



Minnesota State University Moorhead

RED: a Repository of Digital Collections

The Interactive Journal of Global Leadership and Learning Infographics

Fall 12-15-2023

Narrative Inquiry in Practice: A Study Identifying Themes of Persistence and Barriers in the Educational Journeys of American Indian Students in Higher Education

Kristina Cirks

Follow this and additional works at: <https://red.mnstate.edu/ijgll-infographics>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Indigenous Education Commons](#)

Researchers wishing to request an accessible version of this PDF may [complete this form](#).

IJGLL

Vol. 1, Issue 3
Bridge

Interactive Journal of Global Leadership and Learning



MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MOORHEAD®

A member of the Minnesota State system

NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN PRACTICE

M MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
MOORHEAD.

IJGLL

A Study Identifying Themes of Persistence and Barriers in the Educational Journeys of American Indian Students in Higher Education

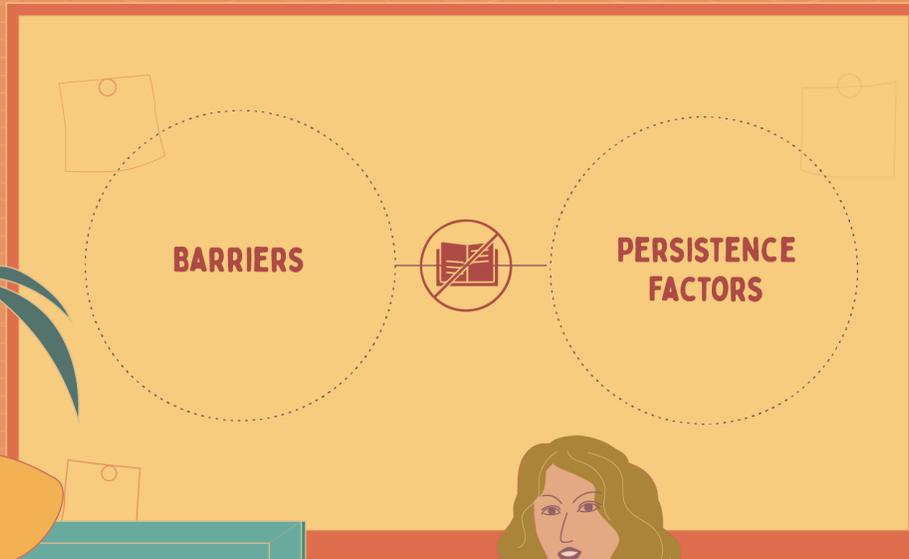
The participation of American Indian students in colleges across the United States brings a wealth of cultural experiences and strengths to the learning environment. However, American Indian students have experienced failure in the educational systems and record the lowest degree completion rates in higher education. To understand this phenomenon, this article features an intimate examination of the student experience utilizing narrative inquiry.



Kristina Cirks



Literature Review



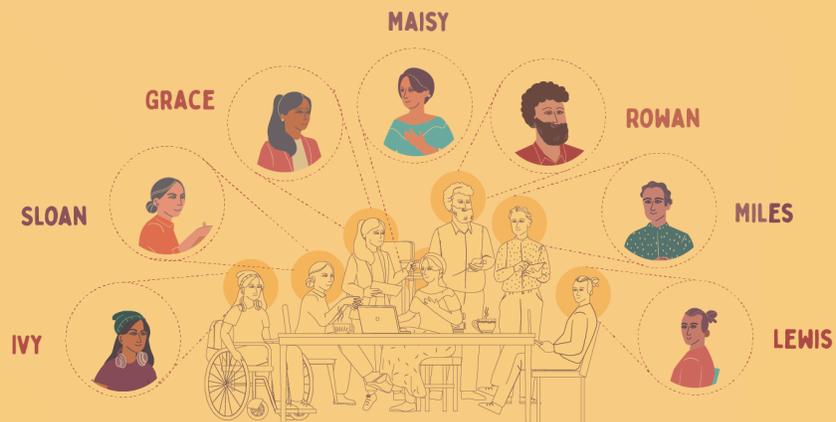
Historically, the education of American Indians has been conducted without Indian input, thus nurturing a sense of detachment and distrust of the educational system for many families and communities. Cultural identity has proved to be a barrier for American Indians in higher education as they face cultural insecurity when trying to maintain their identity and deal with pressure to conform to the university culture. Further, many American Indian students face greater financial barriers because of their low socio-economic status.

The literature found common themes of academic preparedness, sociodemographic characteristics, cultural values and strengths, self-efficacy, personal disposition, and the college experience that affect an American Indian students' persistence.

Research Design

In an attempt to understand the winding pathways of success for American Indian students in higher education, the fundamental question of the study was: **What factors impact American Indian students' enrollment and persistence in graduate school?** With this question as the focus, common themes were created to understand and appreciate American Indian students' educational journeys. This qualitative study delved into the personal educational journeys of seven American Indian students using a phenomenological approach* and a narrative inquiry method**.

PARTICIPANTS

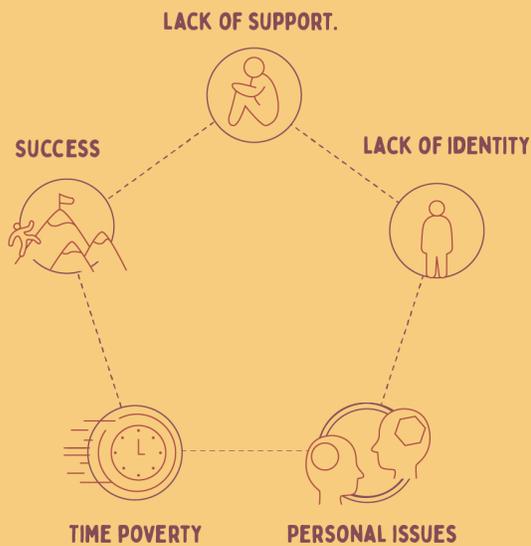


* **Phenomenological approach:** a method in which it is allowed participants to describe their experiences in their own words and expose the human experience.

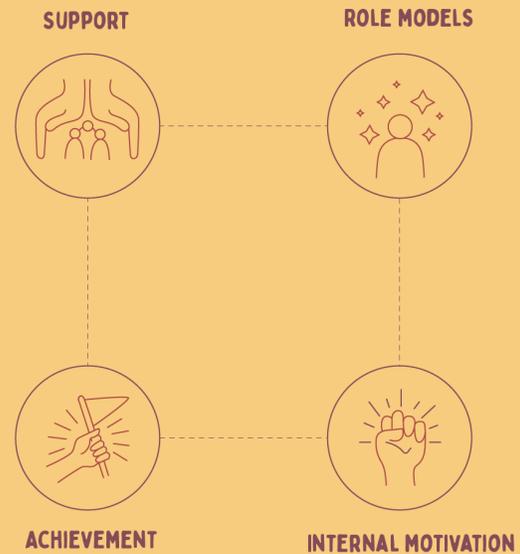
** **Narrative inquiry method:** the aim of this method is to record the experiences of an individual or small group, revealing the lived experience or particular perspective of that individual, usually primarily through interview which is then recorded and ordered into a chronological narrative.

Results

BARRIER THEMES



THEMES OF PERSISTENCE



Predominantly, participants identified the lack of financial support, lack of cultural competency, emotional distress, time poverty, afraid to ask for help, afraid to succeed, and navigating through the college processes as barriers to their educational success.

Additionally, the participants' narratives identify themes of persistence that include the importance of having a role model, fear of failure, making the family proud, advancement opportunities, and support from family, friends, and cohorts.

Conclusions

An illustration of a university hallway. The walls are a vibrant red with a subtle pattern, and the floor is a bright yellow with a pattern of small dashes. A central figure, a woman with long blonde hair wearing a purple sweater, stands with her hands outstretched as if speaking. To her left, a man in a yellow shirt and white pants walks away. To her right, a woman with a backpack and books walks towards her. In the background, another man in a yellow shirt is on a phone, and a woman on the far right is looking at her phone. A single light fixture hangs from the ceiling, casting a glow on the central figure.

Popular barriers in past research have agreed that historical trauma, cultural beliefs, racism, achievement gap, poverty, family commitment, the lack of preparedness, lack of financial and family support, lack of role models, emotional distress, and the high school and college experience all impact American Indian student success.

To increase the retention rate among American Indian students, it is necessary that the learning campus environment meets the needs of the American Indians, both socially and academically.

With dropout rates that continue to rise, American Indians have a significantly lower college enrollment rate than any other ethnic group in the United States (Keith et al., 2016). This article offered an example of how narrative inquiry can be utilized in a qualitative study to identify barriers and persistence factors.



IJGLL

Cirks, K. (2021). Narrative Inquiry in Practice:
A Study Identifying Themes of Persistence and
Barriers in the Educational Journeys of
American Indian Students in Higher
Education.

The Interactive Journal of
Global Leadership and Learning, 1(3).



If you want to read the full article, click this link.