

THE PARADOX OF RESPECT AND RISK: SIX LAKOTA ADOLESCENTS SPEAK

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Nursing
Indiana University

May 2009

Accepted by the Faculty of Indiana University, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, the late Ruth E. Goodburn.

You inspired me as a child and encouraged me as an adult.

I know, wherever you are, that you are smiling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am uncertain where to begin. I think of all the individuals who have willingly given their time and talent, assisting me to succeed. Each person's contribution is unique and helped to shape my thinking, my actions, and my writing.

To Dr. Melinda Swenson, my dissertation chair and advisor, a simple thank you seems unworthy. I think of the hours you spent reviewing transcripts, reading narratives, and rereading my work. Your constructive criticism and helpful comments have forever changed how I think. I can never repay you except by carrying forward what you have so unselfishly given to me.

To Dr. Kathy Russell, my initial advisor, community expert, and organizational guru, thank you for taking me on as your first doctoral student and for connecting me to individuals that were key to the research process. To Dr. Deb Stiffler, my adolescent health expert, thank you for joining the team in a time of my need and willingly sharing your expertise.

To my minor advisor, Dr. Larry Zimmerman, a heartfelt thanks for your guidance as I ventured into new territory. In my times of uncertainty, your knowledge and practical experience regarding the Lakota helped me to overcome my uncertainties and move forward. I am certain a higher power purposively reunited our paths.

I owe much gratitude to the research group known fondly as the "Hermeneutic Circle." Your gifts of reading, writing, sharing, and editing are remarkable. The discernment of the group broadened my thinking and greatly enhanced the quality of this dissertation. Next to the "Circle" group is my PhD cohort. Your support throughout the

plateaus and slippery slopes has been unshakable. I am so thankful to have been a part of such a wonderful group of women.

I would like to thank Professor Frank Pommersheim for sharing his expertise in the area of tribal sovereignty. My deep appreciation extends to Jerome Kills Small for graciously providing me with the appropriate Lakota translations. A heartfelt thank you to my colleagues in the Department of Nursing at Augustana College— without your sacrifices, I would still be writing. To Dr. Cheryl Leuning, thank you for letting me accompany your Augsburg College class to the reservation and helping me to initiate those first connections into the culture.

My deepest appreciation to Pastor Karen Rupp— your prayers and encouragement throughout this journey helped me “remember why.” Thank you for keeping my room available at the retreat center and giving me a second home when I was so far away from home. To Asa and Tresita, your devotion and acceptance has been so special to me. To Kelly and Susie, thank you for challenging my thinking by your gentle humor and guidance. To CeCe and family, your generosity and hospitality has forever touched my heart.

I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to each of the adolescents who participated in my pilot work and in my dissertation research. The candid stories that you so willingly shared with me will help us to shape a better future. My appreciation also extends to the directors of the college centers; thank you for your assistance with recruitment and for providing a place to meet with the participants. I also thank the Tribal Research Review Board for approving my pilot and dissertation research.

To my brothers and sisters, thank you for your patience. You accepted my desire for increased learning and always encouraged me.

I owe a tremendous debt to my daughters, Lindsey and Anna. You never questioned why, but instead sought ways to help. Anna, I thank you for shaking up my world through a simple phone call, *telling* me that I “have to do something.” You were right.

Finally, I wish to thank my husband, Randy. Without your unwavering support, I could never have ventured to Indiana and to the reservation. Thank you for believing in me and for helping maintain balance in my life. You are my *Inyan*.

ABSTRACT

Mary J. Isaacson

THE PARADOX OF RESPECT AND RISK: SIX LAKOTA ADOLESCENTS SPEAK

Adolescence is a time of turbulence as young people stretch parental boundaries, seeking where they fit in society. For many American Indian adolescents this time involves the initiation of dangerous high-risk behaviors. Potential causes posed for this are: loss of identity, loss of cultural values and traditions, lack of positive role modeling and feelings of hopelessness. Survey research has been the predominant method of data collection. Very few studies of Native American youth use storytelling, even though stories are a part of many Indian cultures.

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the phenomena of *respect* and *risk* from the viewpoint of the Lakota adolescent. I employed hermeneutic phenomenology with photography to help the adolescents illuminate these somewhat abstract concepts. I recruited participants from a single reservation on the Northern Plains. I collected data through non-structured interviews and participant observation. I analyzed the data using hermeneutic phenomenology based on Gadamer. Ecological systems theory provided a framework to assist me in understanding the multiple dimensions present in the adolescents' stories.

The phenomena of respect and risk from the perspective of these Lakota adolescents revealed a paradox. Each can be either positive or negative, depending upon the circumstances or the context of the situation. This paradox became the pattern among

the participants. The pattern is the rock (*inyan*) and the wind (*tate*). The rock and the wind are deeply interconnected, and the influence of one may impact the other. Three themes emerged from this pattern: role modeling (positive or negative), identity, and feeling valued. These themes are consistent with current research regarding adolescent high-risk behaviors. These stories are significant in that they are personal accounts by these adolescents.

This study has implications in nursing education, nursing practice, and health policy. Nursing education must attend to teaching students to listen and to become comfortable working with other cultures. As nurses advocate for future programming, it is essential that the research that guides the policies and programming be community-based action research. As society becomes more diverse, nursing must embrace many perspectives, helping all to achieve the highest quality of health and well-being.

Melinda M. Swenson, PhD, Chair

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Terms
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
IHS	Indian Health Service
IRA	Indian Reorganization Act
IRB	Institutional Review Board
SD DOC	South Dakota Department of Corrections
SD DOE	South Dakota Department of Education
TRRB	Tribal Research Review Board
U.S.	United States
USD	University of South Dakota
YRBS	Youth Risk Behavior Survey

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Values or virtues are present in all cultures. Each generation teaches subsequent generations its unique cultural virtues differently. Each family develops personal virtues, and children, as they grow and mature, learn these personal virtues through role modeling by significant adults in their lives. William J. Bennett (1997) writes that virtues encompass more than good intentions— virtues *are* what you do.

In traditional Lakota society, the entire *oyate*, or tribe, modeled virtues in everyday life practices and through the art of oral tradition (Walker, 1982; Young Bear & Theisz, 1994). Essential to this modeling was the embedded understanding that all adults within the *oyate* bore responsibility for raising Lakota children. Literature describes a variety of traditional Lakota virtues, with the virtue of respect consistently identified as being essential in helping to maintain order within the *oyate* (Marshall, 2001; M. Powers, 1986; Red Shirt, 2002; St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995; Young Bear & Theisz, 1994). A select group of Lakota adolescents indicated in the pilot study, which I conducted to inform this dissertation study, that respect is important to them (Isaacson & Big Crow, 2007). These adolescents shared the following comments when asked how they see respect in their communities:

“Be nice to them, listen to them.”

“By treating others how I want to be treated.”

“Cause no violence.”

“So other people won’t go in your yards and trash it up.”

Absent in the comments made by these adolescents was a clear description for how they actually see respect modeled in their everyday lives. These adolescents identified that if people would respect each other there would be less violence and less litter in their communities (Isaacson & Big Crow, 2007). Why did these individuals have difficulty articulating how they see respect in their communities? Many Native leaders suggest that this difficulty originates with Indian adolescents unsure of their identity. Young Bear (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994) writes, “Lakota youth have to identify with Lakota leaders in order to remain Lakota” (p. 112).

Why does such a struggle regarding identity exist among Native American adolescents? Tribal elders and leaders feel that central to this crisis of identity were the governmental mandates in the 1880s, which required the assimilation of Indian children into White, mainstream culture (M. Powers, 1986). With that assimilation came orders for the removal of many Indian children from their homes, families, and communities and their subsequent relocation into off-reservation boarding schools (Bear, 2008).

The sole purpose of the boarding school was to remove *the Indian* from *the child* or, in the words of Colonel Richard Pratt, founder of the first American Indian boarding school, “All the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (History Matters, 2008). Successfully *killing the Indian* necessitated the implementation of rules and regulations that forbade Indian children from practicing their cultural traditions, including speaking their native language (Bear, 2008). Breaking these rules subjected Indian children to severe punishment and ridicule.

Faced with abuse and neglect, many children quickly stopped practicing their cultural traditions and consequently forgot them (Bear, 2008). In an interview with

Charla Bear of National Public Radio, Bill Wright, a former boarding school resident states, “And I remember coming home, and, you know, my grandma asked me to talk Indian. . .and I told Grandma, I don’t understand you. She says, ‘then who are you?’ ” “Dan,” an American Indian elder from South Dakota and the center of focus in Kent Nerburn’s (2002) writings, echoes Wright’s comments:

They mixed us up with white people. They took away our language. They took our kids away to schools and wouldn’t let them learn about the old culture. They herded us onto reservations and rewarded Indians who acted just like white people. They created a generation of Indians who didn’t even know who they were. (p. 59)

Nerburn’s (2002) dialogue with Dan provides exceptional insight into the deep, inner turmoil that continues to exist among residents on the reservation. This turmoil, created by forced assimilation and boarding schools, is the crux of dissension among and within the reservation community, leading to confusion, frustration, powerlessness, and often the initiation of high-risk behaviors.

Susan Gardner’s (2000) conversation with Joyzelle Gingway Godfrey exemplifies the confusion and risk-taking that is apparent on the reservation. Godfrey states,

Who are we truly? That’s something that we need, as Indian people; we need to look at our true history, the reality of who we really were, as human beings, so that we can *be* human beings, so that we’re *not* trying to live up to those thoughts, pictures, something that we never were. My God, no wonder we have so much alcohol and drug abuse, no wonder we have suicide. Our teenagers are killing themselves in droves— what do they have to live up to? On the one hand, they see their parents, the alcohol and drug abuse that’s horrible; on the other hand, they see themselves as supposed to be this noble Indian, you know. So for them there is no middle ground. There is no safety net. (Gardner, 2000, p. 464–465)

What does it mean to be an American Indian in South Dakota? More precisely, what does it mean to be an adolescent and an American Indian on a reservation in South

Dakota? Has over 100 years of forced assimilation had a significant impact on the cultural identity of American Indian adolescents? A plethora of literature is present describing the prevalence of problems and hopelessness that permeates the lives of Native American children.

“Native American youth are taught too often that their problems are hopeless” (Problems Facing Native American Youths, 2002, p. 17). High risk-taking behaviors manifest these feelings of hopelessness. American Indian¹ teens identified the following risk areas as high priorities: alcohol, drug and substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, school drop out rates, gangs, crime, suicide (Problems, 2002). This same report noted that Indian adolescents place importance specifically on the preservation of their Native culture and spirituality. Literature suggests that loss of cultural identity within American Indian children may directly influence the initiation of high-risk behaviors (Beauvais, 1998; Beauvais, Jumper-Thurman, Helm, Plested, & Burnside, 2004; Blum, Beuhring, Shew et al., 2000; Cochrane & Dougherty, 2003).

Daniels (1970) notes that identity crises occur “within families and within individuals because of contradictory perceptions” (p. 230). Nerburn (2002) associates the problems with identity as occurring with the first connection with the White world, “we had our identity taken from us the minute Columbus arrived on our land” (p. 57). Dapice (2006) believes that loss of identity relates directly to the boarding school and assimilation practices forced upon the Indians in the early reservation period.

Young Bear echoes these concerns (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994). The foundation of identity, according to Young Bear, is knowing who you are. He expresses concern for the younger generation, reporting that parents give too much to their children without

instilling traditional values. Young Bear (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994) notes, “if your family history ends, if your family name ends, if the Lakota language ends. . .your family identity, your family blood almost kind of diminishes to water” (p. xxii). Indian children need to know who they are; Indian children need role models (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994).

What do Lakota children need? Moreover, do Lakota adolescents perceive that practicing traditional values, participating in ceremonies, or speaking the Lakota language are important?

The pilot study for this dissertation that Cecelia Big Crow and I completed on a reservation in the Northern Plains with 18 Lakota adolescents (ages 10–14 years) revealed that the participants identified the values of respect, wisdom, and honesty as important, yet were unable to clearly articulate how they see these values displayed (Isaacson & Big Crow, 2007). The participants expressed that knowing their traditional language and participating in traditional ceremonies are essential and professed that these activities distinguish them as Indian. Many of the participants, however, had only a cursory knowledge of their traditional language and engaged minimally in traditional activities.

Clearly, a dichotomy exists in what is valued and what adolescents see. Is a lack of positive role modeling, as suggested by Young Bear (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994), contributing to this dichotomy? Hukill (2006) postulates that in some Indian communities, role models may not be respected, honest, or wise, thus leading to dissension within and among communities in decision-making practices. However, before an investigation occurs on understanding role modeling and risk behaviors, it is

essential to ascertain if potential cultural differences in the interpretations of words and/or values between Lakota and Western cultures exists.

General Aims

Cultural differences in interpretations of words, values, and practices can significantly influence the way individuals receive nursing or medical care. For example, what one person interprets as high-risk behavior may be a normal part of daily living by an individual in another cultural group. By increasing the understanding of potential cultural differences in the subtle variations of words or values in the Lakota culture, I will be equipped to assist this vulnerable population to access resources that they feel will improve their health.

My previous work (Isaacson & Big Crow, 2007) revealed that the Lakota adolescents who participated in the focus group pilot study value respect, wisdom, and honesty. Yet none of the participants in the study could articulate clearly how these values display in their daily lives, with many only able to express how they see these values *not* practiced. Was this finding significant? Did a variation in the interpretation of words or values between Lakota and White cultures influence this finding, or was there perhaps a fault in the research design related to differences in cognitive abilities in the 10- to 14-year-old population? (I will address these concerns in chapters two and three of this dissertation study.)

Respect is an important virtue for Lakota adolescents. However, if respect is so important, why then do so many Lakota adolescents initiate high-risk behaviors? Is it possible that cultural variations exist in the understanding of respect and risk between the

White and Lakota cultures? The primary purpose of this study was to understand the phenomena of respect and risk from the viewpoint of the Lakota adolescent.

Aims

The primary aims of this study were:

1. To describe, through the words of Lakota adolescents, their interpretations of respect and risk,
2. To examine through photography how Lakota adolescents see respect and risk practiced in their every day lives, and
3. To raise awareness of potential cultural variations in the phenomena of respect and risk within the Lakota culture.

Research Question

The research question for this study was: “What is the meaning of *respect* and *risk* from the perspective of the Lakota adolescent?”

Significance of the Study

According to the 2001 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) of over 5,000 BIA high school students across the U.S., Native American adolescents are at greater peril for enacting high risk-taking behaviors than their White peers. Key areas identified by both the BIA YRBS (2001) and Problems Facing Native American Youths Survey (2002) were the risk behaviors of cigarette smoking, alcohol use, substance use, sexual intercourse, and violence.

Risk Behaviors

Cigarette, alcohol, and substance use. According to the 2001 BIA YRBS, 34% of the high school students reported daily cigarette usage, 49% identified consumption of

alcohol, and 50% indicated use of marijuana within the 30 days prior to the survey. Cocaine (21%), inhalants (19.5% within the previous 30 days), and methamphetamines (20%) were other significant substances identified in the survey as having been used. American Indian children reported initiation of substance use earlier than the White population reported (Lowe, 2006), with similar statistics present in the middle school population of BIA schools (BIA, 2000). The 2000 BIA YRBS, specific to grades six through eight, identified the following substance use characteristics: 73% tobacco usage, 52% alcohol consumption, and 45% marijuana experimentation (BIA, 2000). These statistics, especially those that relate to middle school children, raise concerns regarding the future experimentation, use, and potential abuse of more harmful substances such as cocaine and hallucinogens as well as other risk behaviors (e.g., sexual activity, violence, and suicide) (Duclos, Beals, Novins, Martin, Jewett, & Manson, 1998; Novins & Baron, 2004; Novins, Beals, & Mitchell, 2001; Novins & Mitchell, 1998; Potthoff, Bearinger, Skay, Cassuto, Blum, & Resnick, 1998).

Specific data are not available regarding South Dakota Native American adolescent substance use; however, I noted the following statistics within the public high school population of South Dakota from the YRBS: 25% of youth tried cigarettes, 44% consumed alcohol, and 18% used marijuana within the previous 30 days (South Dakota Department of Education [SD DOE], 2007). This same survey identified that 3% of students experimented with cocaine, 5% identified methamphetamine use, and 5% tried inhalants (SD DOE, 2007). According to the 2007 U.S. Census report, an estimated 8.3% of the South Dakota population is American Indian, with approximately 71.3% residing on the reservations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Thirty percent to 44% of this population

is under the age of 20 years (University of South Dakota [USD], Business Research Bureau, 2008a).

Sexual intercourse. BIA high school students reported that 47% of ninth graders have had sexual intercourse. This percentage increases significantly as grade level increases (i.e., 56%, 10th grade; 66%, 11th grade; 75%, 12th grade) (BIA, 2001). The middle school BIA survey indicates that 16% of students reported having had sexual intercourse (BIA, 2000). Forty-five percent of American Indian females have delivered their first child by the age of 20 (BIA, 2000). Also relevant is the significant increase in documented AIDS cases within the Native American population over a seven-year time span: 348 cases in 1993 and 2,234 cases in 2000 (BIA, 2001). In South Dakota, the American Indian single teen birth rate was 21.3%, as compared to 5.6% for White teens (USD, 2008a).

Violence. Prevalent among Native American young people is a rise in teen violence; 20% of BIA high school students have carried a weapon to school, 44% have been involved in a physical altercation, and at least 180 gangs are active in Indian country (BIA, 2001). Braveheart (2003) indicates significantly higher American Indian youth suicide and homicide death rates than for their White counterparts. Freedenthal and Stiffman (2004) identify that attempted suicide by Native youth is associated with cigarette smoking, family substance use, depression, and perceptions of racism.

In the South Dakota American Indian adolescent population, teen arrests and detentions have risen, especially when compared to the general juvenile population. American Indians comprise 15.6% of the juvenile population, yet of the juvenile arrests in 2004, 30.2% were Native American, which is 2.39 times higher than the White arrest

rate (South Dakota Department of Corrections [SD DOC] and Council of Juvenile Justice, 2006).

American Indian young people in South Dakota comprise nearly 35.4% of the juveniles in detention facilities, with Whites comprising 28.91 per 100 detentions as compared to 40.24 per 100 for American Indians (SD DOC, 2006). Also relevant are the number of confinements to secure juvenile facilities. American Indian juveniles are 4.88 times more likely to be held in a secure juvenile correctional facility than their White peers are (SD DOC, 2007).

Do South Dakota Native American juveniles truly commit acts that are more violent than those acts committed by White juveniles; or are these juveniles more likely to be arrested, charged, and convicted than White juveniles are? This question, raised by the state's minority populations, spurred the South Dakota Supreme Court to launch the Equal Justice Commission (South Dakota Equal Justice Commission, 2006). The final report generated by this Commission in 2006 identified the following areas of concern: unfairness in the system; language interpretation; juvenile justice and minority children; attorneys, juries, criminal justice-arrests and stops; and criminal justice pretrial processes and dispositions. Within these areas of concern, the South Dakota Equal Justice Commission reported that a common perception of disparity exists within the justice system for minority populations. The Commission recommended that the justice system improve its data monitoring systems, provide diversity training for all employees working in law enforcement, and hire more minority employees within the justice system (South Dakota Equal Justice Commission, 2006).

Violent deaths (accidents, homicides, or suicides) among American Indian teens are significantly higher than among White teens. From 2003–2007, the American Indian adolescent violent death rate was 199.2 per 100,000 compared to White teens at 48.1 per 100,000 (USD, 2008a).

Potential Risk Factors for Initiation of Risk Behaviors

Poverty. Poverty is a potential link to risky behaviors by Native American adolescents (Blum et al., 2000; Blum, Harmon, Harris, Bergeisen, & Resnick, 1992; Parker, Haldane, Keltner, Strickland, & Tom-Orme, 2002). Poverty influences child well-being as families struggle to meet basic physical needs (Cochrane & Dougherty, 2003). Thirty-two percent of American Indian family incomes are well below the poverty level (Parker et al., 2002).

South Dakota has nine counties that rank in the top 100 of the poorest counties in the U.S., all of which include Indian reservations (USD, Business Research Bureau, 2008b). Forty-three percent to 73% of the children living in these specific counties experience poverty (USD, 2008b), with the 2005 median household income reported in the range of 17,000 to 33,000 dollars, annually (USD, Business Research Bureau, 2008c).

School performance. Poor school performance contributes to adolescent risk-taking behaviors. Studies show that students who feel positive about their school achievement are less likely to report substance use and more apt to identify enhanced reports of health (Novins & Mitchell, 1998; Parker, 2004, Swaim, Beauvais, Chaves, & Oetting, 1997). South Dakota's public school dropout rate for academic year 2007–2008 was 1.6% (USD, 2008a), with the South Dakota BIA high schools reporting a 13.7% dropout rate (BIA, Bureau of Indian Education, 2007–2008). State public schools,

primarily composed of American Indian students and located on or near reservations, reported dropout rates from 1% to 58% for the same reporting period, with non-public school data unavailable (USD, 2008a).

Family structure. Another potential stressor for high risk-taking behaviors is a lack of family structure. Kunesh (2006) indicates that American Indian children are more likely to reside in single-parent households headed by mothers, with higher levels of poverty. In South Dakota, Native American children often live with grandparents or other relatives (Kunesh, 2006).

Summary

It is evident that American Indian adolescents experience significant danger of engaging in high risk-taking behaviors. This study sought to uncover the meaning of respect and risk within the Lakota culture from the viewpoint of the Lakota adolescent, possibly generating insights into potential solutions and the appropriate allocation of resources toward preventing high-risk behaviors.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Martin Heidegger (1962) postulates that to more fully understand and interpret meaning, we must see the horizon of what it is we wish to know and lay it bare, explicating the meaning of its significance from within the context of what we wish to know. This review of selected literature begins with a brief exploration of hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutics is a science of textual interpretation (Ironsides, 2008b). Phenomenology is a foundation for understanding experiences or notions (Smythe, 2002), bringing to light (Heidegger, 1962) greater understanding regarding a phenomena from a particular vantage point. Hermeneutic phenomenology identifies the significance of understanding how a person's culture and traditions may influence that individual's thinking (Christopher, 2001; Gadamer, 2004; Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005).

Second, I will provide an in-depth review of the meaning of respect and risk from the viewpoint of the Lakota American Indian. Following this review is an overview of Lakota history. Understanding and increasing the awareness of potential differing cultural definitions of the words respect and risk, including possible historical influences, will lay a foundation for culturally sensitive interpretation of the data.

Next, I will present concepts related to adolescent cognitive development to ascertain the possible differences in cognitive capabilities in adolescents between the ages of 10 and 14 years. To guide this exploration, I will review Piaget's theory of formal operations (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958), as well as Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1984) and Erikson's theory of identity formation (1950), including current thinking on the applicability of these theories. These theories provide foundational support in the

determination of participant selection, appropriate methodologies, and future data interpretation of adolescents.

Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979). Although qualitative research does not require the use of theory to generate knowledge (Annells, 1996; Mitchell & Cody, 1993), ecological systems theory increases my awareness of the complexity and influences of the sociocultural contexts of persons within and among their communities.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Martin Heidegger initiated the development of hermeneutic phenomenology (Annells, 1996). Heidegger transitioned the focus of knowledge acquisition in phenomenology from an epistemological to ontological emphasis (Racher & Robinson, 2002). Ontology requires that the researcher seek to understand the meaning of *Being*, or our existence in the world, (Annells, 1996; Conroy, 2003; Heidegger, 1962; Racher & Robinson, 2002) by asking the question, "What does it mean to be?" (Mackey, 2005, p. 181). Heidegger emphasized that within ontology, separation of person from world is not possible, but is co-constituting (Koch, 1995; Leonard, 1994; Mackey, 2005). Co-constituting identifies that a person's world helps to create him or her, while he/she simultaneously is creating his/her own world (Annells, 1996; Koch, 1995; Leonard, 1994). Co-constituting is a constant interaction of person and world (M. M. Swenson, personal communication, July 17, 2008).

Heidegger (1962) describes co-constituting as *Dasein*, or Being-in-the-world. *Dasein* simply means "everyday human existence" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 13). Heidegger further explicates that this everyday human existence (*Dasein*) can choose to exist

authentically or inauthentically (Mackey, 2005). This authenticity or inauthenticity reveals Dasein's awareness of Being and can be stated as, "I am" (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1962). A person presents himself or herself authentically or inauthentically. A person is in the authentic presentation of self when he/she realizes his/her potential comes from within (Harman, 2007). Inauthenticity occurs when the person sees his/her potential through the eyes of others (Harman, 2007).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is an interpretive process (Mitchell & Cody, 1993) with hermeneutics signaling the importance of language (Dowling, 2004) in the interpretive process. Hermeneutic phenomenology interprets phenomena, laying bare the hidden, illuminating meaning into the understanding of the phenomena (Annells, 1996; Dowling, 2004; Mackey, 2005). The hermeneutic approach to interpretation of phenomena is circular. Within this hermeneutic circle of understanding (Ironside, 2008a), the researcher pauses to reflect and ponder, going back to the literature and the participants' responses. This circular approach, or going-back, emphasizes the fluidity of phenomenological interpretation; the researcher's thoughts may ebb and flow between not understanding and understanding, thus leading to greater awareness and appreciation of the participant point of view (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998).

The hermeneutical process requires the researcher to contemplate his/her own prejudices, prejudgments, or assumptions prior to entering into a relationship of study with participants (Annells, 1996; Dowling, 2004; Koch, 1995). Heidegger (1962) referred to this preparation as the researcher understanding his/her background or utilizing *fore-having*, *fore-sight*, and *fore-conception*. Fore-having is that with which we are familiar or have a practical familiarity; we understand because we have experienced

something similar in the past (Ironsides, 2008a; Plager, 1994). Fore-sight is our particular perspective; it is the viewpoint that we bring with us, how we have learned to consider the world. Fore-conception is what we think may result from the research (Plager, 1994).

Gadamer, a student and protégé of Heidegger, describes the hermeneutic process similarly, yet differently than Heidegger. Gadamer acknowledges the need for understanding our prejudgment; however, he does not separate this prior understanding into fore-having, fore-sight, or fore-conception. Gadamer (2004) insists that our method include an understanding of our own horizon, or personal standpoint. Gadamer emphasizes that our prejudgments come from our effective history (Moran, 2000) or our own traditions and personal situations (Warnke, 2002). Our prejudgment, or prejudice, arises from our own linguistic background; thus, our bias may be the result of our “horizon of meaning” (Dowling, 2004, p. 35) of definitions of words or interpretation of certain practices. Gadamer (2004) contends, “We must place ourselves in the other situation in order to understand it” (p. 302). We must listen and be open to the other person’s horizon.

Gadamer expands on Heidegger’s description of the hermeneutic circle, indicating that it is the “coherence of the whole and parts” (Grondin, 2002, p. 47). Thus, as the researcher interprets the text of the parts, he/she at the same time considers the whole. Consideration of the whole includes active contemplation of the past, present, and future (temporality), while thoughtfully regarding the context. This consideration is a “constant process” (Grondin, 2002, p. 47) as the researcher and participant share their preconceptions and past. The present and future meld, co-creating meaning through

enhanced awareness of values and language (Christopher, 2001; Gadamer, 2004; Leonard, 1994; Racher & Robinson, 2002).

Gadamer (2004) describes this process as the fusion of horizons—the process whereby the researcher more clearly sees the situation from the viewpoint of the participant. This enhanced insight occurs “because of language and in language” (Moran, 2000, p. 270). Gadamer (2004) places special significance on the importance of language: “You understand a language by living in it” (p. 386). Language makes this fusion of horizons possible (Dostal, 2002).

Gadamer’s fusion of horizons includes understanding the historical horizon (Annells, 1996). The historical horizon includes the participants’ and the researcher’s pasts as part of the interpretive process (Annells, 1996). The historical horizon is an outgrowth of Heidegger’s (1962) *historicality*, which identifies the importance of knowing the past in order to understand the present and the future. Gadamer (2004) describes the horizon as in constant motion, changing as a person changes. Gadamer (2004) writes, “Our own past and that other past toward which our historical consciousness is directed help to shape this moving horizon out of which human life always lives and which determines it as heritage and tradition” (p. 303).

Hermeneutic phenomenology holds great promise as a research method toward greater understanding of the Lakota. The foundational premises of language, fusion of horizons, and historicity (history) interconnect with the Lakota way of life, thus enhancing my potential for interpretation and illumination of the phenomena of respect and risk.

Respect and Risk

Respect

Respect, or *wawoohola*, as practiced in traditional Lakota culture, is a much revered and highly desirable behavior (Catches & Catches, 1999). The selected literature review revealed the following themes: listening, tolerance, addressing and interacting with family members, generosity, and role modeling. Expansion of the themes follows.

Listening. To gain respect, one must be a good listener. One shows this by listening to the teaching of elders and behaving courteously (Napesni & Torson, 2003; Red Shirt, 2002; Weinberg, 2004). Napesni writes:

So you two respect each other. . .what your Mom says, listen to her and do what she says. Even someone that is a day older than you, listen to them, because they are older than you. Even if you don't like what they are saying, don't say anything. (p. 9)

Napesni (Napesni & Torson, 2003) continues her litany of listening and being respectful to elders by saying,

And always remember to listen to your elders. Just listen. Just like my Dad told me, because they know better than you. Don't answer back. Even if you don't want to hear them or you are not going to do it. Just listen!
(p. 25)

"I was taught to listen well" (Red Shirt, 2002, p. 75). Red Shirt explains that Lakota adults teach children not only to listen but also to consider the meaning of words spoken to them. She writes, "In time I learned that sometimes the spoken word was in conflict with the thought behind it. When this happened I had to respond appropriately, in silence, to say nothing" (Red Shirt, 2002, p. 75).

L. Big Crow (personal communication, January 8, 2008) characterizes respect as good behavior, such as when children learn from adults to “sit still and listen to learn.” Young Bear (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994) credits good behavior to a family’s honoring of a child’s significant accomplishments by public acknowledgement. This public acclamation affirms to the child his/her importance within the tribe, instilling the desire to behave appropriately.

Tolerance. A recent pilot study I conducted on a reservation in the Northern Plains revealed that in this particular group of adolescents respect is “treating everyone like how I want to be treated” (Isaacson & Big Crow, 2007). This description is similar to Marshall’s (2001) where respect links to tolerance and, if shown to others, reflects back in a positive fashion on the individual; respect “creates itself in its own image” (p. 55). Respect in the form of tolerance is evident in Melda Trejo’s wish for “everyone to get together” (Petrillo, 2007, p. 122). Melda portrays tolerance by praying, eating, and working with individuals that may not share her views. Thus, respect of others is to be tolerant.

Red Shirt (2002) conveys that within traditional Lakota society laws and rules though unwritten were well known. These unwritten rules maintained order throughout the community. Adults taught these rules to children, who then emulated them throughout their early development, indoctrinating them to the importance of how to treat and interact with others in a respectful manner (Red Shirt, 2002).

Addressing/interacting with family. Within the kinship system of the Lakota, a sign of respect among families is how they address each other. For example, many Lakota do not address each other by given name, but rather refer to one another by their

relationship (brother, sister, auntie, grandmother) or their birth order (Red Shirt, 2002; Young Bear & Theisz, 1994). Petrillo's (2007) interviews with Melda Trejo capture the traditional Lakota way for addressing and interacting with family members. Melda states,

The Lakota way is that you really respect your brothers and sisters. Not even call them by names: Say "brother" in Indian. Say "sister" in Indian. . . .My father sit us down and told me, "Don't play with Norman. He's your brother, respect him." Same thing with Norman: "Respect your sister. You don't tease your sister." (p. 24)

Napesni (Napesni & Torson, 2003) corroborates Melda's statements: "As a little girl at that time they didn't address us by our names. It was always daughter *cunski* and son *cinski*, not by our names" (p. 230).

In traditional Lakota families, not directly addressing the person but rather speaking to them through the married partner demonstrates respect to in-laws (Napesni & Torson, 2003). For example, Jerome Kills Small (personal communication, January 14, 2007) describes the following method of communicating with his wife's family:

I never enter a room where any of my wife's female relatives may be without my wife. I also never talk directly to my mother-in-law, nor does she communicate directly to me. It is usually through my wife that we converse. I might say, "The *wojapi* is good today," and my wife will restate this to my mother-in-law. This is a true sign of my respect for her as my wife's mother.

Generosity. Generosity is a sign of respect. Acts of generosity are boundless.

Examples of generosity are giving away personal possessions or providing food or shelter to those in need. Young children in traditional Lakota teaching understood very early the importance of giving and receiving (Red Shirt, 2002; L. Big Crow, personal communication, January 8, 2008). "[The youth] knew it was better to be generous than it was to be selfish" (Red Shirt, 2002, p. 67). This instilled in children a generous spirit,

teaching thankfulness in receiving because they learned to give first (L. Big Crow, personal communication, January 8, 2008). L. Big Crow then asks, “How do you receive if you can’t give?” as she expresses concern for children today, since many are not taught how to give. Instead, she observes, in contemporary society many Indians are only seeking “What’s in it for me?” (L. Big Crow, personal communication, January 8, 2008).

Role modeling. Young Bear (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994) interconnects respect and generosity with role modeling. He describes his grandmother’s role in teaching him how to be generous: “When you give away, no matter how big or little, give it away in a respectful and honorable way” (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994, p. 59).

Red Shirt (2002) distinguishes that respect in the form of role modeling assisted in the learning and embodiment of living in a traditional tribal community. “A look, a whisper, or an uncomplimentary remark aimed at the wrongdoer was all it took to enforce these rules”; adults both showed and taught children “to do the right thing, in the right way” (Red Shirt, 2002, p. 69).

Leaders modeled the traditional virtues “such as generosity, kindness, having courage, having respect for oneself and for others” (Catches & Catches, 1999, p. 51). By modeling these virtues, a leader earned credibility, thus garnering the community’s trust and respect (Glover, 2004; Mohatt & Eagle Elk, 2000).

Role modeling, as described by Beatrice Medicine (2007), comes in the form of a parent choosing to stop using alcohol. Medicine writes that many Indian women become sober in their later thirties, parallel with their entrance into the role of grandparent. This sobriety comes as Lakota grandmothers wish to be positive role models to their grandchildren.

However, role modeling is not always positive. Medicine (2007) indicates that peer pressure to consume alcohol is formidable, especially for Lakota males. For the Lakota, drinking is symbolic to demonstrating your manhood: “one should drink like a man” (Medicine, 2007, p. 45).

Summary of Respect

In summary, respect within the Lakota culture is multifaceted and displayed in a host of ways. Traditional Lakota instruction instills listening, treating people kindly, and being generous as signs of respect. Persons show respect within families by not only their chosen words but also by their interactions. Role models demonstrate respect. However, I must ponder these questions when considering the Lakota value of respect.

1. If Lakota youth are taught to be silent and listen respectfully, may this be a reason why they are less likely to speak out when they see others engaging in high-risk behaviors?
2. How do Lakota youth see respect modeled in their communities?

Risk

Iyotognaka is to place one’s self in harm’s way (Buechel & Manhart, 2002). Traditional Lakota interpretations of risk are being a warrior, showing bravery, demonstrating courage, and counting coup². Contemporary Lakota conceptualizations of risk include the following: to be Indian, to succeed, to believe in self, and to leave the reservation.

Traditional Risk

The warrior. Young boys, in traditional Lakota society, trained to hunt game and protect the community. They trained to be warriors (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994). As a

warrior, young men learned to be fearless and to confront challenges thoughtfully, but with minimal hesitation (Red Shirt, 2002). “A man among the Lakotas is a warrior and lives with the constant awareness of death” (Red Shirt, 2002, p. 124).

Bravery. Traditional Lakota families encouraged their sons to be brave (Red Shirt, 2002). Boys regularly received challenges to deliver water, food, or needed supplies in the dead of night. This fostered bravery and courage, with the ultimate test experienced in battle (Marshall, 2001; Young Bear & Theisz, 1994).

Courage. Young Bear (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994) states, “The most courageous thing a warrior can do is to walk hand in hand with death. We call that *nagi gluha mani*, walking with the spirit” (p. 79). Warriors prepared for the possibility of death in battle by cleansing themselves in the sweat lodge prior to battle, creating a direct link with the spirit world (Young Bear & Theisz, 1994).

Counting coup. The greatest act of courage and bravery that a Lakota warrior could display was to count coup. The French, the first recorders of Lakota history, described counting coup, or *woyu'onihan kaga*, as the way that Lakota warriors showed honor in battle (J. Kills Small, personal communication, April 3, 2008). To count coup, the warrior would ride through the heat of the battle, cross enemy lines, face his enemy, and touch him with his lance, coup stick, or staff without killing him (J. Kills Small, personal communication, April 2, 2008; Weinberg, 2004). The warrior would then return to his side of the battle and continue to fight. Counting coup is an honorable act; it is the ultimate sign of respect (J. Kills Small, personal communication, April 2, 2008).

Contemporary Risk

To be Indian. Many highly decorated, contemporary Lakota warriors survived World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, only to return to the reservation and die from alcohol or drug abuse (Glover, 2004). Medicine (2007) describes this tendency toward abuse as the “culture of excitement” (p. 63) which traps individuals into feeling that the only way to escape the realities of reservation life and once again feel the glory of the battlefield is to drink and to forget. Alcohol is used to excess by many Indian, male adolescents as a method of proving themselves (Medicine, 2007).

To succeed. Joseph Eagle Elk (Mohatt & Eagle Elk, 2000) conveys the difficulties Indians experience if they try to succeed.

I asked for help [to stay free of alcohol] because I was weak and my friends never let me forget it. You know, when you change your life, many times your old friends, drinking buddies, do not stop bothering you and reminding you of your weaknesses. (p. 45)

Medicine (2007) attributes much of this negative behavior by the Lakota male to the loss of the warrior role in contemporary society. The Lakota male struggles to find his place in contemporary society; thus, his vision for success is limited.

To believe in self. L. Big Crow (personal communication, January 8, 2008) strives each day in her role as executive director of a boys and girls club to challenge the children who enter the club to believe in themselves and to strive to reach their full potential. She states, “It is a real risk for these kids to believe differently, to believe that they have potential. It is an even bigger risk to try” (L. Big Crow, personal communication, January 8, 2008).

To leave the reservation. Glover (2004) describes life on the reservation as similar to incarceration in that “it changes your view of who you are, where you’re going, and even who you used to be. You live in helplessness, dependency, depression, and hopelessness. One day bleeds into the next” (p. 112).

Even with such a dismal picture of reservation life, many individuals fear leaving the reservation. L. Big Crow (personal communication, January 8, 2008) states that one of the biggest risks that Indians face is to choose to leave the reservation. This risk appears even greater when one considers the fear attached to the risk. This fear relates to the feelings of inferiority that many Lakota experience when interacting with the White mainstream population off the reservation (C. Big Crow, personal communication, January 8, 2008).

Summary of Risk

Essential to my understanding of high-risk behaviors among contemporary Lakota, I first reviewed the traditional understanding of risk within this culture. In traditional society, risk is a normal part of every day life with boys raised and trained to aspire to be great warriors. However, the difference between contemporary risk and traditional risk, especially in the role of warrior, is not so clear-cut as noted in Mary Crow Dog’s story (Crow Dog & Erdoes, 1990): “. . .who had consumed a few beers and was singing his death song: ‘It’s a good day to die! Let me out of here! I want to die a warrior’s death. Let me count coup on them pigs!’ ” (p. 72).

Crow Dog (Crow Dog & Erdoes, 1990) notes that during the American Indian Movement’s occupation of Wounded Knee she saw many Indian men bravely and courageously face death or imprisonment. Crow Dog expresses frustration with these

same individuals when they cowered when faced with the realities of life (i.e., parenthood, employment). With such varying views in the depiction of risk, I need to pause and consider the following questions:

1. Is death such a part of living on the reservation that engaging in potentially life-threatening (or high-risk) acts have come to be viewed as a matter of everyday life?
2. What do youth feel are their personal risks?

Overview of Lakota History

Guy Gibbon's (2003) work centers on the Lakota and Dakota branches of the Sioux Nation and begins in 9500 BC, extending into the year 2000. Gibbon records a gradual change in the culture during the late 1700s as the tribe traveled west across the Northern Plains and became established hunters and warriors.

Working men and women were valued for their contributions to the extended family, or *tiospaye* (Gibbon, 2003; Robertson, 2002). The *tiospaye* taught children to be "polite, generous, and cooperative" (Gibbon, 2003, p. 74). Tribal leadership was not familial; instead, a person earned the right to lead as attested by his skill in warfare or, more importantly, in his ability to care for the lesser members of the tribe (Walker, 1982). Typically, the chief was among the poorest of the community because of his generosity.

As the tribe's size increased, family groups would "break off" or separate and form their own *tiospaye*. Considered a part of the larger tribe, this newly formed clan attained self-sufficiency in tribal matters and caring for its community (Walker, 1982). Disruption of this family structure occurred in the 1800s with the movement of the White population toward the settling of the West.

Gibbon (2003) identifies that from 1860 to 1890 the population of Euro-Americans in the U.S. and its western territories surged from 1.4 million to 8.5 million. As the population began to move west, the U.S. Army constructed forts to protect the individuals as they traveled through Indian country. Conflicts arose between the varying population groups in the 1850s, many related to the overuse of resources (i.e., killing of large bison herds) with conflicts continuing until 1890.

To appease the Indians and to decrease hostilities, the U.S. orchestrated several treaties, with the most significant treaty issued in 1868 and titled the “Treaty of Fort Laramie” (Gibbon, 2003). This treaty sought to establish boundaries— launching the reservation system— with dissension occurring among and between the major Lakota leaders. Red Cloud agreed to the treaty and reservation system, while Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse elected not to concede. The initial boundaries of the Great Sioux Reservation included the entire western half of present-day South Dakota.

In 1875, hostilities between the Euro-Americans and the Indians once again increased with the discovery of gold in the sacred land of the Lakota and within the boundaries of the reservation— the Black Hills. Gold seekers rushed to the Black Hills, with the Army offering protection to the miners rather than honoring the treaty. In 1876, the Army and the Lakota clashed in the Battle of the Greasy Grass (Battle of the Little Big Horn) where General George Custer’s Seventh Cavalry suffered a significant defeat (Gibbon, 2003). However, this victory for the Lakota proved to signal the “beginning of the end” of the Lakota people’s traditional nomadic lifestyle.

In 1877, Crazy Horse (one of the principal leaders in the victory over Custer) surrendered; the Army later killed him (Gibbon, 2003). Sitting Bull retreated into

Canada, but returned to the U.S. and officially surrendered in 1881. With the major leaders of the Lakota people now residing on reservations, the U.S. began the process of “civilization.”

Civilization would occur through the assimilation and allotment of the reservation from 1889—1934 (Gibbon, 2003). Under the General Allotment Act of 1887, the reservations were “divided into small allotments of about 160 acres per individual family” (Gibbon, 2003, p. 135). The desired impact of allotments was the destruction of the “traditional communal ‘ownership’ ” (Gibbon, 2003, p. 135) of land. The federal government planned to sell any remaining land to non-Indians after distribution of the allotments. With the establishment of allotments, poverty, along with malnutrition and disease, increased (Lewellen, 2002) among the Sioux on the reservation.

The next step toward civilization was assimilation. The federal government attempted assimilation simply by making traditional dances and ceremonies illegal (Gibbon, 2003; Robertson, 2002). Individuals refusing to comply with these laws faced imprisonment.

As the Lakota’s beliefs and rituals were restricted, many became disheartened, with others going “underground” and continuing to practice the Native ways in secrecy. As poverty, starvation, and illness spread on the reservations, a revival of the Native spirit began with the *Ghost Dance movement* in 1890 (Gibbon, 2003). Those practicing the Ghost Dance believed that the White man would leave their land and the People would once again return to their traditional lifestyle. The government, fearing an uprising, became very suspicious of the Ghost Dance and demanded that the Sioux halt its practice on all reservations. To stop the Ghost Dance officially, the government sent

officials to arrest Sitting Bull, whom they considered a leader in the movement. The arrest ended in the death of Sitting Bull on December 15, 1890.

Sitting Bull's death caused great fear in the remaining Lakota. Chief Big Foot chose to flee the Standing Rock reservation for the safety of Pine Ridge. Big Foot's band consisted of over 300 people, mostly women, children, and older men (C. Wheeler, personal communication, January 7, 2008). The Seventh Cavalry arrested Big Foot's band on December 28, 1890, near Wounded Knee Creek.

On December 29, 1890, with four Hotchkiss guns aimed at the encampment and over 500 military personnel present, the Cavalry disarmed the band (C. Wheeler, personal communication, January 7, 2008). Designed to rapid-fire over 40 rounds of ammunition per minute with a high degree of accuracy, the Hotchkiss gun proved detrimental to Chief Big Foot's band (J. Elk, personal communication, March 22, 2007). Who fired the first shot is unclear in the literature; however, what is evident is that at the end of the day over 200 Indians died, with many left to die in the bitter cold that ensued in the following days (Goes In Center, Pengra, & Jefferson, 2007). The Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 effectively curtailed the Ghost Dance movement.

The suffering of the Lakota people, however, only began with Wounded Knee as the U.S. continued to press for full assimilation and the total destruction of the traditional culture. To destroy the traditional culture, government authorities employed the next tactic: the separation of family groups. This separation occurred through the educational system and the enforcement of boarding schools.

Placement of American Indian children in boarding schools transpired through a forced removal of the children from their homes (Spring, 2007). The Indian population

often referred to the boarding schools as “white school”: “When I went to white school I was unhappy. I cried every night beneath my covers. A boy was not supposed to cry, and I was ashamed” (Nerburn, 2002, p. 167). Boarding schools imposed upon Indian children the regulations of “appropriate” hair length, “proper” dress code, and speaking English only (Spring, 2007). Failure to comply resulted in beatings and humiliation of the children. Nerburn (2002) writes, “So I tried to learn to speak. Most of the kids were afraid to speak. The teachers hit them when they said the wrong words. They thought it was better to be silent” (p. 169).

Survival of allotment, poverty, hunger, disease, and attempted assimilation was possible through the retention of their “core cultural beliefs” (Gibbon, 2003, p. 142). Many returned to the traditional tribal practice of generosity. Families merged their resources and established distribution sites for necessities, helping others to survive through their generosity (Macgregor, 1970). Once again, a revival of the traditional ceremonies began, starting a movement for Indian reform. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 assisted in this reform.

The Indian Reorganization Act removed forced allotments, established monies for economic improvement, education, and healthcare, and allowed the tribes to self-govern through tribal councils (Macgregor, 1970). During this time, many Sioux sought employment off the reservation through opportunities made available in “New Deal” programs (Gibbon, 2003). Unfortunately, the onset of World War II forced a reshuffling of funding from the IRA projects to the war effort, effectively curtailing any advancement for those residing on the reservation.

Even with the lack of funding, policies started by the IRA increased the public's awareness of American Indian issues, initiating a review of U.S. Indian policy (Gibbon, 2003). This review led to new federal legislation, beginning in the mid-1970s, for federally recognized tribes. Enacted legislation included the right to self-determination and education assistance, child welfare and custody, and the right to practice Native spirituality (Gibbon, 2003). These new rights spurred economic development, and legalized gambling became the Sioux's greatest asset (Gibbon, 2003).

The Sioux leadership recognized that successful economic development was contingent upon educational attainment. However, for many Native people, education was directly associated with boarding schools and abuse. To ease fears and encourage individuals to attend school, tribes started primary and secondary schools on the reservations. The Sioux expanded educational opportunities by opening accredited colleges where students could obtain degrees and learn their language, culture, and history (Gibbon, 2003).

Even with these new opportunities, tension and dissension, along with increasing substance use, still exist on the reservations (W. Peters, personal communication, October 27, 2007). The old concepts of *full bloods* and *mixed bloods* re-ignite past injustices and practices, fueling hostilities between and among family units with disputes in tribal leadership adding to the fire (C. Big Crow, personal communication, January 8, 2008; Gibbon, 2003; Robertson, 2002). Gibbon (2003) writes, "Because of these pulls and pushes, every Sioux must make a choice in how she or he will live. Their choices vary along a continuum from very traditional to very progressive" (p. 197).

In summary, the Sioux Nation has endured nearly 150 years of personal and cultural devastation. This brief overview of Lakota history provides insight into this highly complex and multifaceted culture.

Adolescent Development

Adolescence, characterized typically as a time of great emotional, physical, social, and hormonal upheaval, is a youth's transition from childhood into adulthood (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Buck & Ryan-Wenger, 2003). During adolescence, emotions vacillate between feelings of acceptance to feelings of inferiority as youth seek to discover who they are and where they fit in the general schema of every day life. Early adolescence and later adolescence comprise the adolescent period.

Early adolescence comprises ages 10 to 14 years (Buck & Ryan-Wenger, 2003; Reed, 1994; Schine & Harrington, 1982). Early adolescence signals the beginning of further role development, where the individual's self-confidence and self-esteem test the stretching of personal boundaries within peer and family groups (Schine & Harrington, 1982). Early adolescence heralds shifts in cognition, with youth experiencing enhanced abilities to consider multifaceted concepts, while at the same time testing their moral character (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Moshman, 2005).

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Piaget's interpretation of cognitive development encompasses four chronological stages (Santrock, 2003). These stages begin in infancy and extend into adulthood, with each stage signifying changes in a person's ability to process and understand his/her

environment (Santrock, 2003). This literature review will focus on Piagetian Stages 3 and 4, or the periods titled, “Concrete Operational Thought” and “Formal Operational Thought,” respectively.

Concrete operational thought. Stage 3 of cognitive development from the Piagetian view, known as the Concrete Operational Thought stage, includes the ages of 7 to 11 years (Santrock, 2003). During this stage, the child begins the shift from intuitive thought to logical reasoning (Moshman, 2005). This reasoning is reversible and replaces the more physical tasks that are part of early cognitive development; however, the reasoning is limited to concrete versus abstract thinking (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). For example, the child competently groups items and correctly multiplies and adds these groupings, including reversing the relationships (subtraction/division). Piaget and Inhelder (1958) further infer that within the concrete operational thought stage, the child is incapable of elevating his/her thought to systematic thinking or hypothetical reasoning. However, Moshman (2005) indicates that recent studies show that logical reasoning may shift to more sophisticated reasoning (abstract thinking) earlier than predicted by Piaget.

Formal operational thought. Piaget’s final stage, Stage 4, incorporates the ages of 11 to 15 years; its primary characterization is the adolescent’s increased ability to think about thinking (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958; Kuhn, 2006; Santrock, 2003). Inhelder and Piaget (1958) identify that within this stage, the adolescent is reflective and capable of considering possibilities, hence the advent of abstract thinking. Moshman (2005) describes the formal operational period as “operations on operations— that is, as *second-order operations*” (p. 9). Kuhn (2006) distinguishes that adolescents manage their own thinking, influencing the what, where, when, and how of thinking. Kuhn (2006)

likens this ability to managing thinking as the development of executive control or second-order cognitive skills.

As second-order operations, or cognitive skills, emerge, significant changes in abstract and hypothetical reasoning surface (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958; Moshman, 2005; Santrock, 2003). Adolescent thinking becomes more hypothetico-deductive with enhanced abilities to consider and/or solve complex problems. Inhelder and Piaget's (1958) work identifies that formal operational thinking corresponds to brain development. Kuhn's (2006) extensive research on cognitive ability cautions that great variability may exist among adolescents and even among adults. Kuhn (2006) documents in her study that "some 12-year-olds performed as well as the typical adult, while some adults performed no better than 12-year-olds" (p. 65).

Santrock (2003) reports that Piaget expressed limitations with this final stage, implying that the formal operations stage may not be complete until later adolescence or between the ages of 15 to 20 years. Kuhn's (2006) work affirms Moshman (2005); his research with middle school and college students demonstrates that some middle school youth apply formal operational thinking as well as college students.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Similar to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Kohlberg's theory proceeds along a linear path, incorporating a child's moral development with his/her ability to process cognitively (Kohlberg, 1984; Moshman, 2005). Central to Kohlberg's theory (1984) is the definition of morality, which "is the human capacity to reason" (Arnold, 2000, p. 367). As a person morally reasons, thinking should be intentional, sensible, and

autonomous. Kohlberg's theory (1984) consists of three levels and further subdivides into six stages.

The initial stage of moral development is Level 1, or preconventional reasoning. Level 1 characteristics are heteronomous morality (Stage 1), and individualism and exchange (Stage 2) (Kohlberg, 1984; Moshman, 2005; Santrock, 2003). In heteronomous morality, persons in authority determine and interpret what is good or bad for the individual (Stage 1). An enhanced awareness of self develops in Stage 2. This enhanced awareness, coupled with Stage 1, initiates the act of bargaining by the child toward fulfillment of needs for all parties involved (Kohlberg, 1984; Moshman, 2005; Santrock, 2003). Level 1 may transition to Level 2 near the chronological ages of 9–10 years as the child begins to internalize rules and social expectations (Kohlberg, 1984).

Level 2, or conventional reasoning, is the intermediate level of moral development (Kohlberg, 1984; Santrock, 2003). A heightened awareness of “social roles and expectations” (Moshman, 2005, p. 55) depicts Stage 3 and includes the beginning foundations of trusting relationships.

Stage 4 includes established social systems and the conscience (Kohlberg, 1984; Moshman, 2005; Santrock, 2003). These social systems provide the norms for law and order in society. Stage 4 moral reasoning continues over the course of adolescent development and extends into adulthood (Kohlberg, 1984; Moshman, 2005).

Attainment of Level 3, or postconventional reasoning, occurs when the individual makes personal, moral decisions after factoring all options. The person does not base his/her decision upon what others feel he/she should decide (Kohlberg, 1984; Santrock,

2003). Stages 5 and 6 do not consistently appear in all individuals (Moshman, 2005). Kohlberg (1984) describes Stage 5 as the achievement of “utility and individual rights” (p. 176). Laws in this stage regulate the person to respect others, even though he/she may be in conflict with the established regulations. In Stage 6, or universal ethical principles, the person abides by his/her own chosen set of values.

Erikson’s Theory of Identity Formation

Consistent with the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg, Erikson’s theory progresses in incremental stages and correlates to chronological age. Erikson proposes that the formation of identity is continuous and changes as a person grows and matures (Erikson, 1950; Moshman, 2005). The first four stages encompass the ages of 0–10 years. Stage 5 encompasses the early adolescent and adolescent years with the remaining stages associated with adulthood. This literature review will center on Stage 5, or identity versus role diffusion.

Erikson’s Stage 5, identity formation, begins roughly at the age of 10 years and continues until approximately the age of 20 years (Santrock, 2003). Positive and negative occurrences incorporate each stage. As a person journeys through each stage, the preceding stage can predict the outcomes in subsequent stages. For example, an adolescent may harbor feelings of mistrust, shame, guilt, and inferiority as a result of unresolved issues in the earlier stages (Moshman, 2005; Santrock, 2003), hindering his/her ability to achieve the chief outcome of Stage 5, which is the development of personal identity (Erikson, 1950; Hall & Brassard, 2008).

Erikson’s multifaceted theory (1950) indicates that each stage deeply intertwines with the next. Moshman (2005) writes, “Erikson’s view was that adolescent exploration

of alternatives ideally results in a sense of individuality, a role in society, an experience of continuity across time, and a commitment to ideals” (p. 82). Erikson indicates that during this stage, adolescents grapple with extensive physiological changes. Focused on their outward appearance, adolescents seek their place within the peer group. Ego identity formation not only depends upon the adolescent’s ability to incorporate and use skills learned in the former developmental stages but also depends upon changes in libido, learning abilities, and social role expectations.

Erikson (1950) indicates that if an adolescent experiences doubt regarding his/her sexual identity, role diffusion may occur. In role diffusion (or identity confusion), the adolescent may “temporarily overidentify, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds” (Erikson, 1950, p. 228). The adolescent who successfully navigates and negotiates these new roles and expectations develops a sense of who he/she is and will be. However, the adolescent who is less successful in this stage may continue to struggle in his/her adult life with questions regarding his/her place in society.

Summary of Adolescent Development

Understanding the basic tenets of cognitive, moral, and psychosocial development within the adolescent is essential in the selection of appropriate methodology and research participants. Integral to this process of greater awareness is an appreciation for the uniqueness and diversity of each person. Interrelated to the developmental processes of each person is the sociocultural context in which the person resides. These contexts may vary within and across individuals and cultures. The entire research process is dependent upon consideration of all of these factors, ensuring not only a culturally

sensitive approach, but a developmentally appropriate one as well. However, the above theories were not originally developed or tested on the American Indian; thus, they may not be appropriate to use in this specific population.

Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) differs from other developmental theories in that the focus is not on psychological processes, but rather on "their *content-what* is perceived, desired, feared, thought about, or acquired as knowledge, and how the nature of this psychological material changes as a function of a person's exposure to and interaction with the environment" (p. 9). Although dependent upon the foundational underpinnings of Piaget's (1958) work, Bronfenbrenner (1979) considers the developing child (or person) within his/her environment or "*development-in-context*" (p. 12); thus, this theory provides a sociocultural view of child development (Emory University, Division of Educational Services).

Development-in-context interconnects nicely with Heidegger's (1962) understanding of *Being-in-the-world*.

Ecological theory, or ecological systems theory, revolves around the concepts of interconnectedness and the ecological environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological environment consists of multiple layers that directly and indirectly affect persons throughout their lifetimes (Moen, 1995).

The innermost circle or layer is the microsystem. Within the microsystem, contacts with family, peers, neighborhood, and school directly affect the person (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Bronfenbrenner (1979) indicates that the key to understanding the microsystem is in understanding how the person experiences his/her environment. Is

the experience positive or negative? What is the person's perception of his/her environment?

The next layer is the mesosystem. The mesosystem consists of relationships and connections between and among the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Essential to this layer is the active participation of the person creating social links and interconnections within his/her peer group, neighborhood, or school. "A mesosystem is thus a system of microsystems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25).

The exosystem is the third circle and does not require active participation by the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, the exosystem may affect the person (or youth) directly and indirectly; for example, stress at a parent's place of employment may cause stress within the family, or the school board's decision to eliminate after-school activities may cause hardship to a family that used this program for after-school care (Paquette & Ryan, 2001; Santrock, 2003).

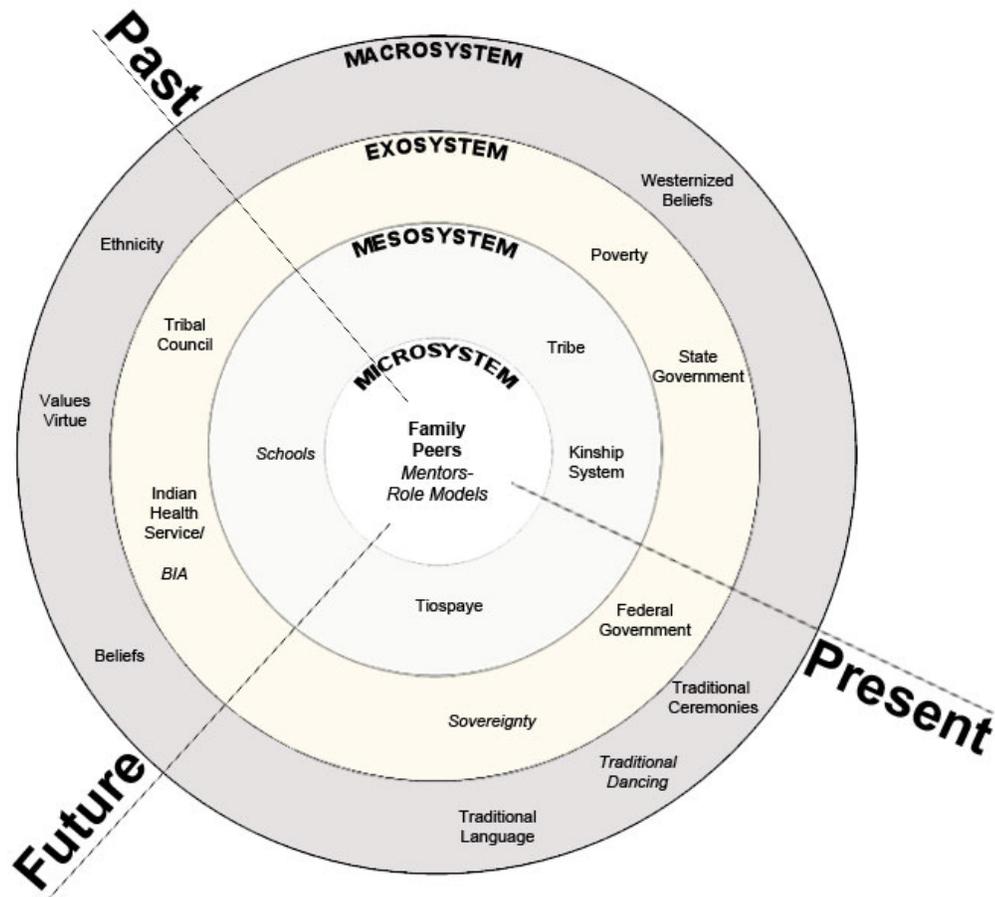
The final layer is the macrosystem. The macrosystem consists of ethnicity, cultural values, beliefs, traditions, ideologies, and religious groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The macrosystem influences what occurs within the microsystem, the mesosystem, and the exosystem.

The chronosystem (the passage of time) influences each of these layers (Paquette & Ryan, 2001; Santrock, 2003). Time may be internal or external. Internal timing refers to the growth and development of the child. External timing includes significant events such as loss of a parent, a divorce, or perhaps relocation.

Ecological transition describes the interconnection of each of these layers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ecological transition occurs whenever a person experiences a change in his/her role or setting; for example, when a child starts preschool or when persons of varying cultures or ethnic groups visit together.

In summary, ecological systems theory provides a useful framework to assist me in the navigation of the complex social and kinship systems of the Lakota. Although I will not use ecological systems theory to guide the research, it will serve as a valuable tool toward dissecting potential influences for understanding respect and risk in the Lakota adolescent (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Illustration of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory.



Note. Additions to Figure 1 after completion of the research are italicized.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to describe the meaning of the phenomena of respect and risk from the viewpoint of the Lakota adolescent. This study contributes to adolescent development and hermeneutic phenomenology literature by increasing the awareness of the potential cultural and linguistic differences in the interpretation of respect and risk. This study may influence interventional programming and resource allocation related to high-risk behaviors in the Lakota adolescent population living on a Northern Plains reservation. This chapter describes the research design, participants, protection of human subjects, data collection, interpretation of the data, and quality criteria.

Design

Hermeneutic phenomenology, influenced by Heidegger and Gadamer, guided me in bridging the horizons within and between the Lakota and White populations toward greater awareness and appreciation of the phenomena of respect and risk in Lakota adolescent youth.

When using hermeneutic phenomenology with diverse population groups, it is essential that I consider the following assumptions:

1. Human beings are interactive with their environment and others.
2. To understand, I must lay out my preconceived judgments, seeking commonality between cultures by use of language.

3. Understanding occurs via the hermeneutic circle, which is fluid and dynamic.
4. To understand and interpret the meaning of the experience, I must engage in dialogue with the participants (Plager, 1994).

Hermeneutic phenomenology easily interfaces with the Lakota tradition of storytelling. “Narratives and storytelling. . .are rooted in oral tradition (Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005, p. 1265). Storytelling employs the use of language and expression by the teller. Gadamer (2004) implores that I remain open to hearing and listening to what the other person has to say. “Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 355). Munhall (2007) reflects that language simultaneously may allow and constrain expression. Language provides a vehicle for a person to describe personal, social, political, or cultural views (Munhall, 2007). Hermeneutics may help illuminate possible cultural differences in the interpretation of respect and risk, thus potentially leading to culturally appropriate interventions for high-risk behaviors.

To assist in the illumination of the phenomena of respect and risk, I chose to combine photography with interpretive phenomenology. Hagedorn (1993) describes this combination as an “aesthetic technique” and labels it “hermeneutic-photography” (p. 80). Photography is a vehicle for participants to convey meaning via visual images (Ziller & Rorer, 1985). Visual images, or autophotography (Jones, 2004; Ziller & Rorer, 1985), are a “nonverbal language. . .that is most understood inter-culturally and cross-culturally” (Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 9).

Photography is a useful research tool, providing visual evidence of the multifaceted and dynamic nature of social-political systems of cultures and communities (Collier & Collier, 1986). Photography offers a springboard for discussion, inviting participants to share their stories (Collier & Collier, 1986; Forte, 1997; Gaskins & Forte, 1995).

Photography is becoming more prominent as a research tool, especially in nursing literature. Gaskins and Forte's (1995) study of the meaning of hope in older adults used photography and interviewing as a technique. The authors concluded that photography was an excellent research tool, offering the researchers a wealth of "rich, accurate information" (Gaskins & Forte, 1995, p. 23). Forte (1997) incorporated photography and phenomenology to describe the meaning of hope in caregivers of children with sickle cell anemia. Photography allowed Forte's (1997) research participants to give a reference for where they found hope. Hagedorn (1993) combined photography and story to illustrate the lived experience of the family of a child with chronic illness. Hagedorn (1993) concluded that photography was effective in launching discussions with these special families' daily experiences.

Photography is as an effective research tool in work with adolescents. Hanna, Jacobs, and Guthrie (1995) used photography to illustrate health in adolescents with diabetes. Pictures provided an avenue of discussion about health for these adolescents. This study (Hanna, Jacobs, & Guthrie, 1995) revealed the importance of understanding the adolescent's view of health, which could be different from the adult concept of health, and incorporating his/her view into educational practices. Bradley (1999) in her study with adolescents and their perceptions of health identified that photography invites

responses that are reflective, contemplative, and descriptive. Hager's (1997) work with adolescents who are insulin-dependent suggested that photography allows participants to express their ideas of health in terms that are more abstract; for example, how health is important socially and mentally. Finally, Campbell (2007) describes the importance of photography in describing the experience of high school from the vantage of the adolescent. Campbell (2007) indicates that photography is an excellent medium for adolescents to portray their thoughts, feelings, and hopes.

Photography, combined with hermeneutic phenomenology, is an excellent research tool for adolescents to convey their message of respect and risk in the Lakota population. Photography provided a visual-textual (Benner, 1994) means of expression for shy Lakota youth to articulate their thoughts, while interweaving the story behind the photographs via hermeneutic phenomenology.

Participants

I recruited the participants for this study via purposive sampling techniques. Characteristics that individuals must share to be eligible to participate were (a) age group (12–14 years of age), (b) membership within a particular Indian tribe, and (c) residence from specific districts on the reservation. I selected the age group of 12–14 years because research shows that these individuals have a greater potential for abstract thinking than their younger counterparts (10–11 year olds) do (Kuhn, 2006; Moshman, 2005; Santrock, 2003). I selected the early adolescent period rather than the later adolescent period because these adolescents are less likely to have initiated many of the high-risk behaviors that plague adolescents who reside on the reservation. By selectively sampling

adolescents from the early adolescent period I hoped to identify factors that might trigger the initiation of high-risk behaviors.

Recruitment of the adolescents occurred with the assistance of trusted members from the various districts within the reservation community and via the purposive sampling technique of *snowball sampling*. Snowball sampling is useful when trying to recruit from underrepresented populations (Wong, 2008). I first sought support and guidance from representatives of the Tribal Research Review Board (TRRB) and from administrators at the district-specific college centers. Each representative either personally contacted an adolescent and his/her parent or guardian or referred me to another potential source for participants. Through these various techniques, I originally recruited eight adolescents for the study.

Procedure and Data Collection

The college center administrators or the TRRB representatives made the first contact with each adolescent and his/her parent or guardian. The representative briefly explained the research project. If the representative received verbal consent from the adolescent and parent/guardian, he/she contacted me to provide me the name and telephone number of the adolescent and parent/guardian. I then called each parent/guardian, introduced myself, explained the purpose of the research, and ascertained if the adolescent was still willing to participate. When the adolescent and parent/guardian verbally consented, I scheduled a mutually agreed upon time and location for obtaining written informed consent and adolescent assent and to distribute the camera with the instructions. I met with six of the eight participants and their parents/guardians

in their homes, with the remaining two participants and parents/guardians meeting me at either the local college center or the boys and girls club.

The initial meetings were informal with both the adolescent and parent/guardian present. I verbally reviewed the purpose of the research project, including the participant's role within the process, and allowed time for questions. Next, I read aloud the informed consent with the parent/guardian sitting beside me. After allowing time for questions, I asked the parent/guardian to sign the informed consent. I ensured confidentiality by noting only the following information on the consent form: adolescent's name, age, year in school, and an adolescent-selected pseudonym. The informed consent also contained a toll free number by which participants or parents/guardians could contact the Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis research compliance office if they felt that I conducted the research in an unethical manner.

After completion of the informed consent, I read aloud the assent form with the adolescent sitting beside me and in the presence of the parent/guardian. I allowed time for questions and then asked the adolescent to sign the assent form. Information on the assent form included only the adolescent's name and self-selected pseudonym. Each consent form received an alphanumeric code.

After obtaining informed consent and adolescent assent, I collected the participant's first name and telephone number on a separate information sheet. I used this information to contact the adolescent via telephone three to four days after he/she received the camera. The phone call served as a reminder to the participant about the scheduled appointment and to see how the photography was progressing. During each

phone call, I reminded the participant to send the camera to me by Friday of that week. This timeline ensured that I would receive the camera and have time to process the photographs prior to my return to the reservation. At the conclusion of the interview, I gave the information sheet to the participant for disposal. I maintained no copies of the information sheet and shredded the information sheet from the participants who did not return their cameras.

Originally, I planned to recruit a maximum of two participants during each visit to the reservation. However, during the meeting with my first participant, I discovered that school would start in two and one-half weeks, necessitating a revision to my plan. If I maintained my original recruitment strategy, I could potentially experience a loss of access to adolescents because of school obligations and activities.

I decided to recruit all of the participants and distribute the cameras during my first visit. I verified with each participant and parent/guardian that one week would be adequate time for the adolescent to complete the photography. All agreed that this was acceptable and achievable. After consent/assent and completion of the information sheet, I gave each adolescent a disposable camera, along with verbal and written instructions. The instructions included information on and a demonstration of how to use the camera, the length of time allotted for taking photographs, and the number of photographs participants were to take. These instructions specified that the participants were to photograph how they saw respect practiced in their daily lives. To ensure proper corresponding identification of cameras to participants, each camera casing and return envelope received an alphanumeric code, matching the code on the informed assent.

I did not ask participants to photograph risk. I made this decision after careful consideration regarding participant safety. I felt that by asking participants to photograph risk, I might unintentionally place them in a harmful situation or that they might possibly photograph something illegal, warranting a referral by me to tribal authorities. To minimize this risk to the adolescents, I asked participants to share their impressions, descriptions, and insights of risk during the one-on-one interviews.

The initial meeting concluded with the scheduling of a return appointment for a one-on-one interview. We scheduled the interview 10–14 days after the distribution of the cameras and in a location that was familiar and comfortable to each participant. Final interview locations selected included the boys and girls club, the local college centers, and one participant's home. Each initial meeting lasted approximately one hour.

By the end of the first week, I had received four of the eight cameras. I noted that one of the cameras returned was in the appropriate envelope; however, the camera itself did not have an alphanumeric code on it. Another camera that I received appeared not to have had any pictures taken. I elected to process both cameras because I was not certain if I had perhaps neglected to write the alphanumeric code on the camera and to ensure that I didn't overlook developing the photographs of a camera that may have malfunctioned.

To correlate proper identification of the cameras to participants, I transcribed the alphanumeric code from the camera onto the envelope at the photo-processing station. After picking up the developed photographs, I wrote this same alphanumeric code on each picture to identify to which participant it belonged. This was the only review of the photographs that I completed prior to the interviews.

As suspected, one camera had no pictures taken, and the non-labeled camera had numerous photographs of snow on the ground. I assumed that the blank camera was the adolescent's way of politely refusing to continue with the research project. I did not contact this participant again. I decided to keep my interview appointment with the other participant because I was not certain if the adolescent had accidentally sent the incorrect camera to me.

After my recruitment visit, I was unable to reach two of the participants by telephone. These same adolescents did not return their cameras. I concluded that they had decided to withdraw from the research.

One participant said that she lost her camera. Her mother assured me that they would purchase another and have the pictures taken by the time of my arrival early in the week. Another participant, according to his mother, was late completing his photographs. His mother elected to process the camera prior to my arrival to their home. I reimbursed the family for the processing fees.

After arriving on the reservation to begin the one-on-one interviews, I reconnected with one of the administrators at a college center. She informed me that one of the participants had inadvertently sent me the wrong camera. She stated that the family attempted to contact me but had not been successful. She then stated that she had another potential participant if I was still interested. I contacted the family of the potential participant per her instructions and scheduled a time to complete the necessary paperwork.

Next, I visited the adolescent who had sent the wrong camera. His mother was very apologetic and embarrassed. She stated that she left numerous messages at the toll

free telephone number that I provided on the consent form. She was unable to call my cellular phone because she did not have long distance access. I gave the family the pictures I had processed and took the correct camera for developing; I rescheduled our interview.

I then contacted the family with the lost camera. They had not purchased another disposable camera but had instead chosen to take pictures using the adolescent's digital camera. The mother assured me that they would have the photographs printed before our interview.

I met with the new participant and her guardian at her district's college center. I followed the same procedure for consent and assent as used previously. Because of time constraints on the adolescent's part, we agreed to have her complete her photographs in 24 hours instead of 10 days. The participant assured me that this would not be difficult because she already had ideas for her pictures. Including this new participant, I recruited nine adolescents for the study with six completing the photographs (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Study Demographics

Participant No.	Districts (1–9) ^a	Camera Returned?	Age	Gender
1	1	No	14	Female
2	2 & 3 ^b	No ^c	13	Female
3	4	Yes	12	Male
4	5	Yes	13	Male
5	3	No	14	Male
6	3	Yes ^d	14	Female
7	6	Yes	14	Male
8	6	Yes	12	Male
9	7	Yes	14	Female

Note. $N = 9$. Participants interviewed: $n = 6$.

^aThe reservation is divided into nine districts; TRRB requested that I try to recruit an adolescent from each district, with the exception of the most populated district, where I could recruit up to two participants. ^bParticipant lives in one district, but works or visits family often in another district. ^cParticipant used personal digital camera. ^dParticipant took no pictures.

I audiotaped each interview. During the initial stages of the interview, I demonstrated how the audiotape equipment worked. I introduced each interview by stating the date, time, and alphanumeric code assigned to the participant in the interview. Following my introduction, each participant introduced himself or herself by the self-selected pseudonym. I replayed the audiotape after each participant's introduction to

ensure that the equipment functioned correctly. To avoid distracting the adolescents during the interviews, I chose not to take field notes but instead used a digital voice recorder after the interview to record my observations. I transcribed these recordings into a handwritten journal.

After completing the introduction, I asked each participant to give his/her personal definition of respect. I then guided the conversation to the photographs, asking each participant the following: “Tell me what it is about this photograph that demonstrates respect for you.” The remainder of each interview was unstructured with conversation spurred from the review of the photographs taken by the participant. I allowed each adolescent time to consider his/her responses and to share his/her oral stories, describing what each photograph depicted or meant.

After each participant reviewed and interpreted each of his/her photographs, I guided the conversation to the topic of risk. I invited each participant to respond to the following statement: “Tell me what it means for you to take a risk.” Many of the participants struggled with the concept of risk. One participant said, “I don’t even know what you mean by a risk.” With this discovery, in each subsequent interview, I added the following to my initial statement regarding risk: “Think of a risk as good and bad choices.” Each interview lasted 40 to 90 minutes and concluded when the participant shared that he/she had nothing more to offer to his/her story. Each participant received a 50-dollar gift card at the conclusion of the interview.

After three interviews, I began to hear recurring themes and to record similar stories among the participants. From a hermeneutic perspective, revealing all conceivable interpretations is not possible because “interpretation or understanding” is “an on-going,

never completable process of understanding, rooted in human finitude” (Moran, 2000, p. 248). “Interpretation is always on the way” (Gadamer, 1983, p. 105). I transcribed these themes, insights, and reflections into my journal in order to provide a glimpse into what I was pondering at that particular time.

I transcribed the audiotapes, including observations from my handwritten journal into the transcription, within one week of completing the interviews. I included detailed descriptions of each photograph as I transcribed the audiotapes.

Human Subjects Approval

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the TRRB approved this study. Recruitment of participants began after approval of the study, with parental/guardian consent obtained prior to adolescent participation in the study. I obtained youth assent prior to participation and after parental/guardian consent.

Interpretation of the Data

Hermeneutic phenomenology guided me in the interpretation of the data. As I began my initial interpretation of the data, I incorporated my personal horizons within the hermeneutic circle of understanding. A horizon, according to Gadamer (2004), is what I can see from my particular stance. The vantage point, or horizon, that I bring to the conversation and the interpretation is an awareness of the stressful situations that Lakota adolescents face on the reservation. My awareness is through immersion and service-learning experiences on the reservation and through extensive reading. As I entered into conversation with the participants and into interpretation of the texts, I brought my historical horizon of a registered, pediatric nurse and a non-Indian, White

woman. My historical horizon includes knowing that current literature on health risk behaviors of Indian adolescents suggests that if an adolescent is more connected to his/her traditional culture, he/she will experience fewer high-risk behaviors. I see the racism that these individuals encounter when they enter my world for health care, which often creates an atmosphere of wariness and hyper-vigilance in initial face-to-face encounters. This awareness of my prejudgments is essential “so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one’s own fore-meanings” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 272).

As I dwelled with the data, I began by reading and re-reading the text, thoughtfully considering potential cultural differences in the interpretation of the spoken words, respecting the “language’s own essence” (Heidegger, 1977/1993, p. 348). In dwelling with the data, my immersion in the text becomes a familiar environment, like home to me. I made no handwritten notes during the initial reviews of the transcripts. By the third reading, I began to feel comfortable with the text and to see the themes emerging.

As the interpretive process continued, I identified paradigm stories or “strong instances of particular patterns of meaning” (Leonard, 1994, p. 59). These paradigm stories capture the rich descriptions vital to illuminating the meaning of the experience as shared by the participants. The story says it all.

Upon conclusion of my initial dwelling with the data, I shared the original transcripts with a nurse consultant who is a recognized expert in phenomenology.

Because of the nature of these transcripts (the participants responded with multiple *yes*, *no*, and *I don't know* responses), she advised me to condense each transcript into two- to three-page narratives, writing the story from the participant's perspective. While writing these narratives, the themes that I thought I heard while interviewing the participants unfolded and new themes emerged, with paradigm stories becoming evident.

I shared these narratives with the nurse consultant, who concurred with my initial interpretations. I then began to analyze the narratives more deeply, searching for common patterns among and between the adolescents. What had I not heard? What meanings did the silences hold? I would need to focus my attention on these silences and listen to the text, which "is the living expression through which the inner world of the speakers is revealed" (Fiumara, 1990, p. 173).

I shared the transcripts and my interpretations with an informal network of established and beginning phenomenological researchers. These doctoral nursing students and established nurse researchers reviewed the transcripts and my interpretations, adding their collective wisdom and insights, thus ensuring the credibility of the data.

Throughout the interpretive process, I remained aware of my own personal horizon, understanding that I cannot separate my own thoughts from the research process. As I reflect on my own personal horizon as an adult, White woman, I must consider the horizon of the participants, factoring into the analysis the historicity and language of the Lakota adolescent culture. Consideration of these differing personal horizons at the forefront enhances my interpretation of the phenomena of respect and risk, potentially bridging or fusing the horizons.

Quality Criteria

I will present the findings of the data at a Level II analysis. Level II analysis in hermeneutic phenomenology identifies the common themes among and between the participants in this particular research study (Sloan, 2002). I will continue to further identify and reanalyze the themes across the interview texts, extracting exemplars and paradigm cases (Ironsides, 2008a). The identification of themes will lead to recognition of a pattern or patterns among the themes. The purpose of the pattern or patterns is to describe the relationships among the themes (Ironsides, 2008a).

Within hermeneutic phenomenology, I am not an objective bystander, passively monitoring “my subjects” to maintain objectivity. I actively engaged with the participants as I sought to understand more clearly what they were trying to portray to me through their words and photographs. This engagement was through conversation. As Figal (2002) writes, “we do not ‘lead’ a conversation, but we ‘are’ a conversation” (p. 106). The conversation leads to enhanced understanding. Gadamer would caution us to remember that within hermeneutics, understanding is never final. “One can always find better words for what needs to be understood, more suited ‘applications’ ” (Grondin, 2002, p. 43). I addressed rigor and trustworthiness throughout the entire research process, as noted in the following sections.

Credibility. I maintain credibility by continuing to visit and work within this Northern Plains reservation community on a quarterly basis. I established trust and rapport with the participants during the interview process, which was evident by the shared laughter and meaningful exchanges noted in the transcripts (Finlay, 2006;

Johnson & Waterfield, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Roberts, Priest, & Traynor, 2006; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Transferability. I provided thorough descriptions of the setting and the participants to allow the potential for transferability. Transferability exists if the descriptions provided allow other researchers to consider a similar study, following my sampling procedures and data analysis, and to apply it to another situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Dependability and trustworthiness. My handwritten and transcribed notes of the interviews offer evidence of dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The participants' verbatim examples support the trustworthiness of the findings (Roberts et al., 2006).

Confirmability. Credibility, transferability, and dependability are foundational for confirmability of the findings to exist (Koch & Harrington, 1998). I shared the original transcripts and my interpretations with a nurse consultant and the informal research network, asking for and receiving feedback, establishing confirmability (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The feedback I received suggested changes or additions to my interpretations, thus enhancing the findings.

Summary

I described in this chapter how I incorporated hermeneutic phenomenology with photography, the participants, and the planned and revised procedure for participant selection and human subjects' protection for this study. I shared the challenges experienced in the recruitment and data collection process, including the decisions I made

along the way. I provided thorough explanations with respect to how I interpreted the data, including the methods I used for establishing and maintaining trustworthiness of the data findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Gadamer (1983) writes:

Understanding is an adventure, this implies that it affords unique opportunities as well. It is capable of contributing in a special way to the broadening of our human experiences, our self-knowledge, and our horizon, for everything understanding mediates is mediated along with ourselves. (p. 110)

To describe my journey toward enhanced understanding of the meaning of respect and risk from these Lakota adolescents' perspective as an adventure seems to be an understatement. The process included many twists and turns, steep inclines with scenic valleys, and at times, seemingly endless plateaus. However, as I ponder Gadamer's words, I find that the experience itself changed not only what I thought I knew but also reshaped my personal horizon as my new understanding transformed my thinking.

Doing research with adolescents presents its own unique set of challenges. For example, will the participant be able to consider and discuss abstract concepts? Research involving adolescents from a different culture can magnify these challenges because the significance of words, actions, or traditions may vary from my personal culture or horizon. Understanding the natural language of the participants is essential to fusing the two horizons. This natural language, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), influences cultural values "within which constructions are made and meanings are represented" (p. 333).

Gadamer (1981, 1983) states, "Discussion bears fruit when a common language is found" (p. 110). What common language will the participants and I use in order to produce fruitful discussions? How will I come to know and understand? Gadamer (2004)

indicates that this knowing and understanding comes through truly listening and being open to another. I found this common language by being open and listening to each participant with my ears, my senses, and my heart. However, I struggled with the natural silences. I tried to fill these silences with my chatter and questions, instead of waiting and listening to the silence, which, according to Fiumara (1990), “can be a very fertile way of relating” (p. 102).

The Hermeneutic Circle

After completing the initial interpretations, I shared the de-identified transcripts and my beginning interpretations with members of my Hermeneutic Circle. This group of doctorally prepared nursing faculty and doctoral nursing and social work candidates provided a sounding board for my thoughts, frustrations, and ideas. In addition, each member shared his/her personal insight of each transcript, giving me another lens through which to consider the adolescents’ stories. Our conversations were many and varied, yet always returned to my initial feelings and thoughts when I conducted the interviews.

On one hand, I sensed that most of the adolescents who I interviewed had strong and protective families. These families insulated them, trying to protect them from the harsh realities of reservation life. On the other hand, some of the adolescents were less protected and sheltered. They were on the edge or, as stated by one member of the Circle, “standing atop one of the famous rock columns found in the Badlands, where a misstep in any direction can be disastrous” (R. Sloan, personal communication, November 23, 2008).

To describe the paradox that I sensed in these adolescents, I am borrowing the words of Eagle Chief, a Pawnee³ from the late 19th century:

All things in the world are two. In our minds we are two— good and evil. With our eyes we see two things— things that are fair and things that are ugly. . . . We have the right hand that strikes and makes for evil, and the left hand full of kindness, near the heart. One foot may lead us to an evil way, the other foot may lead us to a good. So are all things two, all two. (Herr, 2003, p. 17)

The paradox became the pattern among the participants. The pattern is *the rock and the wind*.

The Rock (*Inyan*) and the Wind (*Tate*)

The Rock, or Inyan

In early Lakota teaching, the Rock carries special importance. The Rock, or *Inyan*, is the “grandfather of all things” (Walker, 1983, p. 10). *Inyan*, the grandfather, is foundational to the creation story of the Lakota.

Inyan existed alone. He wished to have companionship in order to use his power (M. Powers, 1986). In order to create the earth, sky, and water, *Inyan* would need to relinquish some of his power. As *Inyan* created the earth, “he opened his veins,” releasing so much power that “he shriveled into something hard and powerless” (M. Powers, 1986, p. 37). His blood created the earth and the water; however, the Rock’s power required another deity in order to live, thus the formation of the Sky (M. Powers, 1986).

The Rock continues to carry significance in the world of the contemporary Lakota in a variety of ways. As part of the sweat ceremony, heated rocks placed in the center of the lodge honor the seven directions, while at the same time cleansing the person from

evil. The heat and steam created from the rocks and the resulting cleansing prepares the person for participation in other ceremonies or daily life.

The rock, in the form of buttes or badlands, holds relevance to the Lakota as sacred sites. These unique geographical formations are scattered throughout the landscape of western South Dakota. The Lakota regard these sites as sacred, to be used for prayer, meditation, or solitude. The Rock, once a powerful force, now provides a foundation for living.

The Wind, or Tate

On the vast Dakota prairie, wind is inevitable. Rare are days when there is a light breeze or relative stillness. More common is a constant blowing or roaring wind, accompanied by the occasional gust. Those of us who choose to live in the Northern Plains become accustomed to the wind. We learn to live with its constancy, relishing in the rare moments when it is quiet.

The wind is significant within Native American teaching. In Lakota mythology, the Wind, or *Tate*, is father to the four directions and seasons (Walker, 1983). *Tate* instructs his four sons to journey around the world, establishing the four directions. He directs his eldest son, *Yata*, to travel the world “until you come to where your shadow is longest at midday” (Walker, 1983, p. 62). *Yata* is the North Wind. *Yanpa*’s direction is east because his mandate is to start “where the sun begins his daily journey over the world” (Walker, 1983, p. 63). Following *Yanpa* is *Okaga*, or the South Wind. *Okaga* travels “to where you will be under the sun at midday” (Walker, 1983, p. 63). Last is *Eya*.

Eya becomes the West Wind, as he treks “to where the sun ends his daily journey” (Walker, 1983, p. 63). The four brothers have a younger brother, *Yum*, who is too small to travel with them. *Yum*, considered spirited and careless, becomes the Whirlwind called *Yumni* (Walker, 1983).

The four Winds, as told in early Lakota stories, have differing personalities, similar to humans. Known to be cold and stern, *Yata* (North Wind) is a master of hunting and killing (Walker, 1983). *Eya* (West Wind) is robust, loud, and jolly. *Eya* helps *Okaga* (South Wind) and *Yata*. Fat, lazy, and irritable identify *Yanpa* (East Wind), while *Okaga* is industrious and enjoys making others happy. Tasked with no obligations, *Yumni* is a maker of mischief (Walker, 1983).

Strife develops among the brothers for the affection of a woman. *Yata*, as eldest, feels it is his right to claim her as his own. However, the brothers disagree and each attempt to win her, quarreling over her. The quarrel continues to present time among the Winds (Walker, 1983).

The wind signifies the haphazard journey that some of the adolescents in this study described. Which way will they journey? Which path will be the safest to travel—north, south, east, or west? Will their foundational rocks or helping, life-giving winds have enough power to help them navigate the whirlwinds that they may encounter on their journey?

Final Interpretations

“Many of us have forgotten who we are, where we came from, and most certainly, where we are going.”

–Little Finger, 2005, p. 1

All adolescents struggle with issues of identity. As children enter puberty, the peer group appears to become more important to them than their immediate family. As the adolescent strives to assert a more independent self, conflicts arise between the adolescent and his/her parents. How successfully adolescents navigate this stage of their life depends upon past relationships, especially those relationships with older role models.

As adolescents face new choices, they reflect on what they have witnessed in the past. How did elders or parents handle a similar situation? What expectations do parents/elders have of the adolescent regarding behavior?

In the U.S., Native American adolescents seem to struggle with issues of identity more so than their White counterparts do. Many reports exist in the literature indicating greater struggles by American Indian teens with the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs as well as higher rates of suicide. It is possible that these adolescents are at greater risk because of the lack of positive role models. A possible link to the lack of role models is the boarding school era on the reservations.

The forced removal of Indian children from their homes and families to attend off-reservation boarding schools began the erosion of the child’s identity. While attending school, Indian children could not speak their native language, practice their traditions or customs, or wear their traditional clothing. Because students often did not see their families for the entire school year, many essential family values, behaviors, and

skills were lost. What many children gained was knowledge about abusive behavior as a way to control others.

The exploration of the importance of role models and the effects of labeling in a child or adolescent's life begins with Han Was'aka and his struggle to identify who he is. Han Was'aka is a 14-year-old male. He resides on the reservation with his mom, three brothers, and three sisters. To assist the reader in "getting a sense" of each participant, detailed descriptions or portraits of each participant are included in the Appendix.

Yanpa— Is this Truly Who I Am or Wish to Become?

Han Was'aka dresses in a hooded sweatshirt, tee shirt, and blue jeans. He wears the "hoodie" up during our entire meeting, even though the temperature outside is close to 90 degrees and the air conditioning in the building is not working properly.

Han Was'aka initiates our conversation before I started the audiotaping component of the computer. Han Was'aka appears to be more comfortable with me during the interview as compared to our initial meeting; his voice is sure and steady, and his deep, dark eyes look at me directly throughout most of our conversation. Han Was'aka seems saddened by the recent relocation of his grandmother to another reservation and uncertain as to why she chose to move.

Mary: "So she just moved there? So do you have family there or did she just move there?"

Han Was'aka: "She just moved there."

Mary: "Does she have family there?"

Han Was'aka: "I don't know."

Mary: "Was it hard to lose Grandma?"

Han Was'aka: "Yeah"

Mary: "What was special about Grandma?"

Han Was'aka: "When we ever just needed something, we could ask her and she would never ask for payment back. As long as we just do, whatever we get, we do good with. Like if it's money we'll just get stuff we need instead of go have or go partying or something."

Mary: "Ok, how did she make sure that you guys said that you'd do that?"
[Han Was'aka sits more erect in the chair and looks directly at me as he replied.]

Han Was'aka: "She said she's proud of us. Like she kind of make us feel good about it. Then we just don't feel bad about letting her down."

Mary: "So it was important to you, to have her feel proud of you?"

Han Was'aka: "Yeah."

Han Was'aka initiated the discussion about his grandmother without my prompting. Han Was'aka telling of the importance of his grandmother's approval indicates how she helped foster the building of his self-esteem and self-worth. Traditional Native American child rearing practices centered on the "education and empowerment of children" (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002, p. 44). His grandmother's actions demonstrate how she tried to encourage him to consider positive choices with the gifts that she generously provided.

Han Was'aka continues the conversation with a discussion about a favorite uncle. The photograph is a dark-haired man in his mid-thirties, wearing a white sleeveless tee shirt. He is repairing a hole in the wall. Han Was'aka smiles and states proudly,

Oh, that's my uncle. He helps us out with everything. If something's broken or needs fixin' he'll help us out. . . .He works in maintenance for the housing district. . . .He cuts lawns, puts up fence, does anything was hard working.

I prompt Han Was'aka to consider why he felt this was important. He responds,

That he's willing to help us out. Like, cause he has to help out a lot of people in his job and he's willing to take time during his personal time, when he's not working and come and help us out. . . .He's willing to help. Help anybody. And that he gets the respect from fixin' somebody house up without, even when they didn't ask.

I ask Han Was'aka why he felt his uncle is so willing to help. Han Was'aka pauses and replies,

That he grew up like around a good family and people treatin' with respect. Even if they're not family. Even if they didn't know how, they still take a chance at it. And to help us out. One time, when he was a kid, his, both of his parents were there. He had the guidance to that.

Han Was'aka is no longer slouching in his chair. He is sitting on the edge of the seat, picking nervously at the black cast on his arm. I inquire, "How important do you think it is to have both parents there to guide?" Han Was'aka immediately responds,

It's really important, cause I don't know how. [He struggles to put what he is feeling into words.] I don't know how, I don't know anything about my dad besides where he's at and what's his name. . . .I don't know his age or anything about his real life, except the bad stories. . . .And, but having two parents is really important so you have another person to come to. Like if it's about girl issues you can go to your dad or if you're a daughter you can to your mom about boys. It's just, you can't [He is really struggling to articulate this so that I understand. He looks directly at me the entire time.] You could go to your mom if it's about a boy too, but sometimes people just prefer to talking to another man about it. . . .And you can, sometimes your mom just wants. [He does not finish the sentence.] You can't go to, you can't really get into sports with your mom. Unless she's into that too. You can't go out hunting with your mom unless she likes it. But I really don't. Actually I, you can't, um. I really don't have, I don't have no father figure, so. . . .I wish I had, did." [At the conclusion of these comments, Han Was'aka speaks very quietly, nearly a whisper. He is no longer sitting on the edge of his seat, but once again slouching in his chair.]

I ask Han Was'aka if his uncle helps to fill in as a father. He replies, "He takes us fishing. . .and he helps out. He lets us go down to his house."

Within seconds, Han Was'aka changes before my eyes. Initially, he was engaged and expressive, but by the end of this conversation, he seemed to erect a wall around himself as though to prevent me from getting too close to him. Han Was'aka silently laments his lack of a father figure as noted by the change in his posture and his speech.

He desperately needs someone to look up to, to talk to, and to do “guy” things with him. Traditionally, in Native American kinship systems within the *tiospaye*, or community, relatives (blood relation or not) helped to rear all children. In the case of an absent or deceased father, the mother and her family often relied heavily upon her brothers (Deloria, 1988). Han Was’aka’s uncle tries to fill the void, yet his need for a male role model seems to be unfulfilled.

Han Was’aka and I shift our conversation to another photograph. The picture depicts a young man, who, according to Han Was’aka, is cleaning out their car. This young man is Han Was’aka’s 16-year-old brother. His story about his brother portrays mixed feelings; Han Was’aka describes his brother as wanting to help out, yet he indicates that his brother occasionally “helps out” because he wants something in return.

Oh, that’s my brother. They been cleaning the cars cause. Especially having a 1000 kids and a car is dirty. . .and he is helpin’ out. Sometimes he likes cleaning. And— only eventually, like if he’s cleaned like the whole day and he’s got to clean so much, he just like [will] want somethin’. But most of the time he will just do it cause they ask him to and havin’ all these kids he will be willing to do it. Cause I won’t.

I inquire if Han Was’aka looks up to his brother. He replies,

Yeah. . . .He’s like good at sports. And he’s willing to go play basketball or something with the little kids. Or go play outside with them. He’s nice to little. He’s nice to other people. When he was little my Grandma told him, “Treat people how you want to be treated.”. . .So that’s why I think he likes being nice to everyone. So he’ll get, be nice, he’ll have someone to be nice to him too.

I then ask Han Was’aka if his grandmother taught him the same thing. He grins and slowly answers, “Ye-aah.” Han Was’aka continues the conversation, “But I just don’t. I don’t hang out with people that like. That are into gang stuff and smoke weed or nothin’.”

Han Was'aka initially describes his brother as helpful, adding that at times he only helps others if he sees himself benefiting from this outward show of assistance. Although his behavior is not unusual in contemporary American society, it is considered inappropriate in a traditional Lakota family. The traditional Lakota did not seek wealth, instructing and emulating the value of generosity to their children (Brendtro et al., 2002; Marshall, 2001; Walker, 1982). These generous acts then earned the respect of others within the community. Han Was'aka's grandmother models and teaches these values to her grandchildren; however, Han Was'aka seems disinterested in learning to be helpful, while his brother is only occasionally generous.

My conversation with Han Was'aka is full of ambiguity. He agrees that he looks up to his brother, yet chooses not to emulate his brother's acts of kindness toward others. Why does he do this? Is it possible that Han Was'aka witnesses conflicting behaviors in his elder brother and is trying to discern which path he should choose? For example, currently Han Was'aka rarely helps, even though he knows he should. Does he behave this way because he sees his brother helping others on one hand and on the other, hurting them by participating in gang behavior? This lack of interest in helping has earned Han Was'aka the reputation as "*the lazy kid.*"

Han Was'aka quietly states, "My part is. . .I'm kind of like the lazy kid in the family but seeing them like how they act and I just want to do it, but it's just too much work for me." Han Was'aka is proud of his younger sister Kim's ability to know how to pitch in and help with the family. He smiles broadly as he describes her industrious activities:

She is younger than me, but she is willing to help out with babies and willing to clean, without being paid or something. . . . You just ask her if she could do something, then she will just get right to it. She won't say, why won't you do it. She won't say, there is a whole bunch of us kids, so why don't you have them? . . . She is doing it for family and cause she respects the younger kids and if the parents out gonna do something. Cause I took that picture when my sister was out at her job, cause my mom was helping with baby, they just asked if Kim could feed Damian. And she just did it.

Han Was'aka understands that his behavior should be more like Kim's. He realizes that he needs to display more initiative as he describes what he should do:

Just deciding to do stuff without being asked. And looking at the past and how stuff went with you being the lazy kid in the family. I'm trying to work on that by cleaning too. It's kind of hard, cause I'm pretty much lazy in the house.

Han Was'aka is not only proud of his sister's ability to "just know" when to help, he also raves about how smart she is. Han Was'aka sits up very straight as he shares the following:

She's young, but she's willing to do stuff adults do and stuff. She's already getting. She already knows everything like. Sometimes I think she's, she's reading top of her class. She's reading sixth grade and I think she's in third or second or first. I don't know. . . I think she is second and she's reading in the sixth grade level.

I agree with Han Was'aka about the significance of his sister's accomplishments, and ask how school is for him. He slouches in his chair and hugs himself. He looks down as he responds,

Me? It's not going so good. Cause I'm not into that much of school and I'm kind of more of a troublemaker there. So, cause sometimes, I just get like bored and kids offer to do stuff to. So I just go along with anything.

Listening involves seeing (Fiumara, 1990), so I am very attentive to Han Was'aka's posture and body language. It tells me he is hurt and troubled by the label "troublemaker," so I inquire as to whom has labeled him as such. He quietly replies,

“Teachers and principals. And someone is the troublemaker in school.” Han Was’aka pauses, then says:

It’s not being a good. It’s not a good thing. Cause if somethin’ goes wrong they’re accusing you. If you steal from school, they accuse you. Say if a teacher had a phone there or a wallet and if it goes missin’ it’s you that’s gonna get in trouble. Or tape recorder or a video camera.

Labels can be destructive in the development of self-esteem and self-confidence in children or adolescents. Labels are typically negative and have a tendency to isolate the recipients, planting what Brendtro et al. (2002) describe as seeds of discouragement.

Han Was’aka’s labels place him at risk for destructive behavior because he fears that he is incapable of being helpful to his family or others and that he is possibly not as smart as his classmates. To cover these feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness, he takes on the roles of the lazy kid and the troublemaker. Brendtro et al. (2002) identify that adolescents who feel incapable or inadequate protect themselves by displaying “indifference or defiant, rebellious behavior” (p. 8).

Han Was’aka’s confusion regarding what is appropriate behavior is evident in his discussion about his brother and his own expectations. He sees his brother help others but usually because he wants something in return. Han Was’aka understands that his brother is not displaying generosity as taught by their grandmother. He knows that he needs to be more responsible, yet struggles to find it within himself to do so. As Han Was’aka struggles in school, he acts out his frustrations, thus alienating himself from those that are best equipped to help him.

Eya— I Will Mentor You

“When the storm blows hard you must stand firm, for it is not trying to knock you down, it is really trying to teach you to be strong.”

–Marshall, 2006, p. 63

The West Wind, or *Eya*, is a helper or mentor. Han Was’aka’s story portrays the importance of role models and the need for clear direction for children to successfully navigate adolescence and define who they are. Han Was’aka reports having limited connections with positive role models, with the exception of his grandmother and his uncle. Lakota adolescents who have positive role models or are themselves role models to others share the following narratives.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka

“The Great Chief lifted the child onto the horse’s back. The boy grasped her mane, and together they began the long journey home.”

–Rodanas, 1994, p. 21

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is 13 years old and lives with his mother, maternal grandfather, sister, and nieces on his family’s horse ranch. He dresses neatly in a plain tee shirt and a pair of dark blue shorts. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka wears a sky blue ball cap, decorated with silver and gold and embellished with “NY” on the front. He wears the cap turned backwards.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s arrival for the interview was unique. He and his cousin, Jim, elected to ride their horses to the college center where they tethered two sorrel colored horses to a fence outside. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka introduces me to Jim and to the horses. He describes in detail how he gentled his horse and proudly tells me that his cousin broke the other horse. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka walks directly behind the horse,

demonstrating how gentle his horse truly is— meaning he does not kick when approached in such a way.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s voice is clear, quiet, and melodic as he speaks. He constantly strokes his horse as he tells me of the gentling process. He smiles and his eyes gleam with pride as he describes how he followed his grandfather and uncle’s instructions to gain the respect of the horse.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s respect for and relationship with his horse exemplifies the significance of the horse to the Native American people. As nomads, the Lakota relied on the dog to help carry their tipis and supplies. The introduction of the horse from the Spaniards greatly eased their work and enhanced their ability to provide food for their families (Sneve, 2003b). Native American people highly revere the horse.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka reciprocates the positive role modeling that he received from his grandfather and uncle to his cousin, Jim. He states, “Every time I go to work with horses for my Grandpa, he [Jim] is always right there helping me.”

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka demonstrates to Jim what he learned from his grandfather and uncle. He then describes what he feels is special about working with horses.

I don’t know just that the way that they look and how gentle they are. . . .I tried to get ’em tame, calmed down before I start and try and put a halter on. . . .They [Other people] try and choke their horses. . . .I think my horse likes me because every time I want to ride it [the horse] he comes right up to me. . . .Cuz I’m gentle to them. Because if you be nice to him [the horse], he’ll be nice back.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka shares that he and Jim spend nearly two days per week, working together, gentling horses.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's mastery in gentling horses illustrates his understanding of responsibility and caretaking. His descriptions mirror stories of traditional horse gentling practices. Deloria (1988) writes, "But ride him cautiously at first, and slowly until he and you become friends in spirit" (p. 64). Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka further demonstrates responsibility as he willingly helps his mother and grandfather feed and water their many horses. At 13, his grandfather allows him to drive the truck with the water barrel out to the pastures to provide supplemental water. His grandfather carries on traditional Lakota childrearing practices by instilling self-confidence and competence in Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka. He allows him to be as independent as possible, thus enhancing and nourishing Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's sense of mastery in his accomplishments.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka indicates that his relationship with his grandfather is special. His grandfather teaches him how to gentle horses and about the importance of his Lakota culture. When speaking of his grandfather, Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka smiles and his eyes shine. He states his culture is important, "cause my grandpa thinks it is important and I try and be just like my grandpa."

Even though Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's father does not live with them, he shares that his father remains involved in his life. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is a powwow dancer, specializing in the fancy, traditional, and grass dances. He learned the intricate steps from his father and sings at powwows with his brother and dad.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's grandfather, father, and uncle provide him many opportunities to learn. They gently guide and nourish his learning; they do not dictate or direct it. They are positive role models for Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka.

Ate' Tanka

“The gift of self is the most meaningful anyone can give.”

–Marshall, 2001, p. 106

Ate' Tanka is 12 years old. He is Han Was'aka's first cousin. Ate' Tanka dresses comfortably in a white basketball tee shirt and blue jeans. His hair is coarse, somewhat curly and shaggy, hanging into his eyes. It is not long, but cut in the latest fashion for young males.

Ate' Tanka thinks that being a role model is “pretty important.” Ate' Tanka describes how he tries to influence his “little cousins” by modeling appropriate behavior:

So like if Tony is being bad, and I tell him to be good, then. If I pick up trash, then he'll follow me and start pickin' up trash with me. . .and then C. is too. Like if I start playing basketball, then he'll come right behind me and start playing basketball with me. . . My little cousin Kelsie. We always do front flips on the trampoline and that's the one I taught to do a front flip. . . It's kind of fun.

Ate' Tanka reports that his many uncles and his big brother watch out for him. “I have my Uncle Frank, my Uncle Ford, my Uncle Rob, my Uncle Sam, my Uncle Louie and my Uncle Joe. . .and my Uncle Ernest.” He shares that his 16-year-old brother is there to talk to if he is sad or needs somebody.

Ate' Tanka understands the importance of sharing responsibility. Three of his photographs are of a small baby, which he reports is his cousin. He proudly states, “That's when I was helping auntie watch her baby.” Ate' Tanka smiles as he tells me that he knows how to bottle, change, and “burp” babies. When asked why he learned to do these duties, Ate' Tanka states in a matter of fact manner, “That's family. So I have to help take care of him.”

Ate' Tanka reports that he has household responsibilities, "I have to do everything. Have to help clean up the house. Take out the trash. . . .[I have to] take care of my stuff and respect it." Ate' Tanka says that his mother is the most influential in teaching him how to be responsible.

Ate' Tanka has positive role models in his grandparents, his mother, his brother, and his uncles. His father lives with them; but only after prompting from me, does Ate' Tanka discuss him, indicating a potential lack of paternal involvement. Although Ate' Tanka has role models, are these relationships significant and powerful enough to help him combat the challenges of living on the reservation?

Wicahpi

"When life ends, life begins somewhere else."

–Little Finger, 2005, p. 4

Wicahpi is 13 years old and lives with her parents and younger brother on a ranch on the reservation. Throughout the interview, Wicahpi's maturity and poise impress me. With each photograph, she thoughtfully contemplates her answers, at times hesitating before responding. She appears to consider each word that she uses in her descriptions, yet when she begins to speak, the words rush out as if she can hardly wait to tell me her story. She smiles and laughs easily during our discussion. Many of Wicahpi's pictures focus on the work of the center or club where she works as a youth mentor.

As a youth mentor for a local club, Wicahpi understands the importance of positive role modeling. She describes a photo: "This is where a girl's reading a book to the little girl. . . .It shows that she [the older girl] is willing to talk to her and read to her." I ask how this helps the younger child and Wicahpi replies,

To be like her and want to be smart and try to succeed, I think. . . .And um, she [the older one] like, she sets goals and finishes 'em. And then sets more goals. So she is trying to talk [the younger one] into setting goals. . . .And this [next photo] is where they are coloring together too. . . .They are sharing a sheet because there wasn't enough sheets. . . .It was care bears.

Wicahpi chuckles as she describes the scene. "And they have to share markers."

Wicahpi details the next photograph,

These two are brothers. And the older brother is giving him a football. . . .He's seven and he [the older brother] just turned 21. . . .They are always nice to each other. . . . He [the younger brother] has three older brothers and he likes all of them. And they are really nice to him. And so he wants to be just like them.

I ask Wicahpi how she feels about them being role models for her younger cousin.

She responds, "That's good, cause it shows. Cause they don't, they do good choices instead of bad. And they are willing to help him and help him learn."

Wicahpi's role model is an aunt who is no longer living. As she describes her auntie, her voice is soft, and she is less animated. With a serious expression on her face, she tells the following:

My auntie was a good person, cause she tried to help stop drinking and alcohol. And tried to stop gangs. And she was also a A+ student, she was good at basketball, she was good at all kinds of sports. I still look up to her, but the kids say like, "Oh well, she's gone now!" And all crazy stuff. But I think her spirit's not. . . .Somewhere around here, you have a second life. You go to heaven and you send somebody else with your spirit. I think there's someone out here like my auntie somewhere. Everybody says I'm like her, but I kind of think so too, but it's kind of hard for me, cause I'm not good at reading, so I'm not an A+ student.

I encourage Wicahpi not to give up on herself. She responds with a smile, "I'm willing to try and I always try and try."

Wicahpi is a positive role model and mentor. She witnesses positive mentoring and role modeling provided at the club on a daily basis. This mentoring/role modeling is

traditionally peer-to-peer and/or by an adult who has only periodic contact. Research indicates that this type of mentoring/role modeling may not decrease risk behaviors for substance use by teens, if these individuals do not have monitoring parents or supportive teachers (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005; Suldo, Mihalas, Powell, & French, 2008). However, research also shows that teens are more likely to have pro-social behaviors if they affiliate with adolescents with similar values; thus, the club may provide that positive outlet for them (Suldo et al., 2008).

Wicahpi explains responsibility in a variety of ways. She first tells of three young girls and a stroller.

There's three girls pushing another little girl in a stroller. . . .They are taking care of their younger siblings and trying to help out. . . .It is like when I take care of my little niece. I babysit her even when she is sick.

Wicahpi describes her next photo:

This little kid, he's my cousin and he swept the gym [at the club]. He's sweeping the gym. . . .It's nice of him that he did that, cause it's helping us. And he's just trying to help the elderly cause my grandma can't do much stuff here, like clean and all that, so he's helping her.

Wicahpi identifies certain practices that the club incorporates to motivate the children. One program is the "Star of the Month." Wicahpi outlines the program's principles:

This is a picture of the Star of the Month. They have 'em every month and these kids work hard to become the Star of the Month. They just pick kids that are respectful and helping. And that little boy, my cousin, who was sweeping. . . .He's a Star of the Month.

I ask Wicahpi what the child receives for being Star of the Month. She replies,

They get a chance to sit behind the desk and help. . . .Cause, it seems. They think it seems like they are older and everything. So it's nice for the little kids who think they are older behind the desk— answering phones. . . .So the kids can learn once they get older and have a chance to see what it's like before they get that old.

Wicahpi is proud to be a part of the club and states, “I think it is respectful they have a place like this to help educate and have the kids learn friendship and responsibility.”

Vera et al. (2008), in a study on subjective well-being, identified that teens with higher levels of optimism and hope were more likely to have positive affects; therefore, they experienced greater social well-being. Vera et al. (2008) recommend that in order to enhance social well-being, programs should pair adolescents with “similar backgrounds who have succeeded in school and the world of work” (p. 230). This “partnering” described by Vera et al. (2008) is similar to what Wicahpi describes as one of the many roles of the club.

Luta Win

“Tribal groups differ in how the shaman is selected, but the belief that these people are exceptional is universal.”

–St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p. 25

Luta Win is 14 years old and lives in a small apartment with her brother, grandmother, auntie, and young cousins. I met Luta Win two times prior to our scheduled interview. With each visit, I noticed how poised and graceful Luta Win presented herself. However, on the day of our interview, Luta Win overslept. I picked Luta Win up at her home, where she greets me with mussed hair and makeup-smearred eyes, dressed in gray

sweats. Luta Win makes amends for not being ready, and eagerly travels to the college center to begin the interview.

Throughout the interview, Luta Win is animated. She skillfully tells her story, using her hands to emphasize certain points or to assist in describing something to me. During the interview, Luta Win laughs easily, chortling over something she says or at times my confused looks or comments.

A significant role model to Luta Win is the shaman or medicine man. For our discussion, Luta Win photographed a young man, whom she proudly introduces, “That’s the medicine man. . . .He’s my cousin. . . .He has respect. And you have to respect him. And there’s like a lot of respect.” I ask Luta Win how she specifically shows respect to the medicine man. She replies,

You, you’re not mean to him. You’re treat him kind, nicely. You treat him like he is kind of fragile, like he could break. Like he is real pretty, like he’s a vase or something. . . .You have to be very nice and you listen. You have to like listen to them when they tell you to do something you HAVE [She emphasizes the word.] to do it.

Her complete and total dedication to the medicine man surprises me, so I ask Luta Win if the medicine man would ever ask her to do something that she did not agree with. She emphatically responds, “He wouldn’t. . . .[It would always be] positive.”

Luta Win so willingly trusts the medicine man because of her exposure to traditional Lakota practices. The shaman is treated with great reverence and kindness because of the personal danger that he experiences as he “challenges the spirit helpers of a ‘witch’ who has created trouble” (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p. 20). According to St. Pierre and Long Soldier (1995), the shaman potentially risks everything in order to help others.

Master

“To American Indians, the spoken word was sacred. Children listened to their grandparents tell stories, recite ceremonial prayers and chants.”

–Sneve, 1989, p. 5

Master is 12 years old. He is tall, thin, and wiry in build. He dresses neatly, in a clean green tee shirt and blue jeans. Master wears contact lenses because he recently lost his glasses. During the interview, Master sits beside me at the kitchen table, rarely making eye contact. Master’s answers are very concrete throughout the entire interview. When I asked him to describe what he saw, he would tell me exactly what was in the picture. Master appears to struggle with illustrating the other possibilities in the photograph, possibly related to an inability to think abstractly. He prefers to answer *yes* or *no* and *I don’t know* while most of the time sitting on his hands and swinging his legs.

Master lives in the country, on family land. Residing on the land in their own personal dwellings (either homes or trailer homes) are Master’s grandmother, uncle, and three aunties. The last mile of my journey is down a rutted, dirt path. Master’s mother calls this the driveway. To enter onto his family land, I have to open a gate and drive my car through then shut the gate. This prevents the horses from wandering off the property. I drive by the homes of an uncle and an auntie and finally arrive at his home, a doublewide trailer, set in a desert-like landscape.

Master’s maternal family literally surrounds him. His best friend and constant companion is his first cousin, Chad. Master’s mother, Sharon, reports that Chad and he are nearly inseparable. She states that often it appears as if Chad lives with them, instead of with his family, while Joan, Chad’s mother, says the same thing about Master.

As Master and I review his photographs, it is apparent that his family has a strong influence on him, especially his maternal grandmother and parents. Master states, “It’s my mom’s iPod. . . .It means to respect it because it is not mine. So she lets me listen to it.” I ask Master what would happen if he did not take care of the iPod. He indicates that his mother would take the privilege away. I inquire who has taught him to respect other people’s property. Master simply states, “My grandma.”

Master shares another photograph that shows a sheet of paper with letters written on it. The letters do not spell anything in English. I ask, “Is that written in code?” Master says, “No, it is written in Navajo.” Master is unable to translate the word, stating, “My dad wrote it.” Master states that his father is Navajo and that he wished to share something of his father’s tribe in our discussion. Master tells me, “[The letters mean to] respect his culture. . . .By not making fun of his words. . . .He still can [speak his Native language].” Master reveals that he is trying to learn to speak Navajo. When I asked if he is trying to learn Lakota, he responds in a whisper, “My grandma tries to teach me. But we don’t learn it. . . .I don’t know [why we don’t learn the language.]” Master indicates that he does not like traditional Lakota dancing or drumming. He says, “It is too hard to learn.”

Our conversation shifts. We begin to talk about disagreeing with an adult. A sign of respect in the American Indian culture is not to disagree with someone older than you because they are considered wiser than you are. I ask Master how he disagrees with his parents. He answers, “I say no. . . .[I learned it] from my mom. . . .She says that it is ok to say no sometimes.”

One of Master's uncles is in the U.S. Air Force. Master frequently visits his auntie and her family where they live near the base. The first photograph that Master chose to share is a picture of the U.S. flag on a flagpole located near a brown machine shed. The sky is vibrant blue with scattered white clouds. There is an antique-appearing wagon next to the flagpole. I am uncertain what is important to Master until he states,

The flag. . . .Because it symbols [He means symbolizes.] our country. And that [picture] says not respect, because the flag is ripped. . . .[A ripped flag does not respect] the country. . . .[The person needs to] put up a new one. . . .[I chose the picture] cause it shows what not to do and to respect the flag.

Master's family insulates him from many outside influences. This insulation is both good and potentially harmful. Master's role models are positive, modeling life skills, such as caring for others' property, being considerate to others from different cultures, disagreeing appropriately with persons of authority, and respecting our Nation's flag. However, Master's family tries to protect him from many of the hazards of living on the reservation, so he has limited opportunities to test his life skills.

Master appears to have no loyalty to the Lakota culture since he is disinclined to learn the language, traditional dances, or drumming. Does Master truly lack loyalty? Or, does his disinterest stem from his isolated surroundings?

Okaga— I Will Nourish You on Your Journey

“Out of the Indian approach to life there came a great freedom— an intense and absorbing love for nature; a respect for life; enriching faith in a Supreme Power.”

Chief Luther Standing Bear

—Herr, 2003, p. 37

Okaga, the South Wind, is life giving and nourishing. As I listened to each story, all expressed something or someone that helped give meaning to their lives, creating a

sense of belonging. Brendtro et al. (2002) write, “More and more people today have the means to live but no meaning to their existence” (p. 34). Adolescents who have meaning in their lives develop a sense of purpose and feel valued by others. Feeling valued leads to empowered adolescents then to productive adults (Brendtro et al., 2002). Following are these Lakota adolescents’ portrayals of how they find meaning in their lives.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka

“Like a swirling stream, the rest of the council joined the circle. All moved together as magic flowed among them.”

–Rodanas, 1994, p. 17

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka finds meaning in the traditional Lakota dances. He learns the traditional dances from his father, grandfather, and uncle. As Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka reviews the dances with me, he smiles throughout the discussion. “There’s traditional, jingle, fancy [for girls]. And then boys, there’s boys’ fancy, grass, and traditional.” I ask what is different about the dances; with Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka replying that the steps differ in each dance.

They’re hard cuz you got to stick to the beat. . . .Men’s fancy you got to go fast. Um, traditional you got to move your feet to the beat. And grass it’s the same thing as traditional, but one thing you got to go a little bit faster. . . .[You are judged] by your moves.

The judging for competitive powwow dancers includes consideration of not only their movements and ability to dance, but also of their regalia. “Like ours, ours [the regalia] is lightening. Our um design is lightening with a pyramid. . . .So my dad made mine with lightening, with a pyramid in the middle.”

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s family hosts a Sun Dance every year. He shares his role in the summer’s Sun Dance.

I had to lead in the Sun Dancers. Cuz I got struck by lightening over there, at their Sun Dance. . . .I got struck by lightening [You can hear in his voice that he is pleased that he has shocked me.] at their Sun Dance. . . .[It happened] last year. . . .I was in the hospital for two day. . . .It came in my head and went out my feet.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka states that he did not receive any burns from the incident.

“No my head just got singed. So Dad told me to shave it.” Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka danced the four days of the Sun Dance, stopping only when given the signal for a rest period.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka tells of the origination of the Grass Dance:

Long time ago there was a boy that was paralyzed and his Grandpa told him to go up on the hill. Then he heard the singing and he started getting up slow, and he was grass dancing and then when the song stopped he laid back down. And he couldn't move.

The story ends abruptly. I feel tremendously let down, as if I have only received part of the story. What is missing? What has Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka left out of his story? Elaine Jahner (Walker, 1983) indicates that when interpreting oral stories from Native American cultures, it is essential to know “who shaped the tale” (p. 12). As a 13-year-old male, has Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka received only portions of the story as his family gradually tutors him in oral tradition? Alternatively, does this partial story indicate a lack of attention on his part, or is he following tradition, carefully choosing his words, and I am to create my own meaning of the story? (Sneve, 1989).

Wicahpi

“No, my grandmother taught them to me.”

–Sneve, 1977, p. 4

Wicahpi expresses the importance of having elders involved in the club and in her life. “I think the elderlies should be here. And to learn the culture, I think a Lakota

teacher should be here [in the club].” I ask if she has spoken to her grandmother about this possibility. She sheepishly replies, “No, she’s too busy.” She then outlines how elders have influenced her:

I have lots of family members. And all the elderly talk to me about it. And my mom, cause. I’m an Indian dancer and so they make me learn the lessons. Cause some people who dance, they don’t learn the lessons, they just want to be popular and become princess or something. But, I want to do it the nice and Lakota way, by learning the values and all that. . . I really like powwows. I think the powwow one is for me. Because I think it shows all of the kids are coming together, dancing with each other and the music is there. And lots of people come to support ’em.

I ask how she learned to dance the jingle and fancy dances.

Um, it kind of grew up in my family. . . My Auntie Karen was a good dancer and Auntie Ann, she was a really good dancer. My dad’s brother’s wife, she was Miss Nation when she was little. . . And I also learn by watching other dancers.

Wicahpi designs her own regalia and applies the beadwork herself. Wicahpi’s grandmother, though busy, takes time to counsel children that attend the club. The photograph shows an older woman sitting on a bench listening to a young boy. Wicahpi describes the scene,

This one, my Grandma is talking to this guy— this little boy. He’s just signed up, like today. . . And he wanted to go swimming, but he has no clothes. So my Grandma’s, um they have clothes here for kids who don’t have stuff. My grandma’s talking to him about, she would get him something if he wanted to swim. He was really happy about that. The kid was respecting her and saying, “Thank you.”. . It was kind of, she was being helpful to the kid. He was like, sad, he couldn’t go swimming, cause all the kids were. . . And she went and found him some shorts. She was willing to help him, so he can be happy.

Wicahpi’s stories relate the importance of elders in her life. She imparts how she gains knowledge and wisdom from her elder family members. Because of Wicahpi’s positive experience with elders, she strongly feels that their involvement at the club

would benefit other young people. However, she hesitates to suggest this to her grandmother.

In traditional Native American culture, elders modeled values and served as guides for children. Elders practiced non-interference, where children “learned to make choices without coercion” (Brendtro et al., 2002, p. 53). Elders, known for their patience, allowed a child to muddle through a situation with limited coaching from them, thus augmenting the child’s independence and creativity.

Ate’ Tanka

“He knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans, too.”

Chief Luther Standing Bear

–Nerburn, 1999, p. 40

The U.S. authorities removed American Indians from their tribal lands, relegating many tribes to living on some of America’s least fertile acreages. The reservation land near Ate’ Tanka’s home is no exception; it lies on the fringes of the Badlands. To the outside observer, the land may appear desolate and unwanted, yet to the Lakota people rich heritage and story encompass these lands. Unfortunately, some of the people on the reservation defile the Great Spirit’s gift by tossing litter everywhere. Even the dogs contribute to the ubiquitous trash by tearing apart garbage bags and strewing trash across the yards.

Yet for all its desolation, Ate’ Tanka and his family follow the Lakota tradition of showing respect for Mother Earth. He relates his actions for protecting the earth as he states, “Just go around and pickin’ up people’s trashes. And help keeping Mother Nature clean.” Ate’ Tanka identifies the significance of caring for the earth in the Lakota culture:

Just like keeping her [the earth] alive. . . .So like the world won't end. . .[by] keeping our yard clean and keepin' Mother Nature clean. . . .We pick up trash every day. . . .Dogs and people like go by and just throw trash out. . . .They don't care.

Ate' Tanka displays futuristic thinking as he considers the effects of air pollution on Mother Nature. He states, "People should buy cars like that can run off water. . . .To keep the ozone layer from breakin' up."

Ate' Tanka expresses bewilderment with his community and their lack of concern and care for Mother Nature. Ate' Tanka's concern for the earth's demise may stem from a combination of Lakota beliefs and classes at school. Traditional Lakota believe that if they take from Mother Earth, they must also give back. For example, when gathering turnips, the people would leave kernels of corn for the mice so all could reap from the harvest (Deloria, 1988). Students as young as elementary school age receive instruction in conservation of the world's resources and the effects of greenhouse gases.

Ate' Tanka's desire to protect Mother Earth may benefit from his Lakota heritage and from his lessons at school, where knowledge of both worlds may enhance his ability to care for Mother Nature more completely. Gadamer calls this a fusion of horizons, as Ate' Tanka reflects on his Lakota heritage, instilling past beliefs into present day practices, helping to heal and care for Mother Nature.

Master

"The American Indian is of the soil."

Chief Luther Standing Bear

—Herr, 2003, p. 11

Master expresses concern for Mother Nature similar to Ate' Tanka. Master, like Ate' Tanka, resides in a desolate area of the reservation. The earth is dry and cracked. On

the surface, it appears barren, life taking instead of life giving. Yet, the quiet, austere beauty of the landscape protects and nourishes Master and his family by isolating them from many of the outside influences of the reservation.

Master shows his love for the land with a photograph of a large puddle of water. Master states that it exemplifies the need to “respect the land. . . .Cause if you don’t respect it, it’ll go bad. Like the water up here would turn bad.” Master implies that if the land is not respected, “It’s all black and it catches stuff on fire.”

The reservation has experienced significant drought over the past several years, making life more difficult. This past spring and summer, rain is plentiful as evidenced by white blooming flowers on the roadsides. Unfortunately, casually thrown next to this evidence of life is humankind’s contribution to nature, litter. Master’s family tells him, “not to litter” or “throw trash out.”

For Master, caring for Mother Nature includes “respecting God’s creations,” whether that creation is a puppy, a younger cousin, or your body. Master shares that his mother makes him care for his animals by feeding and watering them. He is witness to an older cousin’s poor treatment of his siblings. Master shares that his cousin only likes his younger sister, therefore he “beats up” his other brother and sister. To Master, this is hurtful behavior. Master understands that to be healthy includes eating the appropriate food and that food is a gift from the Creator.

Master’s view of Mother Nature is more simplistic than Ate’ Tanka’s is, yet it harbors an understanding of what is real. Gadamer (2004) writes, “Real experience is that whereby man becomes aware of his finiteness” (p. 351). Master sees that caring for the

land leads to a healthier landscape. Master understands that caring for animals, other people, and your body leads to loving relationships and a longer life.

Luta Win

“As long as you pray from the heart, all the pipes that have ever been will back you. If you have the honesty to pray for real, from the heart, you will be heard.”

Wounye’ Waste’ Win

–St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995, p. 201

Lakota oral history tells the story of White Buffalo Calf Woman. Oral tradition says that White Buffalo Calf Woman brought to the People the Sacred Pipe and the seven ceremonies: the sweat lodge, the vision quest, ghost keeping, Sun Dance, the making of relatives (*hunka*), the girl’s puberty ritual, and the sacred ball (DeMallie & Parks, 1987; W. Powers, 1977; Young Bear & Theisz, 1994).

Deeply rooted in symbolism and ritualistic acts, the Sun Dance portrays the essence of traditional Lakota Indian spirituality. The Sun Dance started as a gathering of the tribal bands prior to the buffalo hunt (W. Powers, 1977). Participants experience great hardship such as thirst, hunger, and pain throughout the ceremony. These hardships symbolize sacrifice, and while in the throes of the Sun Dance, participants pray for healing and in the early days of the Lakota, a successful hunt.

As Luta Win focuses her dark eyes on the picture of the Sun Dance grounds, her eyebrows furrow in concentration as she thoughtfully processes how to describe why the Sun Dance is significant to her. “Because it [the Sun Dance] gets us, it like, it helps us. It’s like healing. And it makes us feel that we are heard, and that God can hear us.” I can tell through her tense body posture that what she is trying to tell me is very important. “If

he can hear us then he can hear everyone. And that's good. We want to be heard. That's why we dance. We dance for our family, for friends. We dance to help, to heal."

Luta Win then sketches for me how she dances:

You have to kind of move your feet, but you have to keep 'em on the ground at the same time. . . .There's a part where the men have whistles. They whistle with every breath they take. And that's to tell God that like we're breathing because of him. . . .Cause he gave us life. . . .When they whistle really loud you have to put your arms up.

Luta Win then demonstrates by raising her arms high above her head.

When they're done whistling loud, we put them down and just keep moving our feet. . . .Every time you dance, you're in a big circle. . .you don't go around, you just stay at a spot and you just dance there. . .and you pray while you dance. . . .It takes a very long time. You stand there for a LONG [She emphasizes the word.] time. You pray for a long time.

As physical evidence of sacrifice, some participants choose to give flesh on the first or the third day of the Sun Dance. Luta Win proudly displays her arms. Both have four, three-millimeter circular cuts, extending vertically down her upper arms.

Each flesh can represent a person that you want to heal, that you want God to keep an eye on especially. I gave eight. . . .This [left] is for my brothers and sisters and my auntie. This [right] side is for my grandmas and the last one is for my mom.

Luta Win's eyes fill with tears, but she does not cry. Luta Win demonstrates through hand gestures the giving of the flesh while she continues to tell her story:

They have their own individual packs. . . .They get the needle and they poke your skin up a little bit. . . .They get the knife out and they cut it. . . .It doesn't hurt. . . .Then the Medicine Man will be holding a little piece of cloth. [She forms her fingers into a two-inch-by-two-inch square]. . .Your skin, the flesh will be on the needle and then he puts it on the cloth. . . .He ties it in a little tiny thing and he gives it to you. You go up to the tree, put it in the tree and get on your knees, put your head against the tree and you pray. . . .My auntie, she said that the tree is sacred. You have to pretend like it's God. You have to really, really pray and act like God is standing there. And that you are dancing around him.

Another component to the Sun Dance is fasting by the participants. Luta Win states, “We’re fasting because Jesus, he didn’t eat for. . .a long time.” Luta begins to chuckle, embarrassed because she cannot remember the number of days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness. Luta Win continues her comparison of the Sun Dance to Christian beliefs:

You have to have your crown. . .you know how like they put on Jesus on the cross? You know how they put nails in his hands? That’s why we wear the sage on our wrists and on our ankles.

Luta Win artfully describes how the crown is fashioned from fabric wrapped around sage and then shaped into a crown, similar to the crown of thorns that Jesus wore. The sage purifies and protects the individuals as they dance.

Luta Win proceeds to the next photograph. Gently furling by a warm, August breeze and hoisted to a pole on a green hillside, the picture is of a white, yellow, red, and black flag. Luta Win shares, “That is a picture of our flag at the Sun Dance. And that [flag] is very sacred because it has the four colors that symbolize nationalities and life.” Luta Win informs me that “sacred people,” such as a “medicine man and woman” raise the flag prior to the beginning of the Sun Dance. Luta Win continues by describing how the colors signify life. “White is for babies. . . .Yellow is for adolescents. . . .Red is for the middle aged and black is for the elderly.”

Luta Win’s story of the Sun Dance is multifaceted. She eloquently speaks of tradition, sacrifice, healing, and being heard. What did I hear as Luta Win deftly wove her story? Luta Win’s sharing of her interpretation of the Sun Dance speaks volumes to me. Her hope is that I listen and understand how her Native culture replenishes and nourishes her inner spirituality.

Forbidden to practice sacred elements of their culture, the Lakota and other American Indian tribes experienced significant loss of many of their traditions. This oppression began with the Naturalization Act of 1790, which identified American Indians as “domestic foreigners,” making them ineligible for citizenship on land that they had inhabited for hundreds of years (Spring, 2007). Primarily based on unsubstantiated fears of *lifeways* differing from Westernized culture and a desire for sameness, the U.S. government began to deculturalize, or civilize, the American Indian. This deculturalization included removing them from their homeland, sending their children to off-reservation boarding schools to remove all of their “Indianness,” to the banning traditional native practices, including dancing, language, and rituals by the BIA (Martin, 1999; Utter, 2001).

Recognizing that loss of their sacred values and lifeways could destroy their identity, American Indians took their practices “underground.” They continued to speak the language and to practice their spirituality and traditions in secrecy. Through their efforts, many traditions survive, but not without evidence of change.

For example, evidence of assimilation exists in Luta Win’s interpretation of the Sun Dance. Her descriptions share Lakota, Western, and Christian cultural influences, such as the sage worn as a crown and as bracelets on the wrists and ankles. Luta Win’s discussion of the four colors as representative of the stages of life is incorrect. Does this mean that she is wrong? Perhaps it is a simple misunderstanding on her part, or maybe she is still listening to and learning the stories as told by her family. To Luta Win, practicing her traditional spirituality replenishes and nourishes her soul.

Han Was'aka

“His feet touched the earth in time with the drum, in harmony with his heartbeat, in time with history and the present and his heartbeat.”

–Cook-Lynn, 1990, p. 66

Han Was'aka is one of two of the adolescents to have summer employment. As the “lazy kid,” Han Was'aka refutes this label by proudly discussing his ability to contribute to his family. His comments portray how feeling valued and of importance to others may decrease his risk for temptation.

We can like have a job and keep ourselves like away from the troubles during the day, if we get bored there's temptations. There's always sumpin' to do. . . I get paid tomorrow. . . And what we do there is like a maintenance place. We help, we fix up the houses and stuff. So I work with. So I'm just like working like my uncle.

Han Was'aka feels connected to his uncle, as he attempts to emulate him in his role as a summer youth worker.

It makes me feel good that, cause they don't know how to do it themselves. They try puttin' a hot water in and somethin' bad might happen. So they just call and they are willing to go do that and get themselves hurt for them to get them hot water. . . . That's kind of important. Windows are broken or somethin'. So I'm willing to help 'em do all that.

Han Was'aka's sense of purpose and self-worth lift because he feels he is helping others. Earning a wage versus receiving a handout is critical to the development of his sense of self-respect. Han Was'aka is acutely aware of the stereotype and misconception given to Indians as being content with government handouts.

I'd rather earn it. For myself. You don't have to pay 'em back and you feel better when you get it from yourself. All that hard work and. And when you get it from somebody, it's just like feeling lazy. You just feel bad. . . I'd rather work for myself.

Similar to Ate' Tanka and Master, Han Was'aka expresses frustration regarding the littering that occurs on the reservation. He describes his family's efforts to keep their housing district clean and safe.

Cause our lawn's dirty. And people come by and throw beer bottles or trash out. So we just try and keep it clean. Keep trash from floating around and. Cause, our neighbor, like he has a hard time keeping his lawn clean cause, people cruise by or walk by and throw trash. They just don't ever keep it until they get somewhere. So we decided to pick up outside their lawns too. Cause he watches out, like, cause we are having problem with another family. And he watches out for our stuff outside. He watches our house. So he kind of, we respect him, cause he's willing to do that. . . . Watch out for us. Make sure we're safe or somethin'.

Han Was'aka's depiction of his neighbor watching out for them parallels traditional culture and the role of adults in the *tiospaye*. All children were under the care and watchful eyes of all adult members, ensuring their safety and well-being. These feelings of safety and well-being contributed to each child's self-confidence and identity (Deloria, 1988).

Han Was'aka knows that care and respect for the land are core Lakota values. He attributes the indifference of some individuals seen on the reservation to a loss of values. To Han Was'aka, the Lakota values are important, yet he has limited opportunities to experience Lakota ceremonies or traditions.

I think cause, like people start losing their values and they just get tired of stuff. Cause, all that pollution that's going on, that's just makin' it worse. . . . They're [Values are] important but for some reason, nobody else seems like it's important to them. Cause no one ever uses them that much anymore. . . . I actually went to just two of 'em [Sun Dances]. And seen how it was gettin' pierced and all that, it's kind of like a big honor, so they're important, but seeing they got to stick a thing through your chest and rip off flesh, I don't see that I wanna. . . but it still important to me. Cause, people are getting' big honor. They're willing to do it, just so they'll be close to the like the Lakota values and being instead of just like acting like a different race or somethin'. . . . Cause they're willing to keep that, get that pain.

Han Was'aka initially responds that he does not care for traditional dancing then later admits that he doesn't know how to dance. Even though Han Was'aka has not learned to dance traditionally, he appreciates the Native music and drumming.

Um, I thought that there would be better stuff to do and. It seems like too much. I can't remember all that dancin' and movin' your feet and gettin' the outfits. It's kind of too much work. . . . Yeah, I like it. When you hear it like it's kind of like. It's got its own song in it. Like, like. Sometimes when they play the drums you can just hear the drums and when you focus on them, it sounds like a heartbeat or somethin' you can make it anything.

Han Was'aka experiences fulfillment in having summer employment. He identifies how his job lessens his chances of falling into "temptations" that may be harmful. Han Was'aka expresses concern for the loss of Lakota values. He wishes to understand the traditions better but does not have the opportunity to participate.

Han Was'aka's spirit receives nourishment when he hears the drumming, becoming one with beat, until it meshes with his own heart's rhythm.

Yata— Whom Will You Follow?

"I wish to be a brave man."

Ohiyesa, Santee Sioux [Charles Eastman]

—Dominic, 1996, p. 1

Cold and truculent, *Yata*, the North Wind, is life taking. *Yata*, at times aided by *Eya*, blows with such ferocity that individuals appear powerless to combat him. Yet, given proper nourishment and shelter, persons may lessen *Yata's* essence.

The presence of substance use and gang activity on the reservation personifies *Yata*. All of the participants shared concerns about gang activity that they witness in their respective communities, with each verbalizing thoughts as to why some individuals become involved and how he/she avoids becoming involved in gangs.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka

“Teach these to your children.”

Grand Council Fire of American Indians

–Amon, 1981, p. 85

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is a mature 13-year-old. As he and I discussed the differences between taking good and bad risks, he thoughtfully processed how to answer each question. His grandfather’s influence was palpable as he revealed how he avoids gang activity or individuals who use alcohol and/or drugs. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s grounding in the Lakota culture is a lifeline to combat *Yata’s* influence. Our dialogue begins with his definition of a risk.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka states, “Doing stuff that [I] don’t want to.” Further, a good risk is doing “something for the elders,” with a bad risk as simply, “To do something that you wasn’t s’posed to.” Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka indicates he would like to “try and make the environment healthier” for the kids on the reservation.

As our conversation shifts to alcohol and drug use, Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka acknowledges exposure to these substances but chooses not to use them. Instead, he tells those that invite him to participate, “No. . .I don’t want to. . .and get on my horse and go home.” Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka recognizes that saying no to these individuals, especially if they are his friends, is difficult.

He feels that the difference between his choosing to stay clean and their choosing to use is his desire to “stick with the Lakota culture. And in theirs, they wanna, they wanna, they wanna be a gangbanger.” Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s mother does not allow him to venture into his neighboring community at night, “cause she doesn’t want me to get shot or killed.”

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka shares that his family has helped him in his endeavor to stay clean. “They told me not to smoke or drink,” with his grandfather and dad teaching him the Lakota culture. He is adamant that if children received instruction about their traditional culture in school and at home, there would be less trouble on the reservation. He declares that the problems exist “because their parents ain’t teaching better.” He is certain that to get parents to help we just need to “ask ’em.” Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s solution to helping those involved with alcohol and drugs is somewhat understated, as he simply states, “Take them to treatment.”

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s family is instrumental in providing him with the essential tools needed for success. Even though his family is financially poor, he is rich. His wealth lies in a nurturing family that encourages his competence and independence, fostering his self-confidence.

Wicahpi

“Give me the eyes to see and the strength to understand, that I may be like you. With your power only can I face the winds.”

Black Elk
–Herr, 2003, p. 71

Wicahpi’s story has many similarities to Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s story. Wicahpi, like Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka, demonstrates a quiet maturity as she fashions how to help me understand the north wind that plagues the communities she calls home. Wicahpi’s photographs revolved around the work of the club, a place she feels offers opportunities for kids to be safe, to learn, and to gain new friendships.

Wicahpi states, “So this is great that the kids have a place [the club] to be and there’s transportation for them.” Wicahpi believes the club is necessary because of the gangs and violence:

It’s kind of hard here, because there’s lots of gangs and violence around here. . . .There’s more and more kids that are joining them. Cause their older family members or something they’re in one. And um, it’s kind of bad that the family members are trying to get the younger kids to do gangs. . . .Some kids don’t have a choice. They grew up in that relationship or something. But, I think, that there is a better way for them to go and say no and walk away or ask somebody else, a family member to go stay with them if the gang and violence are inside their home.

Wicahpi lives in the country, but as a result of her parent’s employment spends equal time in two different districts on the reservation. She elaborates on the gang situation in her home community:

I live right across from there. It’s, I’m trying to think of the word. It’s housing—a housing area. And there’s lots of gang and violence there. Drugs and all that. And during New Years they always try to use fireworks to shoot each other with. And the police are always up there and the police still don’t do anything, even though they see it right in front of their car or something. . . . And it’s kind of hard, cause they steal horses. They steal lots of my horses and some got killed, my horses.

Even though gang violence in her home community surrounds Wicahpi, if given a choice of whether she would rather live in the city or the country, she states, “I feel a lot safer in. . .the country. I am on the far side of housing district. And around here, in the city, everybody’s close to each other.”

Wicahpi’s possible solutions to the violence are simplistic. She feels that the emergency response on the reservation needs improvement:

I wanna, like the police and ambulance people to be better, cause once I got hurt, the ambulance did not come until an hour later. . . .And the policeman. It seems hard here, cause they’re, they never come right away.

Cause my Grandma's house got broken into a lot of times. And once, when me and my cousin were in the house— they [other kids] were throwing rocks at the window. So we called the police— oh we called my Grandma first and then the police. The police didn't come until way later. And then the person already got away.

Wicahpi thinks that putting distance between those individuals that seek to harm others and those that try to help would make the reservation safer. "I feel like all the bad people should go somewhere else and all the good people should go somewhere, like the country, where it's out of the way."

As our conversation shifts to good and bad risks, I am again in awe of Wicahpi's answers. I ask Wicahpi to consider what it means for her to take a risk. She instantly replies,

Depends what kind of risk it is. . . .A good risk is like, making honor roll, or going to college. . . .Um, because some people don't got money to go to college. And the family members if they are elderly or sick or something— they are risking to go to college. And if the family member says, "Go on and go to college, because you will learn and it will be good." It will show you support [college and the person].

Wicahpi then shares her views of bad choices or risks. She expresses concern about street racing. "I wouldn't want to do it, cause around here lots of kids do street racing. And I know lots of kids who got killed from that. And they don't wear their seat belts." I express my concern to Wicahpi regarding the lack of seatbelt and child safety seats used on the reservation. Wicahpi replies in a matter of fact manner, "Around here, like the policeman don't do much. And some people don't have money to afford a car seat."

Wicahpi's answers vacillate from truly wise to very simplistic. Her understanding and empathy for individuals living in violent households hint toward a maturity that contradicts her young age. Children reared in communities or households where violence

is the norm grow up feeling powerless and helpless. Fear and mistrust lead these adolescents to feeling disconnected instead of fostering a sense of belonging (Boyes-Watson, 2008).

Wicahpi's cry for a place for adolescents to feel safe is justified. The club creates a safe haven, helping to fight the north winds that many Lakota adolescents encounter. The club provides them with opportunities to build relationships, nurturing a sense of connectedness with staff and peers. Wicahpi's feelings are similar to comments shared by an inner city youth staff worker, "Young people don't need policing; they need relationships" (Boyes-Watson, 2008, p. 30).

Luta Win

"We are all related. Whatever one does, or what happens to another, touches all."
—Sneve, 2003a, p. 5

Luta Win's voice takes on an angry tone as we begin to talk about difficulties on the reservation. She is adamant in her assertions that drinking, drugging, littering, and gang activity are harmful, and that she does not participate in such behavior. Yet, Luta Win acknowledges that even though she does not drink or do drugs, she may still do activities with her friends after they have been drinking or drugging. *Yata's* presence is near to Luta Win.

There's um, too much drinking, littering. . . .I don't know [why there is]. . . .They probably, they probably think that it's ok to drink and litter to do drugs. . . .Cause they think, it don't hurt anyone else, it doesn't hurt them. But it does. It hurts them, but it hurts the people around them more."

I inquire why Luta Win does not participate. She responds,

It's stupid. Because all the. All three of those they lead to nowhere. . . Like six feet under. They lead you to your grave. Drinking, doing drugs, gangs. They just take you nowhere into life, just to your grave and soon. You can die very young. . . I hear from my friend, his brother died because he was in a gang. And I don't know, I felt bad for him. Because he died recently, he died in January. So, I felt bad and was like you better not be in a gang too. He likes, "I'm not. I'm not going to be a gangster."

After Luta Win's impassioned speech, I was surprised when we discussed her friends and risk taking. I asked Luta Win if her family allowed her to "run around" late at night. She responds, "I used to! It was just to walk around with friends, because we were bored. And they felt like talking to me."

I give Luta Win the scenario of her friends inviting her to drink or drug with them. She quickly replies,

I say. Well, I just make up a lie. "I'm tired and I don't want to go." Or I say, "I am babysitting." . . If they want to go do that and I am with them, then I tell them, I say, "I'm going to be at my Grandma's house and when you're done you can come and get me."

I restate the question, to ascertain if perchance Luta Win misunderstood.

Luta Win indicates that as long as "they walk" instead of drive, that it is all right to be with her friends after they have been drinking or drugging. Luta Win remains silent after this pronouncement, so I shift the discussion.

We continue our conversation regarding the meaning of taking a risk. Luta Win contemplates her answer before quietly responding, "It means to um. To do something risky. Life threatening or scary or something. [She pauses.] For someone you love, for someone you, that you would take a risk for. Because you love them or you care for them." Luta Win states that this is an example of, "A bad risk. A good one would be like,

ah. I don't know. I can't think of an example." I ask her to think of risks as choices. She continues,

I never thought of it like that. Hm. Just like there's good choices and bad choices. . . .A bad risk— of losing your life or someone else's. Or someone you love . . .because you love them and you could lose them.

Luta Win does not share an example of a good risk.

Luta Win, on the surface, appears to know the inherent dire consequences of high risk-taking behaviors. She says that she is outspoken with her friends about not joining gangs, drinking, or drugging, yet she seems to struggle in letting go of potentially dangerous friends.

Gadamer asks that I consider my own bias as I contemplate the true meaning of Luta Win's words with her actions. What other alternative meanings exist in this text? Luta Win does not offer any solutions to the problems facing Lakota adolescents. Perhaps Luta Win's staying close to these friends is a way to protect them and to stave the harsh north winds. Does Luta Win feel that her ability to be a positive role model to her friends may keep them from harm?

Master

"Fiercely I fought for my land."
—Sneve, 2003a, p. 19

Master's family currently shields him from many of *Yata's* influences. Even with this shelter, Master is not oblivious to the hazards of living on the reservation. Master attributes a lack of respect for physical property to the work of gangs: "I think that they try to keep up their homes but other people come by and just ruin 'em. . . .Like people in gangs." I ask Master if he is aware of any gangs near where he lives. He quietly replies, "Just down in the village." Master is uncertain why kids become involved in gangs.

I try to transition our conversation to a discussion regarding risk. Master responds, “I barely know what a risk is.” Prior to this discussion Master had shared his desire to become a Navy Seal. Master identifies that the consequences of a bad risk would be, “You don’t live.” I then ask about the risks that he would encounter as a Navy Seal. He acknowledges that Navy Seals risk “their lives” but likens this as an example of a good risk.

Master’s view of risk is guileless. His solution to concerns on the reservation is realistic and simple— “money.” Master’s lack of awareness is concerning. How will Master respond when *Yata*’s cruelty confronts him, and he no longer has the protective shelter of his family? Does Master have the tools he will need to make responsible choices?

Ate’ Tanka

“They didn’t have respect, even among themselves.”

Royal Bull Bear

–Doll, 1994, p. 50

Ate’ Tanka faces the malevolence of *Yata* on a daily basis. *Yata*, personified by gangbangers and haters, constantly challenge Ate’ Tanka’s personal values and beliefs. These challenges place Ate’ Tanka in a precarious position: to choose the red or the black road.

The red road, according to Lakota teaching, is the path leading toward good. This road, on the medicine wheel, runs north and south. Conversely, the black road leads toward evil and devastation. The black road, opposite of the red road, travels an east-west route, where persons neglect each other, thinking only of themselves (Brown, 1953/1971).

As Ate' Tanka shares his personal views regarding why adolescents struggle on the reservation, his dialogue on occasion is difficult to follow. He vacillates between giving deeply thoughtful to witty responses. Ate' Tanka shares, "Cause some of their parents are alcoholics. . . .Some of 'em grew up without parents." Ate' Tanka relates that he has always had his parents, "ever since I was born," with their presence enveloping him in security.

Ate' Tanka sees the result of the lack of adult role models in children's lives on the reservation, as noted by his example of a bad choice or risk: "Say a kid has a Budweiser right there [pointing to his right] and weed right there [pointing to his left], like marijuana, then I wouldn't choose none of 'em." Ate' Tanka indicates that his personal experience as a witness to the effects of alcohol help him avoid it. "Cause I've seen people that fall and break some bones from alcohol. . . .See 'em get in car crashes. . . .Some even got killed over alcohol."

Ate' Tanka reports seeing others "drinking, smoking, like smoking meth and stuff." He emphatically states, "Well I don't be in it. But, I just see people doing it. . . . [I] just don't go towards 'em. . . .I just walk around and play basketball and ride bikes." Ate' Tanka denies having friends that participate in alcohol or substance use. He acknowledges that his many uncles influence his decision not to use.

Ate' Tanka describes how he confronts adversity, "Like you have the courage to stand up for yourself. Take up for yourself." He admits that he has to do this on a daily basis. "Almost everyday, cause people blame me for stuff. . . .Cause they don't like me—they're just haters. . . .They like to hate."

Ate' Tanka's parental and extended family shape and guide his decisions. They bolster him, helping him to remain upright under the heavy weight of peer pressure.

Adolescents living in unstable situations need individuals who model "consistency, reliability, persistence and patience" (Boyes-Watson, 2008, p. 54). While Ate' Tanka's family provides these essential elements, steering him toward the red road and lessening the effects of *Yata*, are they strong enough?

Han Was'aka

"You have made me cross the good road, and the road of difficulties, and where they cross, the place is holy."

Black Elk

—Nerburn, 1999, p. 38

Han Was'aka stands on a precipice. Next to Han Was'aka is *Yata*, who keenly watches and waits for signs of weakness in Han Was'aka. As *Yata* senses a relenting in Han Was'aka's guard, he sends a hearty gust, hoping to topple Han Was'aka over the edge.

Han Was'aka encounters many gusts or temptations. These temptations surface through his past acquaintances and his family legacy. The road that Han Was'aka chooses to follow will depend upon the strength of *Okaga* and *Eya*.

Han Was'aka shares how difficult it is to stay clear of gangs and drug use in his community. "That's pretty hard. Every, mostly, every kid gets high."

His voice is nearly a whisper as he tells of how difficult it is to stay on the straight and narrow path:

Hmm, [I] just play a game or just stay home. . . .Or go play sports. . . .That's only when sometimes, like if temptings are like getting high. I just go and do something, like. I'm into football, but I just don't

like playing it that much. . . .I just play it just if school's doing something or I just don't wanna go home. . . .Well I'm not that really into it.

Han Was'aka's response is confusing. To avoid "temptings" he engages in sports, even though he really does not like them. How long will athletics or games prevent Han Was'aka from falling off the precipice?

I transition our conversation to a discussion about risks. Han Was'aka easily identifies examples of bad risks, "There's always like, fightin' or just drinkin' or going out robbin' people or anything." He struggles to name examples of good risks, so I ask him to consider a good risk as making a good choice. Han Was'aka begins telling how he avoids making poor decisions:

Trying to find somethin' positive to do and some positive friends. But, you don't have to ditch out your old friends. They're just, you can still say "hi" and hang out with them. But you don't have to do what they do. . . .That's kinda hard. Cause there's hardly, hardly anybody positive to find around here. . . .So you can just hang out with people a little bit younger than you or a little bit older that are positive. . . .It's kind of hard cause you don't want to change friends. If you knew 'em, like their whole, most of your life.

Han Was'aka has few friends his age who do not participate in some form of substance use. He acknowledges that to avoid temptings, he has to choose to be with teens younger than he is. In Han Was'aka's opinion, he can still be friendly with former friends yet choose not to partake in their poor decisions. Han Was'aka's continued connectedness to his childhood friends makes him vulnerable and increases his risk for harm (Boyes-Watson, 2008).

Han Was'aka shares that a lack of "positive parents" may be a reason why children on the reservation struggle:

It's cause, when they were like littler, they, when they're little, they didn't get the adult figures. They didn't teach 'em to do the right thing or

anything. They just got high around them, drunk, got drunk around them. Not being that positive parents.

Han Was'aka is concerned that it may be difficult to counter all the drinking and drugging:

Some people are addicted to it and they just drink all day or they just get high all day. So I don't know it would be kind of hard to get it, get them to do it. Cause drugs and alcohol are mostly probably bigger than religion, traditional dancing and all that.

Han Was'aka cannot envision anything that could help people on the reservation.

He feels that they are powerless to combat the effects of alcohol and drugs. *Yata's* deathly chill is present in Han Was'aka's comments.

I ask Han Was'aka to share an example of what he feels is good on the reservation. He replies,

That, there's not that much like. Nobody ever like, mostly got shot out here. Most of it's because they are drunk or it was an accident. Wasn't like because of gangs. . . .Like. If you're a gangbanger. If you're in a gang down here. It's not like gettin' shot at by a real gun or nothin'.

Han Was'aka, similar to Wicahpi, adds that gangs do exist within families, with the expectation that children will become members,

Yeah. That's, that's how it is being on the "V" [He states his last name.] side. They think. . . .That being member on my dad's side. There's risk like. Cause our family's kind of like a gang. . . .Cause if you fought one of them. You had to go against all of them. . . .I got his last name. So they kind of expect me to be on that too. . . .But, I just don't. I'm not that much of a fighter. I just like gettin' along with everybody and just having a good time. . . .Unless, like I got told when I was a little kid, by my Grandma that passed away, if we did get in a fight at least it had to be them first, that hit me first or. She said, "That if you do fight you should at least win."

Han Was'aka lacks positive adult role models in his life and feels pressured to become something he is not, a gangbanger. Will Han Was'aka be able to avoid becoming

a member of a gang? According to Boyes-Watson (2008), gangs emerge when young people seek what is missing in their lives, “security, safety, respect, love, and identity” (p. 28).

Han Was’aka searches to belong. Han Was’aka’s association with his father’s family identifies him as a member of a gang. *Yata* seems omnipotent in Han Was’aka’s life, gathering strength. Will his family be able to provide the security, safety, respect and love to keep him on the red road?

Yumni— How Will I Influence You?

*“Wind is a ghost
That whirls and turns
Twists in fleet moccasins,
Sweeps up dust spinning
Across the dry flatlands.*

*Whirlwind
Is a ghost dancing.”*

–Belting, 1974, p. 5

Yumni, the youngest wind brother, is mischievous and playful. *Yumni* can be either positive or negative, depending on the circumstances. For example, peers may affect an adolescent positively or negatively, by engaging or not engaging in appropriate behavior. Adult connections to adolescents may challenge them to react in healthy or unhealthy ways.

Yumni appears to have polarizing effects. Brendtro et al. (2002) identify that the traditional Indian way of thinking when confronted with polarization is “to search for harmony among seemingly antagonistic elements, thereby avoiding the pitfall of oversimplified polarization” (p. 60). Therefore, as I consider each of the adolescent’s stories that exemplify *Yumni*, it is essential that I discover what elements are missing in

order to understand which direction *Yumni* may lead the adolescent. These missing elements may balance *Yumni*'s polarizing effects, thus preventing the teen from venturing down the black road.

Elders in Native American culture are highly revered. Many Native American children receive instruction in appropriate behavior through modeling by significant adults, especially their elders. The following quotation from Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa), a physician and Santee Sioux, in the early 20th Century illustrates his training as a child.

As a little child, it was instilled into me to be silent and reticent. This was one of the most important traits to form in the character of the Indian. . . .I was made to respect adults, especially the aged. . . .Indian etiquette was very strict, and among the requirements was that of avoiding direct address. (Nerburn, 1999, p. 17)

To understand more completely how these adolescents would confront *Yumni* in the form of an elder behaving inappropriately, I posed the following hypothetical question, "If an elder or an adult was doing something that you did not agree with, what would you do?" Many of the adolescents acknowledged that they would disagree with the elder, but in a respectful manner. With some of the adolescents, we discussed what they would do if they saw an elder using an illegal substance. The responses were similar; however, I was not prepared that some of these adolescents had experienced such behaviors and that their responses were not hypothetical, but true examples. Below are the responses from the adolescents.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka: "I would tell."

Mary: "Ok. And have you ever run into a situation like that at all?"

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka: "Yeah."

Mary: "Yeah. And have done that, told somebody?"

[Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka shakes his head yes.]

Mary: "Who would you tell?"

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka: "I would tell the police, because I wouldn't want the elders or them older people to get hurt."

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka continues to show respect and courtesy to his elders by not confronting them outright. Instead, he shows more concern for their safety and seeks help for them. Will the poor choices of non-significant elders negatively influence Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka? Is Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka prepared to confront *Yumni*?

Wicahpi

Mary: "So Wicahpi tell me. If you disagree with an adult, do you say anything or do you just. . ."

Wicahpi: "Um, well my parents say I always want the last word and all that."

Mary: "Oh."

Wicahpi: "But, it depends how old they are and if it's truly wrong or. . ."

[There is silence.]

Mary: "Ok, so let's go with Grandma. Cause Grandma is older and she is a very respected, at least I believe, person."

Wicahpi: "Uh huh."

Mary: "And so even if you disagreed with Grandma and you felt that she was wrong would you disagree or would you say anything?"

Wicahpi: "Like it matters. If she is doing something wrong, then I will. But if it's ok, sort of, kind of, I'll let it go."

Wicahpi feels empowered to disagree with her parents and possibly her grandmother. She demonstrates the ability to consider each situation, weighing options and outcomes and choosing whether to vocalize her opinion or not. Wicahpi is aware that she has options, wherein some children on the reservation do not. She expresses concern

for those living among families where their options are limited, to join the family gang or to leave their family. Wicahpi appears prepared for *Yumni*.

Luta Win

Disagreeing with an adult, according to Luta Win, is dependent upon the adult's age. She will not disagree with her grandmother, but will with her father. If Luta Win encounters an elder who is using an illegal substance, she, similar to Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka, expresses concern for the elder's safety, rather than confronting the person about the choices.

Luta Win: "Un huh, I don't [disagree with my grandmother]."

Mary: "You don't."

Luta Win: "Some people do, but I don't."

Mary: "You don't. So you do as she asks then? [She shakes her head yes.] So if you disagreed with something about me what would you do?"

Luta Win: "I would tell you that I don't agree."

Mary: "Ok."

Luta Win: "I would do with you what I do with my dad if I don't agree. If I don't agree with him, then I tell him. I don't agree."

Mary: "And it's in a respectful manner. [She shakes her head yes.] So there's a difference again in the age of the person that you choose to disagree with?"

Luta Win: "Yeah."

Mary: "Ok, so what if you saw an elder doing something, like maybe they were getting drunk or high or something like that— what would you do?"

Luta Win: "I would tell someone. I wouldn't say anything to them. I would just leave and tell someone."

Mary: "Ok, how about parents. If you saw that, what would you do?"

Luta Win: "I would do the same thing. I wouldn't say anything to them, but I will tell someone else."

Luta Win, like Wicahpi, is comfortable disagreeing with an adult but not an elder adult. She models her traditional upbringing by respecting the elder's opinion. Luta Win, when faced with an elder's poor choices, continues to respect the elder by not confronting him/her; instead, she seeks assistance. Luta Win appears grounded to confront *Yumni* in

the form of elders; however, how prepared is she to face *Yumni* in the form of her friends?

Master

Mary: "Say that your mom or dad want you to do something or think that you should do this and you don't really think that you should, how do you disagree?"

Master: "I say no."

Mary: "You do say no." [He shakes his head yes.]

Mary: "So if you saw an adult, and I am not saying any one in your family that was disrespectful, what would you do?" [He pauses a long time before he responds.]

Master: "I would try to stop them."

Mary: "Really. If you didn't know them and they were an elder to you? Does it change it if they are an elder?" [He shakes his head no.]

Mary: "How have you learned that— that it is ok to say that you don't agree or that you would stop an elder or an adult from doing something disrespectful? How do you know that, that it is ok to do that?"

Master: "From my mom."

Master's mother demonstrates to him when it is appropriate to disagree with an adult. Master feels comfortable telling the adult or elder that their behavior is not respectful. Superficially, Master appears ready to oppose the demons on the reservation. Perhaps his naïve outlook is more related to his immaturity than it is to the overprotection of his family. How prepared is Master to confront *Yumni*?

Ate' Tanka

Mary: "So what happens, Ate' Tanka, if you, if an elder told you to do something that was wrong, even though they're an elder, what would you do?"

Ate' Tanka: "Don't do it."

Mary: "You wouldn't do it? [He shakes his head no.] Ok. What happens if an elder has told you to do something but you disagree with it?"

Ate' Tanka: "I don't know."

Mary: "What would you do, just think about it."

Ate' Tanka: "Like if they told me to break into something?"

Mary: "That could be an example. So, the break into something would be something bad."

Ate' Tanka: "Yeah."

Mary: "And that's where you are saying that you would not do it."
Ate' Tanka: "Stealing government property."
Mary: "Ok."
Ate' Tanka: "Breaking and entering."
Mary: "So that wouldn't be a good thing."
Ate' Tanka: "Yeah."
Mary: "So you wouldn't do that one. [He shakes his head yes.] . . . What happens if I said something and you didn't agree with it? It wasn't necessarily that I told you to do something, or maybe an elder said something to you and you didn't agree with it— even someone older than me. What would you do?"
Ate' Tanka: "Probably won't listen to them."
Mary: "Would you say anything to them?"
Ate' Tanka: "I probably talk to 'em."
Mary: "Would you?" [He shakes his head yes.] . . . How do you show respect and still disagree with me?"
Ate' Tanka: "Hm. Just say like. If you told me to go and take out the trash, I would. But if you told me to do something bad, then I wouldn't."
Mary: "Ok. And say that you and I were both doing— I maybe said, I think we should do it this way. But you think that we should do it another way. Then what would we do?"
Ate' Tanka: "Hm. Go different ways." [We both chuckle about his comment.]

My exchange with Ate' Tanka troubles me somewhat. He seems to live in a world of extremes, as demonstrated by the examples that he provided regarding what an elder may ask him to do. Is it possible that his examples are a result of his immaturity, a way of getting my attention?

Another example of extremes occurred in our conversation regarding the importance of his family. Ate' Tanka shares, "Really important. Like if one of them dies then, I don't know, I would try and take my life." I immediately respond by looking directly at him and asking him if this is true. He responds no.

Though Ate' Tanka claims that he would never do this, the rate of suicide committed by adolescents on the reservation is very high, bringing this very real possibility to light. What is Ate' Tanka lacking that he vocalizes suicide as his only

option when confronting the death of a loved one? How able is Ate' Tanka to combat *Yumni* in the form of pain or loss?

Yumni may swirl enticingly to Ate' Tanka and his friends when they find they have no outlet for their energy. The reservation lacks playgrounds and organized activities for young adolescents, especially during the summer months.

Ate' Tanka describes what it is like living on the reservation. "It's all right. It gets boring during the day." I ask him to tell me what he does in the evening. "Nothing, just sit around and jump. Or walk around." Ate' Tanka shares what he feels his community needs. "A playground. . . .A basketball court. . . .Probably a better one, that has like swings in the middle. That's probably it." He tells me that children less than the age of 12 may go to the Episcopal church for summer activities. Ate' Tanka used to attend but is no longer eligible. In order to qualify for summer employment, teens must be 14 years old, making Ate' Tanka too young.

Ate' Tanka is at the crossroads. He is in between— where he no longer belongs in the church activities and does not qualify for the summer youth program. Ate' Tanka is in need of opportunities wherein he feels he belongs or where he can develop skills to become competent to deal with *Yumni*, emotionally, physically, and mentally.

Han Was'aka

Mary: "Would you, you openly disagree with her? Would you tell her, 'No, Grandma, I'm not going to.' "

Han Was'aka: "No, it's hard to say no to my Grandma. Cause she's having a rough time. So I don't say no to her that much."

Mary: "And what about if it was another elder, somebody that was in the same age range as your grandma?"

Han Was'aka: "No, they always say to respect your elders. So, I never go against them."

Mary: “What does that mean, ‘respect your elders’ to you?”

Han Was’aka: “To me, it’s like, don’t be like mean to them. Don’t say no and especially if they can’t do it themselves. It’s like move somethin’ or take out the trash— it’s just do it for them and then they’ll thank you and it’s pretty important. Cause the elders went through life and they had struggles too, so I just. So it’s pretty. It’s important.”

Mary: “Ok. And you said that you and mom. Most of the time you get along well with your mom, but every now and then you disagree, ’cause you don’t want to do something. So um, who’s taught you that it’s ok to disagree?”

Han Was’aka: “No one.”

Mary: “No one. Ok, so how important is it in the way you disagree? Is there a difference in how you disagree with people? Do you know what I am trying to say with that?”

Han Was’aka: “No, there’s no difference. Cause, everything, I disagree. It’s not about like who’s the better team or who’s the better basketball player. . . . It’s about like doing stuff. Like cause. Most of the time I agree with them. Cause, I’m not that very into sports so I don’t know who’s the best team is, or who’s the better basketball player so, I just say yeah, you’re probably right then.”

Mary: What about um, say that you saw an elder or um a person that you are supposed to look up to doing something that they shouldn’t be. Like they were getting high or getting drunk. What would you do?”

Han Was’aka: “I’d ask them if that’s really appropriate for someone your age and you’re telling us not to be doing that and you’re kind of just going out, like being a hypocrite. So I just tell ’em if they stop I won’t try it, cause I’ll think it’s ok if they do it. But I really don’t, I’d just use it to say that to them. But it’s important that they don’t do that cause, they’re getting old and might sumpin’ and sumpin’ might bad happen. If they get high or somethin’.”

Han Was’aka speaks of the importance of elders modeling appropriate behaviors.

He respects his elders and expresses empathy for the difficulties they have overcome in their lives. Han Was’aka appears to have the ability to confront *Yumni* verbally; does he also possess it physically and emotionally?

Han Was’aka, similar to Ate’ Tanka, indicates that his community is in need of activities to channel the energy of youth in a positive direction. He states,

That there’s more stuff to do. Like, if there’s a place where you can camp out somethin’ or just do anything. Like in the city there’s a whole bunch

of stuff, like there's a ranch, there's a mall. Or anything you can do to. There's all over places to go. But down here there's only two places to go. There's the school and down home actually. That's the other place to go and it's gettin' really boring and hot.

Han Was'aka, unlike Ate' Tanka, qualifies for summer employment, which helps him to stay busy during the week. Where can he go, or what can he do when he is not working to avoid the temptings of *Yumni*?

The Wind, or *Tate*, presents itself as positive, negative, or somewhere in the middle. The stories shared by these participants demonstrate the interrelationship of each of the Winds— how one Wind may counter, balance, or intensify the effects of the other Wind.

For example, the effects of labeling, or *Yanpa*, may lessen if the adolescent has significant role models to help develop and nourish his/her self-esteem and self-confidence (*Eya* and *Okaga*, respectively). To overcome *Yata*'s chilling presence and *Yumni*'s turbulence, adolescents need to feel a sense of community or belonging with people that truly care about their well-being.

Adolescents need to know that their contributions matter, creating a sense of worth, which empowers them to face *Yata* and *Yumni*'s challenges. They need balance, created from the interconnectedness of the winds and from the Rock's, or *Inyan*'s, presence in their lives. This interconnectedness is similar to the Indigenous worldview of the medicine wheel, where the cyclical patterns of life connect all things to one another (Boyes-Watson, 2008; Dapice, 2006).

Inyan— I Will Be Your Foundation

“The outline of the stone is round, having no end and no beginning; like the power of the stone it is endless. The stone is perfect of its kind and is the work of nature, no artificial means being used in shaping it. Outwardly it is not beautiful, but its structure is solid, like a solid house in which one may safely dwell.”

Chased-By-Bears, Santee-Yanktonai Sioux
–Herr, 2003, p. 75

As participants shared their stories, many spoke of people, places, or spiritual activities that help bring safety and meaning to their lives. Participants acknowledged that although life on the reservation is difficult, they are able to “get through” with the foundational support of these significant persons, places, or spiritual activities. It is through these connections that these adolescents voiced feeling valued and secure.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka

The majority of Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s photographs include members of his family. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka identifies his family, his traditional spiritual activities, and his family land as the significant *Inyans* in his life.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka shares why his cousin, Maggie, a seven-year-old girl with beautiful dark hair, is special to him. “When I always need help she is there to help me. . . .When I am sad, she will cheer me up. . . .Or if I’m mad she’ll make me happy.” He tells me that to repay her kindness to him, “I always go ride horse with her when she wants me to.”

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka becomes sad when he discusses his eight-year-old cousin, April. He indicates that April and Maggie are similar, “Because she is pretty much like my cousin Maggie. . . .She is always nice to me. . . .But I hardly see her.”

Although April lives in a nearby community, Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka and his family do not see her as often as they would like. He does not share why.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka smiles again as he explains why his 27-year-old sister and her two daughters are important to him. “Cuz, my sister always cleans up after me and my niece. She always helps me do the dishes. . . .She does my chores. . .when I’m not home.” Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka reciprocates his sister’s generosity by “doing her chores when she is busy.”

He next describes the entertainment that his two-year-old niece and nephew provide him. His smiles broadly as he says, “They always help my mom clean up around the house. . . .These two both vacuum together. It is fun to watch.”

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka shares that he likes kids, which is evident in the next photograph, where he stands near a young girl. Their heads gently touch, and his eyes hold a paternal glow while he serenely smiles.

This is my niece; she came back from Texas. She was living with her Grandpa. . . .She is three. . . .Ever since she came back, she’s been um, she, she’s just been joyful. She, she’s all, when my mom’s down she always brings her happy again.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s family is important to him. They provide him a foundation of unconditional love and understanding, which in turn, he reciprocates. Family is a meaningful *Inyan*.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka lives on a working horse ranch. Special to this ranch is its location to what his family calls *Paha Hanska*, or tall hills. *Paha Hanska* is sacred to his family. According to family oral stories, “seven generations are up there. There is supposed to be a petrified baby up there. . . .And there is supposed to be a rose up there.”

He tells that his “Grandpa use to climb that rock. We burn sage and cedar. . .to keep us safe and pray.” *Paha Hanska* is more than a rock, as described by

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka. It is a very tall, rocky hill with many trees along the hillside.

Walking to the top is sacred and treacherous, hence the burning of sage and cedar.

Paha Hanska is a place where Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka feels connected to the land.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka values his traditional Lakota ceremonies. As he tells about participating in a sweat ceremony, his sense of humor is present. Also evident is the effect of assimilation on his Lakota ceremonies:

[I] sweat. . .every Sunday. . .cause it’s like church. But you don’t get the bread or the wine, you get water. . . .There’s church in the morning, then I go to sweat at night. . . .They both pray. . .and sing songs. . .and give out water with wine.

At the conclusion of this description, Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka laughs, his eyes bright with mischief.

Besides the sweat, or *inipi*, ceremony, Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is a traditional dancer, drummer, and singer. He has participated in a Sun Dance and plans to do a vision quest next year, after he turns 14. Lakota traditionalism nourishes Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s soul, giving him a spiritual foundation to rely on during times of confrontation or crisis.

Wicahpi

Wicahpi’s *Inyans* are her grandmother, the club, and her respect for her deceased aunt. Wicahpi tells her story with great passion, indicating the significance and deep interconnection of her three *Inyans*.

Wicahpi feels her grandmother is special because she cares so much about the children on the reservation and tries to create a safe haven for them. Taking her auntie's dream and fervent wish, her grandmother found the capital to create this "place."

Wicahpi tells,

She [Grandmother] got to do this building for the kids, where the kids would be off the street and they help the kids get educated. And help 'em have fun. And help 'em make friends. . . . I learned about this building. I was raised here. And so learned to help with the kids. And um, I help with the café and anything that I can help with. Like cleaning, just to help her [grandmother]. . . .cause, my auntie— she passed away. Um, she was making a movie about how all the kids are all getting into drugs and alcohol once they are young and they pass it on. She didn't want that. And the kids are out on the street. And they don't have no clothing or shoes, like that. . . . And she went, she was talking to my grandma about this place called "----" . . .where the kids can come off the street and be here to play together and all that. . . . But the funny thing is what my auntie named the place, became a restaurant! And we added this as the club.

Wicahpi's grandmother and the club provide the foundational building blocks for her to learn and practice responsibility and accountability. From her personal experiences, Wicahpi sees the club as a place to foster the development of life skills for those who choose to come. Wicahpi's belief in her auntie's vision for kids on the reservation burns deeply within her. Her wish to emulate her auntie grounds her decisions toward positive choices. Wicahpi's *Inyans* are the club, her grandmother, and her auntie.

Luta Win

Luta Win's family and Native spirituality give her balance and stability. As part of her spirituality, Luta Win actively partakes in the Sun Dance. However, before she can participate in the Sun Dance, she must do a sweat ceremony. For Luta Win, the cleansing sweat ceremony causes great fear. With the help of her family, Luta Win completes the sweat, which then allows her to replenish her spirit through the Sun Dance.

Luta Win begins by describing what the sweat ceremony symbolizes to her.

It symbolizes like healing. Healing and ah, prayer. Prayer. [She pauses.] Well, I'm scared of the sweat. I'm scared of the dark and I'm claustrophobic, so. . . [She starts to laugh nervously.] But I get scared, especially when they start it. I just start praying. . . .[I have to sweat] every year at a Sun Dance. . . .You have to sweat before you Sun Dance and you have to sweat when you are done Sun Dancing. . . .There are different reasons why you can sweat. . . .I usually sweat for healing. . . .Everyone has their other reasons, I have my own. . . . I sometimes feel that there's more than like. There's usually about like 11 people in a sweat. I feel like there's more, like there's 50 [She emphasizes the number.] people in there with us and that they're not. I know that they're really not there, but I feel like that they are there. And that they are listening to us pray and that they want to help. . . .I used to be scared, I still am scared. But, I used to be very, very scared to go in a sweat, so I used to sit by my mom and grab her arm and close my eyes [She demonstrates by very tightly squeezing her eyes shut.]. And just hold her arm until she says, until she nudges me and says, "You can open your eyes now." . . .It [the sweat], you have to respect it because it's like. It can help you, it can help other people. And if you don't respect it, then, I don't know, chaos.

Luta Win pauses before she states the word chaos. As she described why it is important to respect the sweat, she chose her words carefully, pausing to make sure that her words accurately articulated their significance. Luta Win understands the power in her traditional spirituality and sincerely respects each component in order not to bring harm to herself or her family. Luta Win's ability to face her demons in the sweat strengthens her self-confidence, giving her the courage to face other challenges.

Inyan, as Luta Win's family, is especially significant to her. Luta Win's mother died four years ago, and since that time, she has lived with her grandmother and auntie. Luta Win's nuclear family enveloped her in love and compassion, allowing her the space she needed to heal and continue to grow.

When I ask Luta Win to describe the importance of her family, her eyes begin to fill with tears and she softly states,

They are my life. I love 'em so much. It was hard losing my mom and then everyone was there for me. . . .It was very sad because at my mom's funeral, my little sister is standing beside me, she looked up at me and she asked, "Is mommy sleeping?" And I said, "Yeah." And she said, "How long is she going to be sleeping?" And I said, "for a LONG [She stresses the word.] time." And she said, "I hope mommy wakes up soon."

Luta Win keenly feels the heartache of losing a loved one. Yet through the compassion and guidance of her family, she is developing into a vivacious and caring young woman. Her family is the security and foundation, helping her to thrive.

Master

Master's interview was perhaps the most difficult. He struggled with abstract concepts, so his answers to questions were very concrete. Although Master did not explicitly state that his family and residence are important to him, I feel that I can infer this from my interactions with his mother and him.

Master's favorite playmate is his cousin. He and Chad are free to roam and play on the family land. Described as inseparable, Chad and he require the interventions of their mothers to separate them by sending them to their respective homes. Master feels secure with his family, knowing that his grandmother, aunties, and uncles are available should he need them.

Master's family does not allow him to go into the "village" without an adult. His mother shares that the family is very protective of their children, trying to keep them away from the gangs, drinking, and drugging. I am uncertain if this protection has helped or hampered Master; he seemed naïve throughout most of the interview.

My concern for Master lies in the future for when he must transition into high school. To attend high school, Master can choose between three on-reservation schools or one off-reservation school, each requiring that he travel at least 60 miles from home. Has his family's security and residence been too confining, not allowing him the opportunity to become independent? Perhaps the effects of his personal *Inyans*, his family and his residence, have been grounding and affirming, providing him with the confidence to handle the whirlwinds of adolescence.

Ate' Tanka

Ate' Tanka identifies his family and the sweat ceremony as his *Inyans*. His support comes especially from his mother and grandparents. Ate' Tanka's love for his family is so profound that he expressed great despair at the thought of losing one of them.

Ate' Tanka shares that family is important because

You grew up with them. . . . And that they love you. . . . And they have respect for you and you have respect for them. . . .[My family] get me through life every day. Like, say my mom feeds me everyday. Yeah. And I have to shower at night and in the morning. I have to do everything. Have to help clean up the house. Take out trash. . .[and] like taking care of my stuff.

Ate' Tanka's mother has taught him to respect and take care of his "stuff." He tells that his father has shown him to "cut wood. Show me how to cut wood. Help me use the chain saw."

Ate' Tanka shares that Grandmothers Clara and Alice and his grandpa are very dear to him. His expression becomes sorrowful as he responds,

They take care of me. But my Grandma can't cause she's in the hospital. . . .I cry for her every now and then. . . . Somethin' wrong with her body. . . . She's old and she's stickin' in there.

Ate' Tanka's family is clearly special to him. His parents and grandparents provide him with the comfort of home and the security of their love. *Inyan* is family for Ate' Tanka.

Ate' Tanka attends a sweat "about once a month." He simply states that the purpose of the sweat is it to "get all the bad sins off of you. . . .Erases all your bad sins. And keeps you out of trouble."

The healing properties of the sweat attract Ate' Tanka. Is this attraction enough of a foundation to protect him from the uncertainties of adolescence? Is the sweat truly an *Inyan* for Ate' Tanka?

Han Was'aka

The *Inyans* for Han Was'aka are less evident. He expresses that his family is important to him, with his mother being "there" for him and his grandmother teaching him the Lakota values. Han Was'aka shared that his grandmother recently relocated to another reservation, making her support less available to him.

Han Was'aka feels his family provides him with the security of knowing that he is not alone.

To me it is really important, cause I wouldn't know what I would do if I was like ever alone in life with no family or someone. Or someone to talk to or go to whenever I'm having troubles. . . .So they're pretty important to me. . . .It's my mom. Cause she was there most of my life. And she's not always gonna be there but, I really enjoy the time when she's here. . . .Sometimes we fight, but it's cuz, we just don't agree on somethin' or it's somethin' that happened.

Han Was'aka's *Inyans* are limited and fragile. Where will he turn when he does not feel understood? Will Han Was'aka seek solace in gang activity if he continues to disagree with his mother?

Summary

In this chapter, I provided my final interpretations, including a description of the pattern and themes identified within and among the participants. The pattern, *The Inyan (Rock) and The Tate (Wind)*, resulted after in-depth reading in Native American children's and adult literature and poetry, and after collaborating with the Hermeneutic Circle. I discovered a wealth of Native American knowledge and wisdom within the stories and poems and felt compelled to share some of this historical and contemporary wisdom by including selected excerpts in my interpretations.

Traditional Native American philosophy identifies the circularity of life. Within the final interpretations, this circularity is evident. It is clear that each direction influences the other and *Inyan*— and *Inyan* may affect each direction. Now, the question is, how do we strengthen the nourishing components for each adolescent in order to lessen the effects of the negative ones?

Brendtro et al. (2002) describe an educational model for assisting “at-risk” children. The model, known as the circle of courage, incorporates Indigenous wisdom and child rearing practices into interactions with children, guiding them to success. Brendtro and his colleagues (2002) identify four concerns or “seeds of discouragement” that create imbalance in children's lives. These “ecological hazards” (Brendtro et al., 2002, p. 8) are destructive relationships, climates of futility, learned irresponsibility, and loss of purpose.

I find these hazards similar to the concerns expressed by the adolescents in this study. Destructive relationships are gangs and negative role models. A climate of futility is the effect of stereotyping. Learned irresponsibility is the littering on the reservation. A

loss of purpose may be the lack of connection to spirituality or not having an outlet for their energy.

The circle of courage model seeks to embed the following essentials into children's lives. First is the spirit of belonging, where children feel connected, safe, and loved. Second is the spirit of mastery, where children and adolescents learn to be competent, thus gaining self-confidence and self-worth. Third is the spirit of independence. Children learn to become responsible through mentoring by significant role models. Last is the spirit of generosity, where children give of themselves, feeling that they have gifts worthy of contributing to the community (Brendtro et al., 2002).

My conversations with these six adolescents yielded similar findings. Each participant expressed feeling connected to his/her families; however, some of these connections were stronger for some adolescents than the others. I noted responsibility in the adolescents' descriptions of duties, chores, or jobs that were part of their role as a member of a family. Present in many of the adolescents' stories were the characteristics of nurturing by significant family members or by personal involvement in traditional activities. Some shared how they nurture others and the environment by their caring behaviors.

Carolyn Boyes-Watson's (2008) discussion of inner city youth behaviors and circumstances are comparable to what these on-reservation adolescents described. However, the participants in my study expressed that they were not involved in gang activity or illegal substance use. Boyes-Watson (2008), like Brendtro et al. (2002), bases her interventions on Indigenous wisdom. She incorporates the use of talking or peacemaking circles, and a place where teens can experience the values of belonging,

generosity, competence, and independence. Both models seek to create a sense of balance for children and adolescents, helping them to feel valued.

The concept of balance and the circularity of life are essential in working with adolescents. In order to create balance, I must first understand what directions pull the adolescent and whether the forces are positive or negative. Brendtro et al. (2002) describe healing as mending the broken circle. Important to this metaphor of a broken circle is knowing that healing can occur in the brokenness, and as Hemingway stated, “afterward many are strong at the broken places” (as cited in Brendtro et al., 2002, p. 94).

When considering the future of these Lakota adolescents it is imperative to consider if the circle [the child/family/community/system] is broken. If the circle is broken, how do we help the child, family, community, or system to regain balance and to become stronger and empowered in the process? If the circle is not broken but perhaps weakened, how do we help to sustain and nourish the child, family, community, or system in order to retain balance and grow? Interventions to assist this community must include understanding the circularity of life from the Lakota perspective. As Black Elk stated,

The power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. . . .The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles. . . .Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. (Herr, 2003, p. 13)

The power is in understanding the paradox, in order to find the balance, realizing the interconnectedness of the two.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTEMPLATION FOR FUTURE ACTION: LISTENING TO THE SILENCES

I began this study seeking to understand the meaning of respect and risk from the Lakota adolescent perspective. I hoped that the use of photography would provide a springboard for the adolescents to share their interpretations of respect and risk, giving visual evidence to how they see respect and risk practiced in their everyday lives. I did not anticipate that these six Lakota adolescents would so willingly share their personal horizons of respect and risk, leading us to a fusion or blending of our horizons. However, as I contemplated the significance and implications of this blending of horizons, it became apparent to me that I needed to more clearly understand the notion of sovereignty and to conduct further conversations with members from the community.

Sovereignty

Understanding sovereignty is essential to future work on the reservation. To augment my knowledge of sovereignty, especially in the arenas of healthcare and education, I met with Frank Pommersheim, professor of law at the USD School of Law and an internationally recognized expert in Indian law and the rights of Indigenous people. According to Professor Pommersheim the concept of sovereignty or sovereign nation is difficult for many people to grasp, yet is important when persons are trying to implement programs on the reservation. Sovereignty in the most simplistic terms is the right to self-determination or the right to make decisions on behalf of the needs of tribe. Professor Pommersheim states that the Lakota have sovereignty; however, the term is definitional and how much sovereignty exists is dependent upon the situation (personal communication, December 31, 2008).

In the arena of healthcare on the reservation, Professor Pommersheim describes that funding is completely dependent upon how much the U.S. Congress decides to allocate in any given year. Each year, the tribal council submits a budget to the respective regional BIA/Indian Health Service (IHS) office, requesting specific programs and monetary allotments. This office then submits the final budget for the region to Congress (F. Pommersheim, personal communication, December 31, 2008).

From this explanation, the allocation of spending appears simplistic. However, it is important to recognize that many bureaucratic layers compose this system, making it labor-intensive for each tribe to obtain needed services. One of the logistical challenges centers on the large geographical area covered by one office. For example, the Great Plains Region is responsible for 11 reservations in three states (BIA Maps).

It is not uncommon for Congress to underfund requests from the BIA. It is also difficult for tribes to challenge the funding because they must prove that Congress has committed a breach of the “trust responsibility” as set forth by treaty agreements. Key to this trust responsibility is that although the treaties guarantee healthcare, education, and food to the Indians; the treaties do not state the amount of funding guaranteed. When the federal government releases the funding, the area offices receive the funds then distribute them to the individual reservations (F. Pommersheim, personal communication, December 31, 2008).

Funding for education on the reservations is similar to healthcare, with the exception that IHS is not included in the process. The educational system on the specific reservation whereon the participants lived is very complex. Schools may be a BIA school, a BIA school with contracted services, a contract school, a public school, or a

parochial school (R. Pourier, personal communication, January 10, 2009; A. Wilson, personal communication, January 5, 2009). Professor Pommersheim (personal communication, December 31, 2008) shares that in order for schools to participate in state athletic events, the state of South Dakota must certify each school. “All schools on the reservation comply with state standards, largely due to sports. BIA and contract schools are public schools, but are not state public schools, but are federal public schools. These schools are the only schools solely funded by the federal government for Indians” (F. Pommersheim, personal communication, December 31, 2008).

R. Pourier (personal communication, January 10, 2009), an educator for over 20 years in the reservation school system (parochial and BIA), describes the multiple layers that BIA schools must navigate in order to provide services. According to Pourier, Indian schools funded by the federal government report to the BIA, the state of South Dakota, and the division office for the BIA, and must comply with federal and state standards. Because of the multiple layers it is “difficult to be consistent” across the schools on the reservation (R. Pourier, personal communication, January 10, 2009).

A term common in both funding for healthcare and education is “contract.” Lisa S. Dillon, director of the Tribal Health Administration, designates contract services as those in which the tribe negotiates with the BIA (personal communication, January 8, 2009). These services are ones that the tribe feels they can provide more adequately than IHS. Contracted services in education are similar to healthcare, whereby the tribe then a community school board negotiates with the BIA to either run their own school or control certain services within the school (F. Pommersheim, personal communication, December 31, 2008).

Sovereignty is self-determination. Yet sovereignty comes with federal government regulations and many bureaucratic channels to navigate. The reservation system is dependent upon the federal government for much of its financial resources; however, many on the reservation question the benefits of this dependence. “Up until the 1960’s the Lakota were pretty self-sufficient and self-reliant. Now we have a learned dependency. We need to return to being self-sufficient and begin to think and do for ourselves” (L. Little Finger, personal communication, January 14, 2009).

Member Checks: Are my Findings Valid?

I met with Tresita and Asa Wilson, who live in a community on the western side of the reservation. Asa is a Presbyterian minister, a counselor at one of the state public schools on the reservation and a registered member of a Southwestern tribe. Tresita is a registered member of the Hunkpapa Lakota and worked at a contract school on the reservation until this past year. Tresita and Asa have resided on the reservation for a number of years.

Asa and Tresita were aware of, but not involved in, my research over the past 18 months. I began the conversation by describing my initial feelings and interpretations, including my original pattern of “anchored and adrift.” I then told them of my immersion into Native American literature and poetry (adult’s and children’s), where the pattern of *Inyan and Tate* emerged, leading to the themes within the pattern.

I encouraged Asa and Tresita to correct me if they felt I had misinterpreted or misrepresented the culture in anyway. In true Indian politeness, they were silent, yet engaged throughout my telling of the stories. They engaged me by nodding their heads affirmatively or smiling at me as I wove through the interpretations. When I finished,

Tresita looked directly at me and stated, “Yes, this is what we see here on the reservation. I really like how you included Lakota mythology into the story. It gives it a sense of realness.” Asa smiled and simply stated, “I didn’t know you could talk so much!” Up until that moment, most of my interactions with Asa and Tresita had been as an active listener and observer.

I then asked Asa about the functioning of the school system(s) on the reservation. Asa admits that the school system is very confusing. He is uncertain which school is BIA, contract, or BIA/contract. He transitioned to the public school from a contract school in the fall of 2008 because he felt that the contract school was not providing the essentials that students need. He personally feels that the state public school system is less dysfunctional and more children-centered. Unfortunately, the state public schools on the reservation are kindergarten through eighth grade; however, they recently started a virtual high school, where students who have struggled in the BIA high schools may complete their high school education online (A. Wilson, personal communication, January 5, 2009).

My next member check was with Lisa Dillon at the tribal administration health office. I shared the same stories with Lisa as I had with the Wilsons. During this sharing, Lisa would actually arrive at some conclusions before I finished telling them to her. For example, while I described Master’s protective family, Lisa asked, “Aren’t you concerned that he may be too sheltered and that when he needs to go to high school, he won’t be prepared?” She also confirmed my concerns about the lack of resources for children and adolescents on the reservation, especially those who live in outlying communities. She indicates that many reservation adolescents and children receive little

positive role modeling or mentoring at home. Due to circumstances beyond their control, many shift from school to school (on- and off-reservation) with limited opportunities to form those special relationships with teachers. Lisa indicates that at present there are no formal mentoring programs on the reservation (L. Dillon, personal communication, January 9, 2009).

My final member check was with Kelly Looking Horse, a traditional singer, dancer, and Lakota artist. His artistic specialty is in the creation of traditional dream catchers and drums. Kelly is a registered member of the Lakota tribe, while his wife of over 30 years, Susie, is a member of another tribe. Kelly and Susie live on the eastern side of the reservation. I shared the same stories with Kelly, as I had with the first three member checks. Kelly concurred with my interpretations and concerns regarding the lack of constant, non-parent role models to Indian adolescents:

Many times these kids get shifted from family to family or school to school. They may be up north one week and on the east side the next. How can we expect them to form any trusting relationships? The other concern is that many of the teachers in the schools are not native. They do not live or interact within the community, other than during school hours, making it difficult for kids to see that they [the teachers] really care about them or monitor what the kids may be doing in off-school time. Most of the teachers are white and commute in from Nebraska.

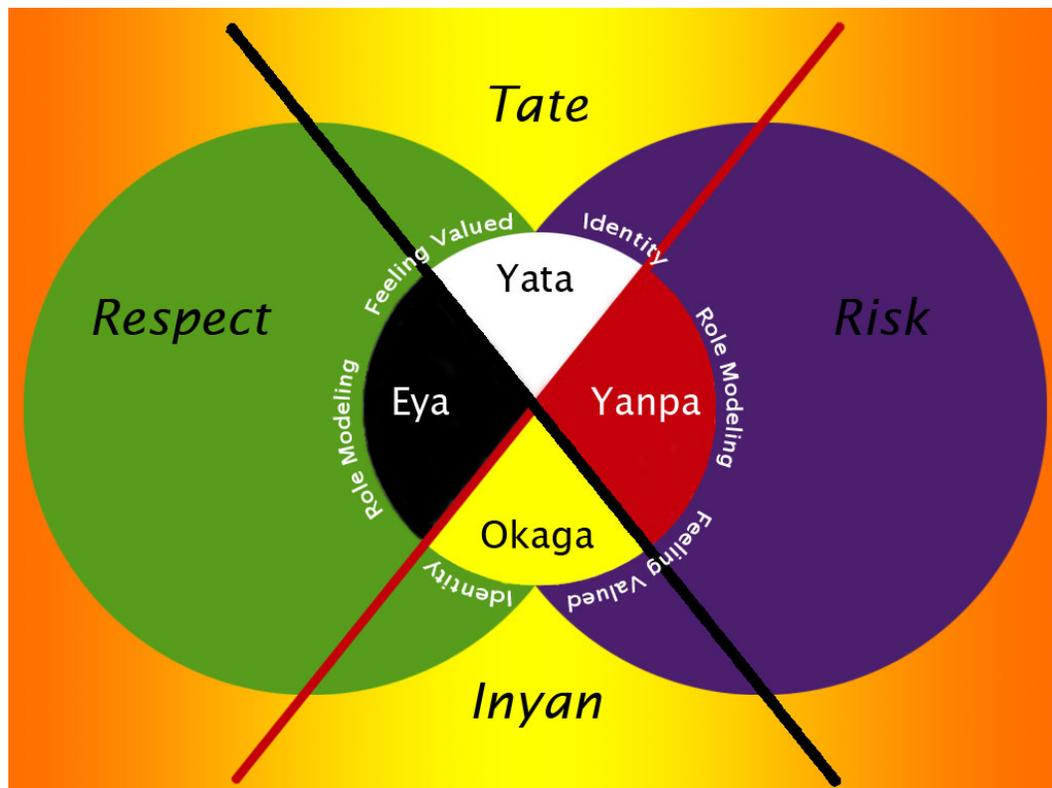
Kelly is uncertain if these teachers have sought to obtain housing through the tribe and were denied, or if it is a personal choice not to live on the reservation (K. Looking Horse, personal communication, January 9, 2009).

It is because of Kelly and Susie's concerns for continuity that they purposively chose to send some of their children to boarding schools in California. Kelly and Susie feel that the consistency their children are receiving and have received at these schools

has helped them to succeed and continue on to college (K. & S. Looking Horse, personal communication, January 13, 2009).

So what is respect and risk from the perspective of these Lakota adolescents? I learned from these youth that respect and risk are each a paradox. They can be either positive or negative, depending upon the circumstances or the context of the situation. From their stories, the themes of role modeling (positive and negative), identity, and feeling valued emerged (see Figure 2). These themes are consistent with current research regarding adolescent high-risk behaviors and are significant because they are the actual stories as lived by these Lakota young people.

Figure 2. Illustration of themes of role modeling, identity, and feeling valued.



The Importance of Adult Role Models

Through hermeneutic photography, these adolescents revealed the importance of having significant adults in their lives. These significant adults add to the notion of paradox in that they may influence the adolescent in a positive or a negative way. Each youth shared how important it is to respect his/her elders, yet some of the adolescents identified that elders within their communities participated in the unhealthy behaviors of alcohol and illegal substance use, causing them to fear for the elders' safety. This behavior by the elders created a paradox in the meaning of respect. How are adolescents to respect their elders when the elders themselves practice high-risk behaviors? Will the behavior of these elders negatively influence the adolescents?

Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, and Notaro's (2002) study reported the importance of natural mentors in the lives of adolescents. Their investigation revealed that mentors can positively influence the behavior of young people. Natural mentors, according to Zimmerman et al. (2002), are relationships that adolescents develop with adults who are not their parents. These adults typically have daily contact with the teen and are not present because of a formal program.

DuBois and Silverthorn's (2005) study identified that natural mentoring relationships can increase self-esteem and physical activity, and the chances of completing high school while decreasing gang involvement and high-risk behavior. Significant to this study was evidence that the influence of the adult was greater in relationships that were of longer duration. However, Dubois and Silverthorn (2005) indicate that the benefits of natural mentoring relationships for decreasing substance use were less if there was not a parent present to monitor the adolescent's behavior.

The study of middle school students and substance use as related to ecological factors indicated that students who feel supported by their teachers and have closely involved parents were less likely to affiliate with students who used substances; thus, they were less likely to use themselves (Suldo et al., 2008). These findings signified the importance of “student-teacher relations” (Suldo et al., 2008, p. 384), which, if positive, may decrease alcohol and drug use while at the same time improving school attendance and achievement, leading to a decreased likelihood of the student dropping out of school.

The above studies, although not completed with on-reservation adolescents, give credence to the importance of significant adult role models, especially the role of the teacher. For many Lakota children and teens, attending the same school throughout the entire academic year may be a challenge due to circumstances beyond their control. Joan Nelson, a long time resident of a “border town” and employee on the reservation, describes the following scenario. Because of financial difficulties or unstable home environments, many Indian children may move to a different district on the reservation or to an off-reservation community several times during the school year, necessitating multiple changes in school settings (Dapice, 2006; J. Nelson, personal communication, January 6, 2009). Unfortunately, with each transition, these students experience exposure to differing curricula and new teachers with new expectations (J. Nelson, personal communication, January 6, 2009). This constant shifting from school to school may lead to student dissatisfaction manifested in the form of poor school attendance, poor academic performance, and the initiation of high-risk behaviors, such as alcohol or drug use and gang involvement.

Who I Am— the Importance of Identity

Dapice (2006) indicates that the shaping of identity for Indian youth was through the *tiospaye*. All members of the community monitored the behavior and actions of the children and taught appropriate behaviors through modeling; hence, learning occurred through imitation and observation (Deloria, 1988). With the advent of boarding schools, exposure to traditional teachings and contact with elders and parents was limited, leading to a loss of cultural and personal identity.

Present in these adolescents' stories were signs of cultural revival and cultural loss. Some of the adolescents shared how they learned traditional dancing from their families. To them, it was not only important to know how to dance but also to understand the meaning of the dance from the traditional perspective. Some of the adolescents reported participating in traditional ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance and sweat ceremony. Through their parents, grandparents, and extended families, they understood the significance and purpose of each ceremony from the Lakota viewpoint. This teaching-learning dialogue and instruction with parents and elders helped to shape each teen's personal and cultural identities, giving him/her a sense of personal identity.

However, evidence of cultural loss existed in some of the adolescents' narratives. For example, three of the males indicated that they did not learn to dance because it was "too hard." Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka described the intricacies of the dance steps and the importance of "stickin' to the beat"; however, unlike the other males, he experienced mentoring and coaching from his father, uncle, and grandfather.

Many of the adolescents reported a grandparent who is a fluent Lakota speaker, yet each of these adolescents knows only a few words in Lakota. Some identified that

their grandparents tried to teach them the language, but that it was, once again, “too hard.” Ate’ Tanka described differences in Lakota language instruction in the school. He shared that in a previous school, teaching and learning of the language happened for all students. The school that he attended last year did not reinforce the language, choosing to use it mainly during the Lakota flag song.

Significant in these stories is perhaps not the loss of culture, in the shaping of identity, but rather, the loss of adult interaction. As noted previously, some of the adolescents report the presence of significant adults in their lives, helping them to sort out day-to-day trials. However, consider Han Was’aka’s stories of labeling and his lack of contact with male adult role models. Will learning the traditional ceremonies and language prevent him from participating in high-risk behaviors? Dapice (2006) writes that the practice of traditional ceremonies is important; however, unfortunately, it may not be enough of an impetus to prevent Indian teens from participating in high-risk behaviors. “A broader...approach is indicated” (Dapice, 2006, p. 257). Who will help Han Was’aka as he struggles to understand who he is?

The Importance of Feeling Valued

An adolescent who feels valued by others, experiences enhanced self-worth and is more likely to be generous and contribute to others (Brendtro et al., 2002; Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004). Contribution of personal gifts strengthens the youth’s character and builds self-confidence in his/her competence (Hamilton et al., 2004).

Each adolescent expressed feeling valued differently. Some identified that helping care for “Mother Nature” gave them a sense of purpose and connection to their traditional Lakota beliefs. Others found meaning and a sense of belonging by participating in

traditional ceremonies and dances. One teen shared that having a job provided him with a sense of responsibility and productivity.

Common to each of these areas are the connections experienced by the participating adolescents. These connections are to the community by picking up trash, to elders by practicing and learning traditional ceremonies and dances, and to a social network by working in the community. These connections can support the development of positive outcomes for adolescents (Hamilton et al., 2004).

As adolescents feel valued and feel that they have something to contribute, “they learn how to express other values as well: love, faith, peace, hope, humility, integrity, and empathy” (Boyes-Watson, 2008, pp. 36-37). These values can shepherd adolescents toward feelings of empowerment, potentially leading to healthier decisions for themselves and for their communities. It is vital that I, as a nursing professional, focus my skills and energy toward avenues that can assist Lakota adolescents to feel empowered in their decision-making capabilities. I will discuss these avenues of further work as implications for nursing education, nursing practice and health policy.

Listening to the Silences— Implications for Nursing Education

Learning to appreciate silence became a part of my cultural journey with the Lakota. Allowing the silences to just “be,” showed the adolescents that I was listening and open to what they were trying to convey to me. The silence portrayed my respect to the adolescent. However, my initial reaction to these silences, or pregnant pauses, was to begin talking. As I listened to the audiotapes, I became frustrated with my need to fill these silences. As I spoke with these adolescents, their families, and community members, I made a conscious effort to be silent and to remember the significance of

silence in the Lakota culture. The following quote by Chief Luther Standing Bear eloquently describes silence.

Silence was meaningful with the Lakota, and his granting a space of silence to the speech-maker and his own moment of silence before talking was done in the practice of true politeness and regard for the rule that, “thought comes before speech.” (Herr, 2003, p. 51)

As a nurse educator, how do I emulate listening when I am working with students? Do I consider the “communication” class that students have taken prior to my acute care classes as sufficient? How do we teach listening and hearing what is being said to our students?

Fiumara (1990) writes that listening should be a form of thinking and action. Listening is not passive, but “co-operative creativity” (p. 173). Listening is not linear. Active listening requires that we consider many viewpoints, realizing that these points may change our way of thinking and require us to rewrite our story, our way of knowing.

Listening requires the listener not only to be in tune with the person speaking but also to oneself. How do I show the speaker that I am engaged? Do I let the speaker finish talking, allowing a space of silence to elapse before I launch into my response? Do I consider the person’s cultural heritage before I begin any dialogue? How do I know if I am being culturally appropriate and sensitive? Does it mean that the person does not understand or comprehend if he/she is silent? How do I respond to silences? These questions are essential to teach and model to our students.

To Gadamer (2004) listening also requires the ability to be present with another, while at the same time forgetting about oneself. He writes,

This kind of being present is a self-forgetfulness, and to be a spectator consists in giving oneself in self-forgetfulness to what one is watching. . .it

arises from devoting one's full attention to the matter at hand, and this is the spectator's own positive accomplishment. (p. 122)

Nursing education must attend to teaching students to listen and to become comfortable being a spectator when with persons from cultures other than their own. Nursing education programs should incorporate a transcultural caring course into the nursing curricula. This course should teach students how to approach and interact with persons from differing cultures and to provide opportunities for experiential learning.

As I consider this call to action for nursing programs, I reflect back to my interview with Luta Win. When I originally began my research, I thought I was well versed in many of the Lakota traditions; however, Luta Win's telling of the significance of the Sun Dance to her, especially in the giving of flesh, shed an entirely different light on traditional cultural practices. By listening to and becoming a spectator in Luta Win's interpretation of the Sun Dance, the giving of flesh no longer appears as a barbaric act to me and actually serves as a method of healing for her.

What had I not heard when I was first told about the Sun Dance? Was I truly listening? I do not believe that I was present in the moment or open, until I became a spectator in Luta Win's story.

Resolution of misunderstandings among differing cultures can occur, if we choose to listen and learn. Differences between cultures are what make us all uniquely human. Yet we, as humans, have a tendency to seek those that are similar to us, potentially disregarding or belittling those who are different in color, language, or cultural practices. Similarities exist in our humanness, such as our ability to think, to feel, and to love.

Nursing education must equip students with the courage to seek to understand those who are different from them. As students learn to appreciate the differences, they will see the similarities of what it means to be human. Consider the words spoken by Nkosi Johnson, a South African boy dying of AIDS,

Care for us and accept us. We are all human beings. We are all normal. We have hands. We have feet. We can walk, we can talk— and we have needs just like everyone else. Don't be afraid of us. We are all the same. (Wooten, 2004, p. 206)

Nursing education programs must respond to the need to understand and work with persons from all cultures, instilling in nursing students the desire and the passion to care for others, regardless of race, creed or illness.

The Effects of Culture and Poverty— Implications for Health Policy

As I interacted with these six adolescents, the lack of futuristic thinking expressed by most of the participants struck me as unusual for this age group. My previous work with young adolescents found ideas for future programs, which were at times realistic, but more often grandiose. What was different about the two groups that I had failed to consider in my initial analysis? The differences between the two groups were cultural, economic, and geographic. The characteristics of the first group of adolescents were predominantly White, middle class, and urban. Characteristics of the six adolescents were Indian, predominantly lower class, and rural. Which of these differences limited the Indian adolescents' futuristic thinking? I believe it is cultural and economic.

Culture

Prior to their residence on the reservations, the Lakota people were a nomadic tribe. They moved sites based on weather conditions, food resources, and safety. The

male members of the society typically planned the relocations and the hunts. The male was the main provider of food and the source of safety to his family. This significant role required planning, cooperation, and collaboration with other members of the *tiospaye*. The pre-reservation male displayed futuristic thinking capabilities as he planned for the future of his family's livelihood (J. Nelson, personal communication, January 7, 2009).

After relocation to the reservations occurred, the male's role changed significantly. The federal government assumed the role of provider and protector, leading to a loss of self-respect for many Indian males (Medicine, 2007). Without this role, many Indian men covered their feelings of inadequacy by consuming alcohol, losing sight of their vision for the future.

Poverty

Poverty is persistent on the reservation with 66% to 90% of the families with children, eligible for free school lunches (USD, Business Research Bureau, 2008a). In order to qualify for free school lunches a family of four must have a median income that is less than or equal to \$26,845. The child poverty rate for this reservation is approximately 46% (USD, Business Research Bureau, 2008b).

According to Dr. Ruby Payne (2005), poverty is "the extent to which an individual does without resources" (p. 7). Resources needed by persons in order to leave poverty are financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of the hidden rules (Payne, 2005).

Payne (2005) indicates that emotional resources are the most important because they provide the individual with persistence and perseverance. Role models can be the source of these resources. Mental resources simply mean the person has the capability to

read, write, and think. Spiritual resources protect the person from feelings of powerlessness; a healthy individual has physical resources. Persons who provide support in times of distress complete the supportive resource category. Consideration of the role model necessitates understanding whether the role model is a good or bad model. Finally, examination of the hidden rules for each class is vital for a person to navigate successfully from one class to another (Payne, 2005).

Living in persistent poverty forces persons to be present-oriented versus future-oriented. Payne (2005) states, “Decisions [are] made for [the] moment based on feelings or survival” (p. 42).

Implications for Health Policy

Poverty greatly affects the health and well-being of children. Diseases such as asthma and malnutrition are more prevalent in families that experience poverty (USD, Business Research Bureau, 2008b). Not only does poverty affect children’s health and well-being, it also affects their ability to consider future possibilities. Poverty can lead to decreased self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

Future considerations for health policy formation need to first take into account how the federal government calculates poverty thresholds. Based on standards developed in 1963–1964, current poverty thresholds reflect the minimal income needed for the purchase of three nutritious meals per day (USD, Business Research Bureau, 2008b). This does not factor in other costs of living, such as clothing, shelter, daycare, and fuel for commuting to work. Should we begin to advocate for a more realistic poverty threshold, instead of having to make additional adjustments to reflect the truth?

Health policy formation should factor into consideration the concept of sovereignty. The tribe must be included in discussions when matters concerning their future health and well-being are decided. New health policies must center on rebuilding self-reliance and independence, not fostering reliance and dependence. Nursing needs to consider ways to decrease the multiple layers of bureaucracy that exists on the reservations and help tribes advocate for more control.

Community Based Action Research— Implications for Practice

As we advocate for future programming on the reservation it is essential that the research that guides the policies and programming be community based action research. This type of research sees the community as the expert in their setting, not the researcher (Averill, 2005). Community based action research includes and fosters a partnership with the community to help identify concerns, develop and implement interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program/interventions.

Future programs should consider the “Lakota style of management” as proposed by Leonard Little Finger (personal communication, January 14, 2009). This style, unlike the Euro-American style, does not consider the worst-case scenario with each step of the process. This style, according to Little Finger, was the predominant way of pre-reservation Lakota thinking and included the following basic steps: “Identify the issue, consider what can be done, and then do it.” Little Finger (personal communication, January 14, 2009) feels that too much thinking about all the potential worst-case scenarios impedes creativity, leading to little or no action.

Nurses with a desire to practice and perform research on the reservation must first strive to understand the culture. Nurse researchers must then determine their underlying

motive for the research. Is it for personal gain or is the research for the benefit of the tribe? Research can no longer ethically be helicopter in origin, where the researcher is present for a brief period, completes the research and leaves. This type of research is short term and the results do not benefit the people. Nurse researchers can experience great success and satisfaction by working in conjunction with the tribe, helping to assess needs they also feel are important.

Ecological Systems Theory— Implications for Practice

I found the use of ecological systems theory, in combination with hermeneutic phenomenology, to be effective in guiding my thoughts while interpreting the research. Ecological systems theory helped me to consider the multiple dimensions within each child's life, as I listened to and pondered the meaning of their stories. Ecological systems theory may be useful in developing culturally appropriate interventions to help foster role modeling and mentorship. I have made additions to Figure 1 (see chapter two) to reflect these insights, which are italicized.

Limitations and Strengths

In chapter three, I alluded to some of the limitations of this study. First, I am a White woman working in a predominately Indian culture. However, my ability to connect with these Lakota adolescents is evident by the wealth of data in the transcripts. I believe that meeting with the participants and their families on more than one occasion helped them to become comfortable with me. My presence on the reservation through participation in community events (e.g., powwows, basketball games), delivering school supplies, and scheduling health screenings shows a commitment to the health and well-being to members of the community.

Second, the number of participants is small and all are from the same reservation. Even though only six adolescents participated, the transcripts are rich in story and told from their personal perspectives. I believe that replication of my study can occur on other reservations. However, it is essential to understand that in phenomenology, interpretation is never complete, but always in process; hence, the results may be similar, yet unique based on the participants, the context, and the researcher.

Third, the use of the purposive sampling technique of snowball sampling may have led me to participants with similar characteristics. As stated in the methods section, I recruited each participant from recommendations received from either members of the community or directors of college centers. I believe that recruiting adolescents from five separate districts helped add differing contexts to each story.

Finally, the use of self-report and monetary gifts may have swayed the participants to share what they felt I wanted to know; however, I believe the adolescents were honest and forthright in their comments to me, which was evident in the transcripts. Many times the adolescents shared personal concerns and information without prompting from me. In addition, the use of member checks supported the participant self-reports as well-respected members of the community validated their concerns.

Summary

I titled this chapter “Contemplation for Future Action: Listening to the Silences” rather than significance and implications, to signify to the reader the importance of the findings of this study. The practices and policies of dominant society have silenced and marginalized Indigenous people. This marginalization has led to feelings of inferiority and inadequacy that may be present in all age groups.

Feelings of inferiority and inadequacy may manifest themselves into high-risk behaviors. The stories of these six adolescents revealed the importance to them of having role models, a sense of identity, and a feeling of being valued.

I described why nursing programs should rethink and re-evaluate how they teach listening and hearing, especially with culturally diverse populations. Nursing programs can no longer exist in a vacuum but must attend to teaching that includes experiential opportunities, outside the hospital setting. This teaching should include how to work with and care for those from differing cultural backgrounds. We must instill in our students the desire to serve the underserved and the compassion to listen to the silent voices.

I explained to the reader the need to understand sovereignty as it pertains to health care and education on the reservation. I conveyed the significance of incorporating community based action research into research studies and the development of future programs on the reservation— for who knows better the needs of the community than those who reside there?

Finally, I reported the limitations and strengths present in the study. The reader may feel that an alternative method may have proved more useful in understanding the meaning of respect and risk. I am certain that hermeneutic phenomenology with photography created opportunities for these adolescents to tell their stories. Giving them the freedom to speak, while I listened, leading to a fusion or blending of our horizons.

Future research and programming should include the following areas:

1. An exploration of respect and risk from an older Lakota adolescent perspective.
2. Creation of a partnership with community members and adolescents to consider the development of future programs.
3. A study of the current reservation school system that tracks students who change schools, specifically monitoring school attendance and academic performance.
4. A thorough review of the reservation school system that provides specific details regarding the different types of schools available, including examples of each school's curricula.
5. Development of a pilot interventional, intergenerational program in two to three communities on the reservation; linking children and adolescents to positive elder role models, helping to create a sense of identity and feeling valued by others.

A key component of nursing is to improve the health and well-being of persons.

Nursing must consider this calling to include all persons, not just those whom we can see.

This calling may ask us to leave our comfort zones and seek those living on the fringes of society, ensuring that they may experience the same opportunities for health and

well-being as those for whom we can see. As our society becomes more diverse and multicultural, nursing should reflect back on the words of Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa),

We know that the God of the educated and the God of the child, the God of the civilized and the God of the primitive, is after all the same God; and that this God does not measure our differences, but embraces all who live rightly and humbly on the earth. (Nerburn, 1999, p. 83)

May we choose to embrace all.

APPENDIX
PARTICIPANT PORTRAITS

Author note: Each participant self-selected his/her pseudonym. At the time of recruitment, each adolescent, except two, chose Euro-American names or characters. At the conclusion of our interview, I asked each participant if he/she would like to keep the original pseudonym or change it. It was at this time that I suggested that they could select a Lakota name. All of the participants, except one, chose Lakota names.

Luta Win

Luta Win (translates to: Red Woman; phonetic: *Loo-tah Wee-ahn*) is 14 years old and lives in a small apartment with her brother, grandmother, auntie, and young cousins. She will be in eighth grade this fall. She resides in a town located on the reservation in one of the further eastern districts. As I travel to meet with Luta Win, I find that I need to concentrate fully on my driving in order to avoid the many “road break up” areas on the poorly maintained, asphalt road. The drive to Luta Win’s community is treacherous, yet beautiful at the same time, as the road climbs and descends many hills. Farmland or pastures line the road on either side. Sunflowers, brilliant in their gold and black, turn to the west, as they follow the sun’s descent to the horizon, while some of the grain fields lay barren from the recent harvest. In the distant west, dark clouds are rolling in, with a faint rumbling audible in the background.

I meet Luta Win and her grandmother at the local college center. They wait for me in her grandmother’s car. Luta Win exits the car first and rushes to the driver’s side to assist her grandmother, who is short, round, and requires a cane for ambulation.

Luta Win's poise and composure are striking. She presents herself elegantly and gracefully with great self-assurance, lacking in the typical adolescent awkwardness. Luta Win is polite and respectful of her grandmother throughout our meeting, as noted by her deferring to her for some answers and assisting her in walking and settling into the chair.

Luta Win states that she is part Lakota and part Mexican. She is dressed in jeans and a magenta colored tee shirt. Luta Win's blue-black, chin length hair and chocolate-colored eyes accentuate her medium brown complexion. Artfully applied eyeliner further emphasizes her dark eyes, otherwise she wears minimal makeup.

I meet with Luta Win two more times. I pick up the camera on my next visit. As I walk up the dirt driveway, I notice the small light gray pony pegged off with a rope and halter in the front yard. I skirt the horse droppings as I ascend the stairs to the duplex. Her grandmother answers the door, seated in a wheelchair. The four children with her all appear to be under the age of seven. The sparsely furnished duplex is neat and clean. Luta Win's grandmother is uncertain where to locate the camera. She contacts Luta Win, who is en route from grocery shopping with her auntie.

Thirty minutes later, Luta Win arrives with her auntie. At the time of Luta Win's arrival, a thunderstorm unleashes its fury outside, creating small muddy streams on the path to the house. Luta Win ignores the rain and rushes past her grandmother and me, leaving muddy footprints in her haste to locate the camera. As she retrieves the camera and hands it to me, she apologizes effusively.

Luta Win and I planned to meet the following morning at her community's local college center. However, she did not arrive at the scheduled time, and I was not able to

reach her by phone. I travel the short distance to her grandmother's duplex, where Luta Win sits in the car, talking on her cellular phone. She appears to have just awakened, as she greets me with mussed hair and makeup-smudged eyes, dressed in gray sweats. Luta Win makes amends for not being ready and eagerly travels to the college center to begin the interview.

The employees at the college center graciously allow us to use a classroom. The white room contains multiple rectangular shaped tables interspersed with chairs. I choose to seat our chairs side by side, allowing us to view the pictures at the same time.

Luta Win is animated throughout the interview. She skillfully tells her story, using her hands to emphasize certain points or to assist in describing something to me. Because of Luta Win's gesticulations, I move the recording equipment closer to me, providing her more access to the tabletop, which she uses to make visual representations of the Sun Dance ground layout for me. Luta Win laughs easily; chortling over something she says or at times my confused looks or comments.

On two occasions during our discussion, her cellular phone rings. It is friends wishing just to visit. After the second phone call, Luta Win turns off her phone (without my asking) and apologizes for the interruptions.

Luta Win does not share if she participates in athletics. She shares that her mother died four years ago and since that time, she and her siblings live with her mother's relatives. Luta Win excitedly reports that she and her older brother will be relocating this fall to the northwestern part of the state to live with her father, who is a chef at a restaurant.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka (translates to: Runs with Wild Horses; phonetic: *Shoo-kah Wawk-on ob EE-young-ka*) is 13 years old and lives with his mother, maternal grandfather, sister, and nieces on his family's horse ranch on the reservation. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is approximately my height (66 inches) and husky with deep penetrating brown eyes and neatly kept, straight, coal black hair. He will be in seventh grade this fall.

I make much of the journey to Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's home over wide, poorly tended gravel roads. The gravel is either thickly and unevenly dispersed or totally lacking, with washboards and ruts scattered haphazardly along the way. No existing 911 markers in this county make following directions to Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's home difficult.

I am awe-struck with the amazing scenery. The topography in this area of the reservation consists of rolling grassland to tall rocky hills, covered with majestic pine trees. Plentiful rain this summer results in lush green to slightly yellow grasses. The deep, dark blue expansive sky has few clouds present.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka lives off the main road just over a mile from the nearest community. The narrow, steep, and short driveway ends at a green ranch-style home. Four young children run to greet me, clothed in swimming suits, with hair wet from just exiting the large plastic-sided pool that sits beneath a shady tree near the house. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka and his mother, Rose, shoo the children away, and she asks if I would like to join them in the shade to visit. As I walk with them, three brown and black puppies "attack" my feet and legs. I struggle to keep upright as Rose leads me to the other

side of the house. She offers me the best chair, a rusty metal lawn chair, while she and Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka sit on an old bedspring.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's parents no longer live together, although his father is still very involved in his life. Rose describes her father as a full blood Lakota. Her mother, now deceased, was of Irish descent, hence, the light blue eyes that look directly at me. Constant interruptions by the young nieces occur throughout our first meeting, as they feel compelled to show us their new tricks or bring us a treasure. Both Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka and Rose pause to applaud or recognize the children and then re-enter our conversation where we left it. Near the conclusion of the meeting, the children include me and explore my jewelry and shoes, and trace the flower pattern on my brightly colored skort.

On my next visit to Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's home, I retrieve the original camera and return the pictures that I had processed from the wrong camera. Three young girls run to my car, yelling, "Hi Mary!" as they approach. Rose invites me inside her home and I note general chaos in the form of two very young children. A round oak table sits in the center of the kitchen with all of the chairs lying on their sides on the floor. Rose quickly picks up a chair and informs me that she purposely places the chairs that way to prevent the youngest grandchild from climbing too high. On cue, as soon as the chair is upright, the toddler immediately clamors up the chair and stands on the kitchen table.

Rose wakens Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka. He sleepily walks into the kitchen. His dark hair askew, he yawns as he approaches me. Rose reminds me that Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka danced at their family Sun Dance most of the weekend, hence

his fatigue and late awakening. Besides participating in Sun Dances, Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is a powwow dancer, with the grass, traditional, and fancy dances reported as his areas of expertise.

Rose and Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka review and comment on each of the pictures that I have brought with me. Rose holds one up to Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka and says, “You might want to use this one for when you talk to Mary.”

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s eyes light up as he reaches for the photograph and replies, “Oh, yeah.”

Rose states, “This is *Paha Hanska* (translates to: tall hills; phonetic: *Baha-Hawn-sss-kah*). This is our sacred land.” She proceeds to tell a story of the significance of the hill to her family. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka adds, “I climb it with my grandpa every year.”

As I prepare to leave, I ask Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka when he would like to reschedule the interview. He slyly looks at me, smiling mischievously, “This morning.” Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka knows that is not possible because the nearest photo-processing site is over 60 miles away.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka and I schedule the interview at the college center nearest to his home. When I arrive at the college center the following afternoon, Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka has not yet arrived. His auntie, who works at the center, calls Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka’s home and discovers that he left with his cousin, but that Rose will locate him. Fifteen minutes later, Auntie Ella asks me to follow her. She leads me outside to the backyard of the college center. Hitched to the split rail fence are two sorrel

colored young horses, with Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka and another young boy standing next to them.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka proceeds to introduce me to his cousin and the two horses. He describes in detail how he gentled his horse and proudly tells me that his cousin broke the other horse. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka walks directly behind the horse, demonstrating how gentle his horse truly is— meaning he does not kick when approached in such a way.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's voice is clear, quiet, and melodic as he speaks. He constantly strokes his horse as he tells me of the gentling process. He smiles, and his eyes are no longer mischievous but gleaming with pride as he describes how he followed his grandfather and uncle's instructions to gain the respect of the horse.

I conduct the interview with Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka in the library of the college center. We sit beside each other in order to view the pictures simultaneously. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is less animated and descriptive during the interview when compared to our earlier conversation. He dresses neatly in a plain tee shirt and a pair of dark blue shorts. Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka wears a sky blue ball cap, decorated with silver and gold, and embellished with "NY" on the front. He wears the cap turned backwards. I can see a silver chain around Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka's neck, although I am uncertain if there is a pendant attached to the chain.

Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka is respectful during most of the interview, although he appears tired. He yawns frequently during our discussion, and his eyes are less direct. Toward the end of the interview Sunka Wakan ob Iyanka makes drum noises on the table with his hands, grinning wickedly each time. (He knew that these noises could be

disruptive for me when I am transcribing the audiotape because I had earlier informed him of this.)

Master

Master is the only participant who chose not to select an Indian name for his pseudonym. Master is short for “Master of the Universe,” a game that he plays with his cousin. Master is 12 years old and will be in the seventh grade this fall.

The drive to Master’s home is uneventful, until the last mile. Master lives in the country, on family land. Residing on the land in their own personal dwellings (either homes or well-maintained trailer homes) are Master’s grandmother, uncle, and three aunties. The last mile of my journey is down a rutted, dirt path. Master’s mother calls this the driveway. To enter onto Master’s family land, I have to open a gate, drive my car through then shut the gate. This prevents the horses from wandering off their property. I first motor by his uncle’s home, followed by his auntie’s, and finally arrive at his home, a double wide trailer, set in a desert-like landscape.

As I walk to the home, two small white puppies, yelping gleefully, greet me. Sharon, Master’s mother, meets me at the door. Master’s home is nice and cozily decorated. Master’s grandmother, Ruth, joins us shortly after I arrive. We gather around the kitchen table to review the paperwork. Master is shy and quiet, deferring most of his answers to his mother. He does not look at me when I speak to him. I note that Master is tall (over 66 inches), thin and lanky, with short coarse black hair. Master wears glasses over small, slanted dark brown eyes. His skin is light tan in color.

Master's reserved manner disappears when his cousin and best friend, Chad, arrives with his mother and two sisters. Master loves to read about World War II and enjoys playing war games with Chad. He is not active in other sports.

Master's community is on the fringes of the Badlands. Considered an outlying community on the reservation, access to services is a challenge for most residents. Sharon, however, indicates she enjoys traveling off the reservation into the city to go shopping.

Master's family invites me to lunch. As I visit with Sharon, Ruth, and Joan, I see the comical side of Master emerge. He engages in combat with Chad. Because of the ruckus created by their war game, Sharon and Joan request that Master and Chad continue their siege outside.

My next visit with Master is to review the photographs. Master had not finished his pictures in time for me to process them before returning to the reservation, necessitating Sharon having to get the photos developed. Master dresses neatly in a clean green tee shirt and blue jeans. He wears contact lenses because he recently lost his glasses.

I proceed to set up the equipment for audiotaping on the kitchen table. Sharon states, "I'll do whatever you need me to do. If you need me to leave, that is ok."

Master immediately gets a panicked look on his face and says, "No, you got to stay!" To reassure Master, I describe to him that when I was young, I, too, preferred my mom to be there with me. I told him I knew that if my mom stayed with me, I would not have to talk. Master smiles at my confession and understanding, visibly relaxing. We

agree that Sharon can stay, but she will stay in the back bedroom until we finish. Master and Sharon agree with the plan.

Master sits beside me at the kitchen table, rarely making eye contact with me. Master's answers are very concrete throughout the entire interview. When asked to describe what he saw, he tells me exactly what is in the picture. Master struggles with illustrating the other possibilities in the photograph. He prefers to answer *yes* or *no* and *I don't know*, most of the time sitting on his hands and swinging his legs.

Chad enters the house as we conclude the interview. Master immediately jumps off the chair and begins playing.

Han Was'aka

Han Was'aka (translates to: Stand Strong; phonetic: *Hahn Wash-ah-ka*) is 14 years old and lives in one of the outlying districts of the reservation.

Han Was'aka is in the eighth grade. He has seven siblings, four brothers and three sisters; the youngest is four months old, with Han Was'aka being "in the middle." His mother is not married. Han Was'aka and his family recently moved from their own home to live with his auntie and her family. In all, 14 people live in a single family home.

The trek to Han Was'aka's is probably one of the least adventurous because his community actually has 911 markers, making directions less difficult. Han Was'aka's community skirts the Badlands, thus scenic panoramas of white to pink, rocky hillsides and green valleys surround the city.

My first visit with Han Was'aka and his mother takes place at his grandmother's home, where a rummage sale is in full swing. Han Was'aka's grandmother is preparing to move to another reservation. Lisa, Han Was'aka's mother, cordially greets me at the door

and invites me into the chaotic home. She offers me coffee and instructs me to settle myself “wherever I can find an empty space.” Lisa reports that Han Was’aka is not around, but that her brother-in-law is currently looking for him. While waiting for Han Was’aka, a young boy who appears to be about five years old entertains me by bringing me toys. I note that his speech is difficult to understand, and his eyes do not align. This is one of Han Was’aka’s younger siblings. Forty-five minutes later, Han Was’aka arrives, escorted by his uncle. The uncle promptly leaves to find his son, who is to be another participant in the study.

Han Was’aka is of average height and build. He has thick, dark brown to black hair, which appears to have a natural wave. Han Was’aka eyes are dark and inquisitive, accentuated by thick, dark eyelashes and full dark eyebrows. Han Was’aka is polite, yet reserved. He answers all of my questions with a quiet voice that at times is difficult to hear. Han Was’aka sports a black cast on his left arm. He reports that he “fell off a roof.”

Han Was’aka and I meet two weeks later to review the photographs at the local college center. The administrator graciously set up a table for us in the weight room. The room is very warm and stuffy because the air conditioning in the building is not working appropriately, so the employees distributed large fans throughout the facility. The outside temperature is close to 90 degrees.

Han Was’aka arrives with his mother, her sister, Lori, and his cousin, Ate’ Tanka. The other family members elect to go to the computer lab while Han Was’aka and I visit. Han Was’aka dresses neatly in a black hooded sweatshirt, tee shirt, and blue jeans. Han Was’aka wears his “hoodie” up during the entire interview. I clarify with

Han Was'aka that he is comfortable throughout the interview, and he reassures me that he is.

We sit at a large table, with Han Was'aka at the end. During the interview, I notice that Han Was'aka constantly fidgets, shifting his position in the chair from slouching to rocking on two legs. Han Was'aka continues to wear the black cast on his left arm, which appears to have endured great torture since my last visit, the edges now rough and jagged. I note that Han Was'aka seems unable to stop picking at his cast and small tufts of cast padding line the floor while we visit.

Han Was'aka's voice is sure and steady during our conversation. Even with his constant movement, he looks directly at me; his inquisitive eyes searching mine as if for understanding. He shares willingly and seems to want to "unload" on me as he shares personal concerns about himself without my prompting. Han Was'aka refers to himself as either the "lazy one" or the "trouble maker." Most remarkable is his last statement to me when I ask if he had anything else he would like to share. Han Was'aka looks directly at me, smiles and says, "No, I got it mostly out."

Ate' Tanka

Ate' Tanka (translates to: Big Daddy; phonetic: *Ah-tay Tahn-ka*) is 12 years old and in seventh grade. Ate' Tanka is the first cousin of Han Was'aka. He lives with his parents, brother, and sister, and currently shares his home with his auntie's family of eight.

I met Ate' Tanka and Han Was'aka under the same circumstances, although it took Ate' Tanka's father longer to locate him than Han Was'aka. After recruiting

Han Was'aka, I waited an additional 30 minutes for the appearance of Ate' Tanka.

Ate' Tanka arrives carrying a basketball under one arm and laughing with his father.

Ate' Tanka is tall (over 66 inches) and somewhat stocky. He laughs and smiles easily. When asked what name he would like for a pseudonym, Ate' Tanka whispers his selection to his mother, who chuckles. He then turns to me and mischievously says, "Ate' Tanka. It means Big Daddy in Lakota!" Ate' Tanka is the first participant to choose a Lakota name.

I meet with Ate' Tanka 14 days later at the local college center. When Ate' Tanka enters the room, he immediately tells me that he is "more shy" than his cousin. His voice is quiet and hesitant, and his eyes nervously dart around the room. Ate' Tanka's quick wit, humor, and energy, evident at our first meeting, are less apparent now.

Ate' Tanka dresses comfortably in a white basketball tee shirt and blue jeans. His hair is coarse, somewhat curly and shaggy, hanging into his eyes. It is not long, but cut in the latest fashion for young males.

Ate' Tanka enjoys sports. He plays basketball, football, and softball in addition to swimming. He likes to work out by lifting weights. He proudly shares that he has his "own weight bench" in his room at home. Ate' Tanka shares that he would like to attend college on a basketball scholarship.

Ate' Tanka is the youngest of three children. His brother is 16 years old, and his sister is 13 or 14; he cannot recall her exact age. Ate' Tanka states that it is not fun sharing his home with his auntie's family, although he indicates pride in his ability to care for "Baby," his name for Han Was'aka's youngest brother.

Ate' Tanka demonstrates a strong connection to his family throughout our interview. He fondly refers to his grandparents, sadly sharing his concern regarding the health status of one of his grandmothers. At one point during our discussion Ate' Tanka states that his family is so important that if something were to happen to one of them, he may consider taking his own life. After further questioning, Ate' Tanka clarifies that he would not do that, but was trying to signify to me the importance of family to him.

Wicahpi

Wicahpi (translates to: Star; phonetic: *We-chah-pee*) is 13 years old and lives with her parents and younger brother on a ranch located in one of the middle districts on the reservation. I personally know Wicahpi through a relationship with her parents and grandparent. Wicahpi is in the eighth grade. Although Wicahpi lives on a ranch, she feels qualified to not only discuss concerns about her district, but also regarding another, more populated district as a result of her family connections there.

My initial meeting with Wicahpi occurred in one of the larger communities because she was visiting her family. Wicahpi is of average height and slightly built. Her skin is light tan in color, and she has brown, naturally wavy hair, tied back into a ponytail. Wicahpi wears glasses over her brown eyes. Wicahpi's smile is engaging and welcoming and she immediately asks about one of my daughters. We agree to meet in the same location in two weeks.

I discover during my "check-in" phone call that Wicahpi cannot locate her camera. She believes that she left it at her grandmother's home. She promises to find it and take pictures when she is at the powwow this coming weekend. We agree to

reconnect immediately after I arrive on the reservation the following week, allowing me time to process the photographs.

Wicahpi's mother calls me after I arrive on the reservation with news that Wicahpi cannot find her camera. We agree to have Wicahpi use her personal digital camera, and she will have her pictures ready before our meeting.

Prior to our scheduled meeting time, I receive a phone call from Wicahpi, asking if we could meet either earlier (now) or later. I explain to Wicahpi that I am currently in a meeting and cannot come earlier and that I have to travel a long distance after our scheduled time, so I cannot delay our meeting time. Wicahpi agrees to keep the meeting time.

When I arrive at the scheduled time, Wicahpi warmly greets me, skipping out to the car dressed in a pink tee shirt, blue jean capris, and white tennis shoes. I apologize for not being able to change the meeting time and she cheerfully replies, "That's ok, I can go swimming another day."

The center places Wicahpi and I in a comfortable room, complete with a couch, chair, and coffee table. As I begin setting up the audiotape equipment, Wicahpi informs me that she did not have time to make prints of her photos. We agree to connect her camera to my laptop, and we can review them together from there. However, Wicahpi discovers that she forgot to bring the camera's adaptor. Therefore, we sit huddled together on the couch reviewing her photographs on the screen of her camera. We begin the review of over 60 pictures with roughly less than one-fourth strength of battery power left. Wicahpi does not extra batteries.

Throughout the interview Wicahpi's maturity and poise impress me. With each photograph, she thoughtfully contemplates her answers, at times hesitating before responding. She appears to consider each word that she uses in her descriptions, yet when she begins to speak, the words rush out, as if she can hardly wait to tell me her story. Many of Wicahpi's pictures focus on the work of the center where she works as a youth mentor. She smiles and laughs easily during our discussion.

Wicahpi dances at powwows. She specializes in the jingle and fancy dances. She designs her own regalia. Wicahpi is active in sports, particularly basketball. She reports struggling in school because of reading difficulties, yet confidently states that she does not give up.

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Footnotes

¹I will use the terms *American Indian*, *Indian*, and *Native American* interchangeably because the adolescents I interviewed commonly used these three terms to describe themselves.

²The English translation of the French word *coup* means to knock, blow, or shoot (fr.thefreedictionary.com).

³Some tribal members may not appreciate my use of a quotation by a Pawnee leader because, in the past, the Lakota and Pawnee were not friendly. However, over time many of the old animosities have diminished, if not completely faded away. If the use of this quotation is offensive to anyone, I sincerely apologize. I take this risk because the subject of the quotation and its emotional expression are pertinent to this analysis.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Mary J. Isaacson

EDUCATION:

UNDERGRADUATE:	Nursing: St. Luke's College	Diploma	1982
	Nursing: South Dakota State	B.S.N.	1998
GRADUATE:	Nursing: Augustana College	M.A.	2002
	Nursing: Indiana University	Ph.D.	2009

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS:

Assistant Professor, Augustana College 2002 to present

Teach theory and clinical courses in all levels of baccalaureate program. Coordinate junior level pediatrics and (online) senior level leadership and research courses. Teach graduate CNL nursing ethics course. Co-teach senior interdisciplinary Capstone leadership course. Mentor new nursing faculty. Coordinate junior level teaching team. Coordinated junior level health assessment, nutrition fundamentals, and pharmacology courses.

Instructor, Mount Marty College 2000 to 2001

Taught junior level adult health, pediatrics, and pharmacology clinical and theory courses. Supervised senior level community health experiences.

Adjunct Clinical Faculty, University of South Dakota 1989 to 1992

Supervised nursing student clinical rotations while charge nurse at University of South Dakota Health Clinic. Participated with department faculty in clinical evaluations of all students supervised.

OTHER RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE:

Staff Nurse, Sanford USD Medical Center, Sioux Falls, SD 1999 to present

Maintain unscheduled part-time status in post-anesthesia care unit that includes numerous and varied patient cases, including neurology, orthopedics, urology, vascular, gynecology, and gastroenterology, and populations ranging from pediatrics to geriatrics.

Research Assistant to Dr. Pamela Ironside Summer, fall 2008

Indiana University School of Nursing
Performed literature and Web reviews covering teaching geriatrics in nursing education, including clinical and classroom experiences, resulting in an annotated bibliography each semester.

<p>Nursing Supervisor, Sanford Vermillion Medical Center Provided case management services to Medicare and insurance patients. Developed and implemented new nursing admission and discharge forms. Provided staff nursing services in medical, surgical, pediatric, and emergency departments.</p>	2001 to 2002
<p>Outpatient and Community Outreach Director, Sanford Vermillion Oversaw physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, home health, hospice, radiology, laboratory, surgery, outpatient services, and clinic services departments. Assisted department managers in budget preparation and fiscal management.</p>	1998 to 1999
<p>Nursing Home Health & Hospice Director, Sanford Vermillion Coordinated 7 RNs, 10 home health aides in the provision of home health and hospice care within 50-mile radius of Vermillion, SD. Responsible for volunteer program (including training) within hospice.</p>	1997 to 1998
<p>Hospice Coordinator, Vermillion, SD Coordinated hospice services for individuals and families within 50-mile radius of Vermillion, SD. Oversaw training and scheduling of hospice patient volunteers. Provided hospice care and pain/symptom management inservices to local organizations and care centers. Established contracts with nursing homes within the service area.</p>	1992 to 1997
<p>Charge Nurse, University of South Dakota Health Clinic, Vermillion Coordinated 2 LPNs and 1 nurse aide for the student health population. Averaged 80 patient visits per day. Provided sexually transmitted disease, immunization, and AHA Basic Life Support inservices.</p>	1988 to 1992
<p>Clinic RN, Olson Medical Clinic, Vermillion, SD Sole RN in general practice clinic. Patient population ranged from neonates to obstetrics to geriatrics. Spearheaded immunization recall system for child-rearing families. Taught AHA Basic Life Support courses to community members.</p>	1985 to 1988
<p>Charge Nurse, Emergency Department, Vermillion, SD Night supervisor of 2 RNs, 2 nurse aides for small rural hospital. Managed all emergency department cases. Assisted in obstetrics. Cared for newborns including newborn assessment. Passed medications on medical floor.</p>	1984 to 1985
<p>Staff and Charge Nurse, ICU, McKennan Hospital, Sioux Falls, SD Developed staff and management skills in critical care nursing practice including trauma, neurology, and cardiovascular.</p>	1982 to 1984

LICENSURE:

Registered Nurse's Licensure, South Dakota, active status

CERTIFICATIONS:

American Heart Association
BLS Health Care Provider
ACLS Provider
PALS Provider

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

American Nurses Association, South Dakota Nurses Association

Midwest Nursing Research Society

Phi Kappa Phi, South Dakota State University

Reserve Officer's Association

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Zeta Zeta Chapter

Society of Rogerian Scholars

Transcultural Nursing Society

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:

South Dakota Nurses Association, Program Committee for 2005

Midwest Nursing Research Society, Liaison for 2008, 2009

UNIVERSITY SERVICE:

Service Learning Committee, Augustana College	2009
Co-curriculum Council, Augustana College	2007 to 2008
Honor Code Task Force, Augustana College	2007 to 2008
Admissions Committee, Department of Nursing Augustana College	2006 to 2008
Religious Affairs Committee, Augustana College	2003 to 2005

HONORS & AWARDS:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| April 2009 | Received Emily Holmquist Doctoral Student Award from Indiana University Alumni Association. |
| March 2009 | Selected to present at the state Sigma Theta Tau Research Day. |
| February 2009 | Awarded Travel Fellowship from the Indiana University Graduate Office and Fellowship Committee, \$600. |
| February 2009 | Selected to present at the Expanding Your Horizons Workshop. |
| May 2008 | Selected to present at the International Transcultural Nursing Society Conference. |
| April 2008 | Selected to present on innovative teaching strategies, Nurse Educators and Deans Conference. |
| March 2008 | Selected to present at South Dakota Sigma Theta Tau Research Day. |
| September 2007 | Nominated for PEO Scholar Award from the Sioux Falls Chapter. |
| June 2005 | Received St. Luke's College Alumni Graduate Student Scholarship, \$1000. |
| Spring 2004 | Nominated for Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, Augustana College. |
| Fall 2002 | Received Navy Commendation Medal. |
| March 2001 | Received Faculty Research Award. |
| May 1998 | Inducted into Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. |
| Fall 1994 | Received Meritorious Service Award, Professional Category, South Dakota Hospice Organization. |
| January 1993 | Received the Young Outstanding Allied Health Professional, Vermillion Jaycees. |

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS:**Augustana College**

Spring 2009	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 352 A	Child Health Nursing	3	32
NURS 352 B	Child Health Nursing	3	33
NURS 610	Philosophical & Ethical Issues in Health Care	2	4
Interim 2009	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 451	Leadership in Professional Nursing	3	52
Spring 2008	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 352 A	Child Health Nursing	4	27
NURS 352 B	Child Health Nursing	4	28
Fall 2007	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 326 A	Nursing Therapeutics I	4	30
NURS 326 B	Nursing Therapeutics I	4	30
Spring 2007	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 352 A	Child Health Nursing	4	27
NURS 352 B	Child Health Nursing	4	28
Fall 2006	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 326 A	Nursing Therapeutics I	4	30
NURS 326 B	Nursing Therapeutics I	4	30
Spring 2005	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 352 A	Child Health Nursing	4	30
NURS 352 B	Child Health Nursing	4	32
Fall 2005	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 324	Health Assessment & Nutrition	3	60
NURS 326	Nursing Therapeutics (clinical)	2	16
Spring 2004	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 352 A	Child Health Nursing	4	27
NURS 352 B	Child Health Nursing	4	27
Interim 2004	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 330	Nursing Therapeutics II (Pharmacology)	4	60
NURS 330	Nursing Therapeutics II (clinical)	2	30
Fall 2004	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 324	Health Assessment & Nutrition	3	60
NURS 326	Nursing Therapeutics (clinical)	2	16

Spring 2003	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 352 A	Child Health Nursing	4	29
NURS 352 B	Child Health Nursing	4	28

Fall 2002	Course Title	Credits	Students
NURS 324	Health Assessment & Nutrition	3	60
NURS 326	Nursing Therapeutics (clinical)	2	16

Mount Marty College

Spring 2001	Course Title	Credits	Students
	Nursing Through the Life Span II	6	13

Fall 2000	Course Title	Credits	Students
	Nursing Through the Life Span I	6	15

PRESENTATIONS:

Teaching

1. *Simulation: An alternative to post conference.* (2008, Summer). Nurse Educator Deans and Directors Retreat, Mitchell, SD. (poster presentation).
2. *Alternatives to post conference.* (2008, Summer). Nurse Educator Deans and Directors Retreat, Mitchell, SD. (podium presentation).

Research

1. *American Indian traditional values: Are they significant to Native youth.* (2008, Fall). Transcultural Nursing Society International Conference, Minneapolis, MN. (poster presentation).
2. *American Indian traditional values: Are they significant to Native youth.* (2008, Spring). State Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Scholarship Day, Sioux Falls, SD.
3. *TLC Ayuda: Beyond something.* (2003, Spring). State Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Scholarship Day, Brookings, SD.
4. *Practical application of the science of unitary human beings.* (2001, Spring). Nursing Theorist Series, Sioux Falls, SD.

Professional Service

1. *The ethics of culture in nursing and healthcare.* (2009, Spring). Augustana College, Chair of Moral Values Lecture Series. Sioux Falls, SD.
2. *School supplies in Indian country: Reducing educational barriers.* (2007, Spring). Vermillion Rotary Club, Vermillion, SD.
3. *Research on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation.* (2007, Fall). Augsburg College Graduate Students. Sioux Falls, SD.

4. *Mentoring in the Navy*. (2006, Spring). Operational Health Support Unit, Great Lakes, IL.
5. “*H-squared*” – *Handwashing & the Heimlich maneuver*. (2005, Fall). Educational sessions to Sunday school students at Trinity Lutheran Church, Vermillion, SD.
6. *Dis-ability awareness Sunday*. (2003, Spring). Educational sessions to Sunday school students at Trinity Lutheran Church, Vermillion, SD.

PUBLICATIONS:

Research

1. Isaacson, M. J. (2001). Who I Am. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 14(2), 117-119.

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Augustana College Department of Nursing. Coordinated senior nursing leadership experience on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Senior students worked in the IHS Hospital and during off-time conducted service learning immersion experiences. (Interim 2009, 2008).

Rural Metro Ambulance Service. Provide pediatric-specific lectures for paramedic refresher training. (November 2008, January 2008, November 2007).

Augustana College Department of Nursing. Coordinated senior community health service learning experience on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Senior students conducted school screenings while immersed in the Lakota society. (October 2008, 2007).

Red Shirt School Supplies. Obtained donations for school supplies for the Red Shirt Community on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. (August 2008, 2007).

Asniya Camp. Provided health related instruction to middle school Indian youth in Waubay, SD. (July 2008, 2007).

Augustana College Spring Break Trip. Service learning experience on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. (March 2007).

Board Member, Health Cabinet. Trinity Lutheran Church. Vermillion, SD. (2000 to present).

TLC Ayuda (Middle school church group) Leader. (2000-2003).

MILITARY SERVICE:

Navy Reserve Nurse Corps Officer February 1990 to present
 Promoted to Captain (Rank of O-6) in November 2008. Assignment: Department Head for Medical Surgical Services National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD.