and Tribal Connection to Land, p. 2).
Reclamation and revitalization toward Indigenous futurities	Component 2	Indigenous revivals and cultural continuity operating in resistance to colonization (e.g., language revitalization) (McCarty & Lee, 2014; Moll & Ruiz, 2005)	“Within the Northern Cheyenne community today, traditions of name giving are still practiced. The individual or the parents identify someone in the community that is admired for their personal qualities such as bravery, honesty, integrity, etc. Then the individual or the parents go to the namesake and the parents” (What’s in a Name? p. 52).	Essential Understanding 3: The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practices by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. (Montana Indians: Past Traditions and History, p. 1)

Code	Component of CSR (McCarty & Lee, 2014)	Definition	Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)	Non-Example (including name of lesson plan and page number)
Community-based accountability	Component 3	Responsibility to the 4 R's - respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships when working with Indigenous communities (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy et al., 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; McCarty & Lee, 2014)	"Students will know the etiquette involved in politely researching and respecting a tribe's traditions. For example, prior to researching, the class will discuss how to research and how to ask about oral history when interviewing tribal members" (Learning About American Indian Oral Traditions, p. 1).	"Students will know negative impacts of stereotyping American Indian people" (Stereotypes, p. 2).

## CURRICULUM VITAE

MEGAN HAMILTON

1351 Edvalson Street  
 Department 1304  
 Ogden, Utah 84408-1304

## EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences** 2023  
 Department of Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences, Utah State University, Logan, Utah
- M.Ed. in Secondary Education** 2015  
 School of Teacher Education and Leadership, Utah State University, Logan, Utah
- B.S. Biology Composite Teaching (Cum Laude)** 2011  
 Science Teaching Program, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah

## PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

- Assistant Professor in Teacher Education** 06/2022 – (current)  
 Teacher Education Department  
 Weber State University
- High School Biology & Chemistry Teacher** 08/2020 – 08/2021  
 Davis Connect Online High School  
 Farmington, Utah
- STEM Professional Practice Assistant Professor** 08/2016 – 04/2017  
 Utah State University Extension/4-H  
 Provo, Utah
- High School Biology & Genetics Teacher** 08/2015 – 07/2016  
 Jordan School District  
 West Jordan, Utah
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Integrated Science Teacher** 08/2011 – 07/2015  
 Tooele County School District  
 Tooele, Utah

**District Science & Engineering Fair Coordinator** 08/2013 - 05/2015  
 Tooele County School District  
 Tooele, Utah

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#### HONORS & AWARDS

**Graduate Fellow** 2021-2022  
 Intersectional Gender Studies & Research  
 Utah State University

**ICLS Doctoral Consortium Participant** 2020  
 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Learning Sciences  
 Nashville, Tennessee (Virtual Conference)

**ITLS Research & Development Award** 2020-2021  
 Department of Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences  
 Utah State University

**Doctoral Scholar Fellowship** 2017 – 2022  
 Department of Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences  
 Utah State University

**Science Post-Graduate Scholarship Fund Award** 2017 – 2022  
 American Indian Graduate Center  
 Albuquerque, New Mexico

**AERA Division C Shark Tank Competition Judge's Winner** 2019  
 American Educational Research Association  
 Division C—Learning & Instruction

**Legacy of Utah State Award** 2018 - 2019  
 College of Education and Human Services  
 Utah State University

**Second Best Paper Award** 2018  
 SIGCSE/Computer Science Education Research

**Frederick Q. Lawson Scholarship** 2017 - 2018  
 Utah State University

**Terrel H. Bell Teaching Scholarship** 2010 - 2011  
 Weber State University

**F. Ann Millner Presidential Scholarship** 2005 - 2009  
 Weber State University



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## PREVIOUSLY FUNDED GRANTS

**Hamilton, M.** (2019). Principal Investigator. Culturally Responsive Game Design with Off-Reservation Native Youth & Their Communities. Funded by the Division C Graduate Student Shark Tank Competition. AERA. \$1500.00

**Hamilton, M.** (2019). Principal Investigator. Culturally Responsive Game Design with Off-Reservation Native Youth & Their Communities. Funded by the Department of Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences. \$1500.00

**Hamilton, M.** (2016). Principal Investigator. Utah County Extension 4-H STEM Community Outreach Program. Funded by Utah State University–Extension. \$9,869.00

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## SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

### PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

#### 2020

Litts, B. K., Tehee, M., Baggaley, S., Jenkins, J., Isaacs, D., **Hamilton, M.**, & Yan, L. (2020). Culturally Disruptive Research: A (Re)Engagement with Research Processes and Teaching Practices. *Information and Learning Sciences*.

#### 2019

**Hamilton, M.**, Clarke-Midura, J., Shumway, J. F., & Lee, V. R. (2019). An Emerging Technology Report on Coding Toys and Computational Thinking in Early Childhood. *Technology, Knowledge and Learning*.

Clarke-Midura, J., Lee, V. R., Shumway, J. F., & **Hamilton, M.** (2019). The Building Blocks of Coding: A Comparison of Early Childhood Coding Toys. *Information & Learning Sciences*.

### PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

+ *indicates equivalent of peer- reviewed journal article*

#### 2022

**Hamilton, M.** & Morgan, C. (2022). Lessons from Manoomin: Toward Acknowledging the Sovereignty of Indigenous Making & Sharing. The Interdisciplinarity of the Learning Sciences, 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS) 2022, Hiroshima, Japan: International Society of the Learning Sciences.

**2020**

Litts, B.K., Searle, K.A., **Hamilton, M.**, Yazzie, K., & Mannie, C. (2020). Diversifying Computational Tools: How Technology Affords and Constrains Indigenous Youths' Agency. In M. Gresalfi, M. & I. S. Horn (Eds.). *The Interdisciplinarity of the Learning Sciences, 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS) 2020, Volume 3*, Nashville, TN: International Society of the Learning Sciences, pp. 1261-1267.

**2018**

**Hamilton, M.**, Clarke-Midura, J., Shumway, J., & Lee, V. R. (2018). An Initial Examination of Designed Features to Support Computational Thinking in Commercial Early Childhood Toys. *Proceedings of the 2018 International Conference of the Learning Sciences*. London, UK: ISLS.

+ Clarke-Midura, J., Poole, F., Pantic, K., **Hamilton, M.**, Sun, C., and Allan, V. (2018). How Near-Peer Mentoring Affects Middle School Mentees. *Proceedings of ACM SIGCSE conference*, Baltimore, Maryland, USA, February, 2018. Won second best paper Award for CS Education Research.

## PRACTITIONER-ORIENTED JOURNALS

**2019**

Shumway, J. F., Clarke-Midura, J., Lee, V. R., **Hamilton, M.**, & Baczuk, C. (2019). Putting Spatial Orientation and Measurement Skills to Work: Coding Toys in Kindergarten. *Teaching Children Mathematics*.

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 CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

## PEER-REVIEWED PRESENTATIONS

**2021**

Litts, B. K., **Hamilton, M.**, Timbimboo-Madsen, P., Pacheco, R., Sherlock, A., & Quayle, K. (April 2021). Community-Driven Design Research: A Critical Methodological Approach. *American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (Virtual Conference)*.

Litts, B. K., Tehee, M., **Hamilton, M.**, Jenkins, J., Isaacs, D. S., Baggaley, S., & Yan, L. (April 2021). Culturally-Disruptive Design Research: An Ethical & Methodological Shift to Support Partnership Work. *American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (Virtual Conference)*.

## 2020

Litts, B. K., Tehee, M., **Hamilton, M.**, Yan, L., Isaacs, D., Jenkins, J., & Baggaley, S. (November 2020). Toward a Culturally Disruptive Framework in Partnership-Based Research and Design. Association for Educational Communications & Technology Annual Conference (Virtual Conference).

Yazzie, K., Mannie, C., **Hamilton, M.**, & Litts, B. K. (November 2020). Using Simple Heart Rate Monitors to Promote Healthy Lifestyles. Association for Educational Communications & Technology Annual Conference (Virtual Conference).

**Hamilton, M.** (October 2020). Building a Computer Science Learning Ecosystem: An Exploratory Study Examining the Connections Between Culture and Technology with Indigenous Partners Across Northern Utah [Oral Presentation]. Society for Advance of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science Conference (Virtual Conference).

**Hamilton, M.**, Litts, B. K., & Searle, K. A. (August 2020). Design Considerations for Empowering Indigenous Youth through Video Game Design [Oral Presentation]. Play Make Learn Conference (University of Wisconsin-Madison/Virtual Conference).

**Hamilton, M.** & Litts, B. K. (April 2020). Making in Indigenous Contexts: Design Considerations for Culturally-Responsive Workshops. In *Making the Future: Addressing Critiques, Transitions, and New Challenges in Maker Education* [Structured Poster Session]. AERA Annual Meeting <http://tinyurl.com/y5copmwt> (Conference Canceled).

## 2019

Clarke-Midura, J., Sun, C., **Hamilton, M.**, Pantic, K., Poole, F., & Allan, V. (April 2019). Near-Peer Mentoring as a Way to Foster Self-Efficacy in Informal Computer Science Environments. AERA (Toronto, Ontario, CAN).

## 2018

**Hamilton, M.**, Clarke-Midura, J., Shumway, J. F., & Lee, V. R. (October 2018). A Framework for Evaluating Computational Thinking Skills and Design Features of Early Childhood Toys [Structured Poster Session]. 2018 SACNAS National Conference (San Antonio, TX).

Clarke-Midura, J., Pantic, K., Poole, F., Allan, V., Dorwood, J., & **Hamilton, M.** (2018). Making Apps: A Near Peer Mentoring Program for Girls. In *K. A. Searle & B. K. Litts' Making at the Margins: Engaging Underserved Communities in Maker Technologies, Activities, and Spaces* [Structured Poster Session]. AERA (New York, NY).

## PRESENTATIONS (NON-PEER REVIEWED)

**2022**

**Hamilton, M.**, Mansour, R., & Pantic, K. (submitted). Flipgrid-ing the Classroom: Around the World in 10 Days [Utedchat]. 2023 UCET Conference.

**2019**

**Hamilton, M.**, Litts, B. K., Searle, K. A., Yazzie, K., & Mannie, C. (October 2019). Culturally-Responsive Video Game Design with Indigenous Youth. American Indigenous Research Association [Structured Poster Session]. 7th Annual Education & Research Conference (Polson, MT).

**Hamilton, M.**, Litts, B. K., Searle, K. A., Yazzie, K., & Mannie, C. (September 2019). Culturally-Responsive Video Game Design: Implications for Indigenous Youth [Structured Poster Session]. 2019 #InclusiveSciComm Conference (Kingston, RI).

Sherlock, A., **Hamilton, M.**, Parry, D., Litts, B. K. (August 2019). Building Inclusive & Sustainable Community Partnerships Through Place-Based Storytelling [Panel Discussion]. The 68<sup>th</sup> United Nations Civil Society Conference (Salt Lake City, UT).

**2017**

**Hamilton, M.** (2017). Building a Robotics and Coding Program for Elementary Youth [Workshop]. Utah Afterschool Network's Northern Recharge Conference (Salt Lake City, UT).

**Hamilton, M.** (2017). Electronic-Textile (E-Textile) Bows [Workshop]. Utah Valley University's She-Tech Conference (Orem, UT).

**Hamilton, M.** (2017). Starting a 4-H Robotics Club [Oral Presentation]. Utah State University Extension's 4-H Leadermete (Kanab, UT).

**2014**

Sanders, C., & **Hamilton, M.** (2014). [Oral Presentation]. Using OER (Open Education Resource) Texts in the Classroom. Utah Middle Level Association Conference (Salt Lake City, UT).

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 INVITED TALK
**2020**

Litts, B. K., Tehee, M., Isaacs, D., & **Hamilton, M.** (July 2020). Who Decides What “Counts”? | Equitable Stewardship: Ethical, Cultural, & Historical Considerations of Data Practices in RPP Work [Panel Discussion]. 2020 National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships Annual Forum (Virtual Conference).

**Hamilton, M.** (April 2020). Culturally Responsive Video Game Design with Indigenous Youth: Implications for Practice and Future Research [Invited Speaker Session]. AERA Annual Meeting San Francisco, CA <http://tinyurl.com/wlo25bn> (Conference Canceled).

**2019**

**Hamilton, M.**, & Litts, B. K. (October 2019). Native CS Connections Across Northern Utah [Mini-Plenary Session]. 2019 CSforAll Summit (Salt Lake City, UT).

Moore, K., Lewis, P. & **Hamilton, M.** (September 2019). Inclusive Science Communication as a Mechanism Towards Decolonizing Science [Panel Discussion]. 2019 #InclusiveSciComm Conference (Kingston, RI).

**2017**

Clarke-Midura, J., & **Hamilton, M.** (October 2017). Understanding the Role of Gender in Engaging the Interest of Girls in Computer Science [Oral Presentation]. NSF ITEST Session, 2017 SACNAS National Conference (Salt Lake City, UT).

Clarke-Midura-J., Pantic, K., **Hamilton, M.**, Wood, L., & Balderas, A. (July 2017). Integrating App Inventor into your Programming Efforts [Oral Presentation]. 4-H Computer Science Pathway Training (Lehi, UT).

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 TEACHING

## COURSES TAUGHT

**Instructor for EDUC 3900 – Preparing, Teaching, & Assessing Instruction** (Format: Face-to-Face; Semester: Fall 2022); This course focuses on lesson planning, teaching, and assessment in diverse content areas.

**Instructor for EDUC 1010 – Exploring Teaching** (Format: Face-to-Face; Semester:

Fall 2022); This course is a prerequisite to elementary and secondary licensure program in the Department of Teacher Education at Weber State University.

**Co-Instructor for ITLS 6540 - Learning Theory** (Format: Face-to-Face; Semester: Fall 2017 & Fall 2018); Topics include theoretical background, history, definitions, pedagogical approaches.

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#### INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

<b>Moyes Academic Support &amp; Technology Endowment (ASTECC)</b> Committee Member Weber State University	2022
<b>Mursion Research Group</b> Committee Member Weber State University	2022
<b>Storytelling Festival</b> Steering Committee Member Weber State University	2022
<b>Annual WSU Diversity Conference</b> Evaluation Committee Member Weber State University	2022
<b>Annual WSU Diversity Conference</b> Technology Committee Member Weber State University	2022
<b>Graduate Fellow</b> Intersectional Gender Studies & Research Utah State University	2021 - 2022
<b>President</b> Instructional Technology Student Association (ITSA) Utah State University	2018 - 2019
<b>Treasurer</b> Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science Utah State University Chapter	2018 - 2019

**Vice-President** 2017 – 2018  
Instructional Technology Student Association (ITSA)  
Utah State University

**Vice-President** 2017 - 2018  
Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science  
Utah State University Chapter

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#### NATIONAL LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

**SACNAS Mentor Judge of Student Presentations** 2021  
Society for Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science Conference

**AERA Volunteer Reviewer of Submissions** 2020 — 2021  
American Educational Research Association

**SACNAS Student Presentation Subcommittee** 2019 — 2020  
Society for Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science Conference

**Full-Paper Track Co-Chair** 2019  
FabLearn Conference