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# BEING CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF USA LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE PROGRAM TO THE DINÉ PHILOSOPHY OF HÓZHÓ AND THE KINAALDÁ, TO ILLUMINATE LEADERSHIP, REKINDLE IDENTITY, AND REVITALIZE LANGUAGE AMONG DINÉ GIRLS

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By

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M.S., University of Northern Colorado, 2009



DISSERTATION

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## DEDICATION

"Rekindling the teachings of the seventh fire" is a way to say that our time is here and now, it is time to "illuminate a new path" and revitalize our language, rekindle our self-identity, and build a sustainable structure and resilient capacity of Indigenous communities into the 21st Century" (Cajete, 2015, p. xiii).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

How does analytically comparing the Girl Scouts of the United States of America's (GSUSA) Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophy of Hózhó (harmonious way of life) and the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony) positively affect the unique diversity of each Diné girl and give attention to leadership skills, self-identity, and the Diné language? This is the research question that guided this research study of comparative analysis. In addition, there are three subquestions: (a) How does aligning the GSUSA Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá build leadership skills, positive self-identify, and a healthy social and emotional well-being of Diné girls? (b) How does aligning the GSUSA

Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá build positive relationships with Diné girls, their families, their school, and their community; and (c) How does aligning the GSUSA Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá build connections between the Diné philosophies and Western educational systems/values?

Leading this research study are four frameworks: (a) the sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky, whose viewpoints and emphases of being culturally relevant and culturally responsive; (b) the personal well-being of each girl, which speaks to the 16 pillars of Secatero's *Indigenous Well-Being Model in Leadership and Wellness* (2015); (c) the Indigenous autoethnographic experiences of the researcher and research subjects, as well as the themes of chosen authors, research, and readings; and (d) the vision and mission of the GSUSA Leadership Experience program.

For more than 100 years, GSUSA has provided the tools to lead, to break barriers; and to create positive change with a strong sense of self, seeking challenges and learning from setbacks, displaying positive values, forming and maintaining healthy relationships with peers, family members, and community members that they associate with church members, police officers, firemen/women, etc.; and being able to identify and contribute to resolving problems in the community-meaning where they live and/or attend school. Girls and young women who are part of GSUSA learn to dream big and feel successful with themselves, among their families, and in their community (GSUSA, 2020). To introduce this research, attention was given to the beliefs and traditional knowledge of the Diné teachers, specialists, and medicine men and women. Note: The word *specialists* refer to one who has completed public or online presentations in the areas of teaching, promoting, and fostering the Diné language and culture. As part of the research,

participants were interviewed either by telephone, during a Zoom meeting, or via email. Data collected pertained to the comparative analysis of personal goals, vision, leadership, and social-emotional philosophies; the Diné philosophy of Hózhó; and the purpose of the Kinaaldá. Additionally, through comparisons of multicultural viewpoints, thematic patterns are identified and elaborated on. Interview transcripts; themes, critical literature analyses; and artifacts, such as research studies, memoirs, and personal stories, elicited outcomes and recommendations for future research.

Keywords/phrases: cultural relevancy, cultural responsiveness, Girl Scouts of the United States of America, Navajo history, Navajo ceremonies, Navajo puberty ceremonies, Navajo clanship system, Navajo philosophy of life.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AI/AN | American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| BIE | Bureau of Indian Education |
| DCDC | Diné Community Development Corporation, Inc. |
| GSIS | Girl Scout Impact Study |
| GSLEP | Girl Scout Leadership Experience Program |
| GSRI | Girl Scout Research Institute |
| GSUSA | Girl Scouts of the United States of America |
| M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| QCA | Qualitative comparative analysis |
| RES | Rural elementary school |
| SEL | Social and emotional learning |
| SES | Socioeconomic status |
| SRES | Small remote elementary school |
| ZPD | Zone of proximal development |

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# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

## THE DAY MY KINAALDÁ BEGAN

It was the Summer of 1980. I was 11 years old, and it was at a Tucson, AZ, car wash where my first menses happened and when my ceremonial experience of womanhood began.

My mother was a full-time student at the University of Arizona, pursuing her Bachelor's degree in education. During the summer months, we would stay with her for about two weeks. The other times, we stayed with my grandparents, a couple of aunts, and several cousins (sisters and brothers), in beautiful Blackrock, Arizona. Coming from a family that believes in education, this was a normal practice for us children during the summer months. Aside from being big believers in getting an education, our family also were traditional and lived by the philosophies and beliefs of Mother Earth, Father Sky, Changing Woman, and all other deities. These were special times, times that we got spend with and learn from our Masani (maternal grandmother), Chei (maternal grandfather), and the many shima yaazhiis (maternal aunts). It is the teachings of being a hard worker, resilient, respectful, resourceful, taking care of animals, appreciating life, and knowing our language, culture, tradition, and history. It is these teachings that now come into play and are of great importance, for the next four days of my Kinaaldá. (Belone, 2022).

## INTRODUCTION

In *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* Shawn Wilson (2008) stated that "within the last decade, research and researchers have begun to change. More is being done to bring Indigenous communities into the research process, and the usefulness of the research is becoming more visible and beneficial to the communities" (p. 15). Wilson also cited research by Martin (2003), Rigney (1999), Steinhauer (2002), Wilson and Pence (2006) and wrote:

> a precursor for this change has been the growing number of Indigenous people who have excelled in academia and who focus their studies on their own peoples. These new

> Indigenous scholars have introduced Indigenous beliefs, values, and customs into the research process, and this in turn has helped research to become much more culturally sensitive to Indigenous peoples. (p. 15)

Having a firsthand connection to an Indigenous culture as a Diné and educator guided my decision to focus my research on looking more into the similarities I had noticed among Diné people's worldviews. I developed a research paradigm and research questions that would help me examine how young Diné girls could have more opportunities to be successful in both worlds: Diné and Western Eurocentric. The methodology I used in this research is a qualitative comparative analysis.

Within the guidelines of a comparative analysis, the main frameworks and philosophies of my research stemmed from the sociocultural theorist Lev Vygotsky; the Diné philosophies; teachings, morals, and values of Hózhó; the puberty ceremony of the Kinaaldá; and the vision and mission of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) Leadership Experience program. Intertwined in these frameworks and philosophies is a strong emphasis on cultural relevancy, cultural responsiveness, narrative stories, and the 16 pillars of Secatero's Indigenous well-being model.

My hope was that this research would be a catalyst of change by comparing, analyzing, and aligning the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá to the GSUSA Leadership Experience program and that my research would result in a celebration of the maturity of Diné girls as they journey into womanhood. Additionally, I hoped this research would help the participants develop a mindset that would bring forth leadership skills and goals that have been researched and proven by the GSUSA to be effective and beneficial and that the participants would become socially, emotionally, linguistically, and academically successful in the worlds of Western Eurocentric peoples and Indigenous peoples.

By comparing and analyzing the themes, stories, experiences, and beliefs from the Diné participants and outcomes of Indigenous research studies, I hoped to understand how Diné girls could learn to succeed in a Western Eurocentric educational system while also maintaining a strong Indigenous identity; positive emotional, physical, social, and spiritual well-being; and their native language. I hoped to achieve this by integrating the perspectives of the Indigenous participants, authors, and myself about our lives in traditional communities and households, following and using Eurocentrically unique values.

Lastly, it is my hope that this research would feature some lived experiences and stories from myself, from Diné specialists/teachers, from traditional healers and medicine men and women that would strengthen, enhance, and bring purpose, clarity, and Indigenous perspectives to the examination of participants' journeys into womanhood.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study, pseudonyms were used for the participants, communities, and schools referred to in the research. Navajo spelling and their definitions were taken from the Eighth printing of the *Navajo-English Dictionary* (Wall & Morgan, 2005) and if not available, then they were taken from the Native Languages of the Americas (2020) website.

- Bahózhonchi: Pertaining to the Beauty way songs
- Bit'ahnii: His Sheaves . . . Leaf clan . . . Under His Cover clan
- Cheii: Maternal grandfather
- Comparative analysis techniques: comparing and contrasting two different theories, two schools of thoughts, two scientific approaches, or any two historical personalities (Anasari, 2011, para. 1)

- Ch'osh doo yit'iinii or ha't'íishíí na'ałniihi (deadly and unseen sickness or ghost-virus): COVID-19
- Diné: Navajo term for Navajo people
- Hashtł'ishnii: Mud clan–Original clan
- Hataałii: Medicine man or traditional singer
- Hogan: Navajo dwelling
- Hózhó: Navajo term for beauty, perfection, harmony, goodness, normality, success, well-being, holiness, order, and ideal
- Hózhóójí Nanitiin: Diné traditional teachings
- Indigenous people: While no universally accepted definition of the term *Indigenous* exists, there are characteristics that tend to be common among Indigenous peoples:
    - Indigenous people are distinct populations relative to the dominant post-colonial culture of their country.
    - Indigenous people usually have (or had) their own language, cultures, and traditions influenced by living relationships with their ancestral homelands.
    - Indigenous people have distinctive cultural traditions that continue to be practiced (Cultural Survival, 2022).
- Kinaaldá: Female puberty ceremony that celebrates the maturity of girls
- Kinyaa'áanii/Kiyaa'áanii: Towering House clan–Original clan
- Másání: Maternal grandmother
- Tł'ááshchí'í: The Red Bottom People clan
- Tótsohnii: Big Water clan
- Tódich'ii'nii: Bitter Water clan–Original clan

- Tsklólh: Traditional hair tie string
- Yoołgaii Asdzáá: White Shell Woman–Holy female deity

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS APPROACH

As a new researcher, I have learned that there are three different approaches to research, and they are not as discreet as they appear: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. As Newman and Bentz (1998) stated, “qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as rigid, distinct categories, polar opposites, or dichotomies. Instead, they represent different ends of a continuum" (p. 3). Creswell (2014) wrote that “a study tends to be more qualitative than quantitative and vice versa” (p. 3). The research of the current study was more qualitative than quantitative and was a combination of both, making it mixed methods. More distinctly, this research was framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative) and using opened-ended questions (qualitative interview questions) rather than closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses). In choosing a qualitative approach, I engaged in a form of inquiry that honors an inductive style, focuses on individual meaning, and recognizes the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation: here, illuminating leadership, rekindling identity, and revitalizing language among Diné girls.

A search for the definition of comparative analysis research design yielded two meanings relevant to this study. According to Richardson (2018), comparative research “essentially compares two groups in an attempt to draw a conclusion about them. Researchers attempt to identify and analyze similarities and differences between groups, and these studies are most often cross-national, comparing two separate people groups” (Characteristics of Comparative Research para. 1). Similarly, Hantrais (1995) stated that “comparative research methods have long been used in cross-cultural studies to identify, analyze and explain similarities and differences across

societies. . . . The benefits to be gained from cross-national work include a deeper understanding of other cultures and of their research processes" (Research Study Design Types, para. 1).

Richardson (2018) went on to reiterate that:

> comparative research studies essentially compare two different groups and may be experimental or nonexperimental. Comparative studies often attempt to draw conclusions across nationalities or social groups, and they often include socioeconomic and demographic variables. The purpose of these studies is to determine either similarities between groups or differences between groups. A comparative study may look at the effects of an intervention on students of two different ethnicities, or the effects on low-income students versus high-income students. Data from comparative studies are analyzed for revelations about these two groups. (Characteristics of Comparative Research Design, para. 2)

The research in the current study compared themes, similarities, and differences between Indigenous and Western Eurocentric philosophies, beliefs, experiences, and teachings among a limited number of participants.

## NARRATIVE STORIES

Research provides evidence of the universality of oral tradition. According to Stephens et al. (2012), "we are all storytellers," and "using storytelling to transmit educational messages is a traditional pedagogical method practiced by many American Indian tribes" (p. 1). Native American stories offer relevance and truth because they present essential ideas and values in a simple, entertaining form. Different story characters show positive and negative behaviors. Stories illustrate the consequences of behaviors and invite listeners to draw their own conclusions after personal reflection. Because stories have been passed down from generation to generation, listeners also can reconnect and identify with tribal realities from years past. The research of the current study is unique in utilizing storytelling for the purposes of rekindling identity, revitalizing language, and illuminating leadership. Stories can help motivate girls to develop and sustain healthy, traditional lifestyles and practices (Stephens et al., 2012).

Among Indigenous tribes, Indigenous identities and experiences are constantly shifting, storytelling makes sense of the changes. By recalling distinct moments of Indigenous lives and placing them together into a narrative, a unified whole is created that allows for an understanding of the lives as coherent and having meaning. Additionally, when personal narratives are composed, decisions are made as to which events are important enough to share, connections are made, and conclusions are drawn. In this way, Indigenous people are empowered to determine how to define themselves, which in turn shapes their hopes and expectations for the future (Stephens et al., 2012). It is my own background, early years, influences, and lived experiences that have driven the focus and positionality of this research.

## LEV VYGOTSKY AND SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

The theoretical framework that steered this study was the sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky. According to Cherry (2022), Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist best known for his centered and diverse sociocultural theory on issues of social learning, child development, and education; he also explored the psychology of art and language development. He believed that social interaction played a critical role in children's learning. Vygotsky found that through social interactions, children go through a continuous process of learning, and he noted that culture profoundly influences this process. Imitation, guided learning, and collaborative learning all play a critical part in his theory (Cherry, 2022, para. 1). Additionally, Kurt (2020) added that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory asserts that learning is an essentially social process in which the support of parents, caregivers, peers, and the wider society and culture play crucial roles in the development of higher psychological functions. Vygotsky maintained that the social world is more than a child's interactions with peers and teachers; it also consists of outside influences within a community. Prior knowledge, such as learned behaviors at home, impact learning in the

classroom environment. To illustrate this, Vygotsky outlined three main concepts related to cognitive development: culture is significant in learning, language is the root of culture, and individuals learn and develop within their role in a community (Kurt, 2020, para. 1 & 3). Kurt (2020) wrote that:

> culture can be defined as the morals, values, and beliefs of community members, which are held in place with systems and establishments. Acceptable attitudes and conduct are communicated via language. Culture is shaped over time as the result of specific events, whose messages are then conveyed to community members. Vygotsky explained that culture consistently affects cognitive development by affecting human behavior. He wanted others to realize that there is a complex relationship between culture and human development. It is a cycle; at the same time that the culture is influencing an individual, that individual is in turn creating culture. (para. 3)

Vygotsky's theory was based on his research that showed the following: children construct their own knowledge; development cannot be separated from its social, historical, and cultural context; prior conceptions and new concepts are interwoven; and language plays a central role in mental development (Schribner, 1985). Moreover, Vygotsky affirmed that "human learning and development occur in socially and culturally shaped contexts" (Schribner, 1985, p. 12). How people become who they are thus depends on what they have experienced in the social contexts in which they have participated. The social contexts individuals encounter are based on the cultural and social status of their lives. Because historical conditions constantly change, interactions with one's environment, family dynamics, and various people also result in changing contexts and opportunities for learning and development. Vygotsky suggested that human development results from a dynamic interaction between individuals and society. Through such interaction, children learn gradually and continuously from parents and teachers. However, that learning varies from one culture to the next. It is important to note that Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the dynamic nature of this interaction. Society does not just impact people; people also affect their society.

While Vygotsky was a contemporary of theorists/philosophers Skinner, Pavlov, Freud, and Piaget, his work never attained the same eminence as theirs during his lifetime, partly because the Communist Party often criticized Vygotsky's work in Russia, making his writings largely inaccessible to the Western world. His premature death at age 37 also contributed to his obscurity. Despite this, Vygotsky's work has continued to grow in influence since his death, particularly in the fields of developmental and educational psychology. It was not until the 1970s that Vygotsky's theories became known in the West as new concepts and his ideas were introduced in the fields of educational and developmental psychology (Haggbloom et al., 2002). Since then, Vygotsky's works have been translated and have become influential, particularly in the area of education. His work contributed significantly to the current study.

## DINÉ PHILOSOPHY OF HÓZHÓ

In published literature that explains what Hózhó translates to and how from it a state of well-being is derived, Michelle Kahn-John's (2016) Diné viewpoint is the simplest and most relevant. Her viewpoint is shared by Navajo Blessingway singer Frank Mitchell (1978) and Diné philosopher Wilson Aronilth (1991). Kahn-John (2016) defined Hózhó as "the complex wellness philosophy and belief system of the Diné (Navajo) people, comprised of principles that guide one's thoughts, actions, behaviors, and speech" (p. 1). In her article "Living in Health, Harmony, and Beauty: The Diné (Navajo) Hózhó Wellness Philosophy," Kahn-John (2016) described characteristics embodied by Mitchell:

> Hózhó may be best understood by describing the characteristics of a Diné individual who excels in his or her journey to achieve this revered state of being. Diné elders are the ideal role models; Diné elders have both received the ancient teachings of Hózhó and have had a lifetime of experience in working toward attaining Hózhó. People living consistently with Hózhó ideas are humble; intelligent; patient; respectful; and thoughtful (demonstrated in speech, actions, and relationships); soft-spoken; good and attentive listeners; disciplined, hardworking, physically fit, and strong; generous; supportive, caring, and

> empathetic; positive in thought, speech, and behaviors; spiritual; loyal and reliable; honest; creative and artistic; peaceful and harmonious; perceptive, understanding, and wise; confident; calm; deliberate in actions; gentle yet firm; and self-controlled. (p. 2)

In acknowledgement of Michell, Kahn-John wrote, "Hózhó teaches that respectful thought, speech, and behavior should be nurtured and that relationships in life, including those with the whole of creation in the universe, should be supportive and positive" (p. 3). Lastly, Kahn-John pointed out that "it is critical that we embrace the benefits of cultural wisdom while recognizing the inherent wholeness" (p. 8). Kahn-John also found that "culture is a component of the existential core of a person's identity. Removing someone's cultural identity wisdom is destructive and leaves an existential hole in the body-mind-spirit, creating vulnerabilities to physical, mental, and social ills" (p. 8). What this says is that ongoing refusal to acknowledge the need for and the benefit of cultural practices and beliefs continues to inflict trauma on many American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) people, adding to the chronic stress that has resulted from historical trauma and attempts to eradicate Indigenous principles and well-being (Kahn-John, 2016).

Aronilth (1991) believed that "iina (life) is that journey that each of us make. It is the true value of education and survival" (p. 48). He saw that the Diné used the foundations of storytelling to describe the path to a good life and that stories deepen the understanding of how people view themselves as human beings. Stories affirm Diné beliefs and values, influencing how Diné people see the world and how stories document their lives. Diné recognize this journey as a way of maintaining life that is balanced and harmonious. College students can learn about this journey through Aronilth's class "Foundations of Navajo Culture." In *Navajo Philosophy of Learning and Pedagogy*, Herbert Benally (1994) described how "life becomes the knowledge itself because everything in life is part of the four branches of knowledge, the four stages of

maturation, and the four cardinal directions" (p. 24). Benally (1994) explained the framework of Navajo philosophy "as a process guided by the four principles of knowledge and the philosophical foundations of Navajo culture [which] are holistic in process with a perspective on life as a whole" (p. 2). The traditional knowledge and skills acquired throughout one's lifespan are significant to understanding self-identity within the Navajo culture. An awareness of these stages of life is essential to understanding one's place in life.

## KINAALDA: THE NAVAJO PUBERTY CEREMONY

In their article "Adolescent Identity Formation and Rites of Passage: The Navajo Kinaaldá Ceremony for Girls," Markstrom and Iborra (2003) stated that "the Kinaaldá is a rite of passage for Navajo girls that is a celebration of entry into womanhood and firmly establishes them within the context of family life and Navajo society" (p. 408). In the article, Markstrom and Iborra (2003) name several key individuals credited with significant teachings on Kinaaldá, including Begay (1983), Frisbie (1993), Hirschfelder and Molin (2001), Brown (1964), Lincoln (1991), Manookin (1996), Roessel (1981), and Schwarz (1997). Markstrom and Iborra (2003) conclude that the key authors share a theme that "such a distinction may be attributable, in part, to the fact that the Kinaaldá go far beyond the obvious sexual maturational and reproductive linkages. This ceremony is regarded as the most important personality-shaping event in a woman's life, and it is believed to set her life course" (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003, p. 408). Collectively, Begay (1983), Frisbie (1993) Hirschfelder and Molin (2001), Brown (1964), Lincoln (1991), Manookin (1996), Roessel (1981), and Schwarz (1997) all believed in some form of Markstrom and Iborra's (2003) definition of Kinaaldá. Additionally, Beck et al. (1996), Bol and Star Boy Menard (2000), Hirschfelder and Molin (2001), and Pritzker (1998) contributed ideas related to Markstrom and Iborra's (2003) notion that "the significance of coming-of-age ceremonies to the life course of

young women is a theme common to numerous other North American Indian cultures" (p. 408). From their collective assessment of these contributing authors, Markstrom and Iborra (2003, p. 408) conceptualized a list of the purposes of the Kinaaldá for a Diné girl:

- To celebrate her change in status from child to adult, to ensure her reproductive capability
- To instruct her on the proper roles of Navajo women in the established social order
- To test and build her endurance and strength
- To give her good posture and physical beauty
- To focus her personality development
- To make her generous and giving
- To give her strength for later difficulties in life
- To influence her future endeavors
- To ensure harmony in her future
- To protect her from misfortune
- To impress on her an identity that is embedded in Changing Woman

The social and celebratory aspects of the Kinaaldá rite of passage are remarkable and stand in stark contrast to the privacy and embarrassment that sometimes accompany the onset of menses among girls in European American society (Roessel, 1981). As stated by Navajo educator Roessel (1981), "in Navajo society the girl's first period is not a time of shame and anxiety, but, rather, a time of happiness and rejoicing" (p. 82). The ceremony is regarded as the most important personality-shaping event in a woman's life, and it is believed that it sets her life course (Frisbie, 1993; Brown, 1964). The significance of coming-of-age ceremonies to the life course of young women is a theme common to numerous other North American Indian cultures

(Roessel, 1981; also see Beck et al., 1996; Bol & Star Boy Menard, 2000; Hirschfelder & Molin, 2001; Pritzker, 1998). Additionally, noted Navajo historian and photojournalist Harold Carey Jr. (2010b), who wrote "Kinaaldá—The Navajo Puberty Ceremony Celebrating Maturity of Girls Among the Navajo," noted that the ceremony is "held generally on the fourth night after the first evidence of the maiden's entrance into womanhood" (p. 1).

For the current study, it is useful to compare the goals and purpose of this ceremony to the goals and lifestyles of contemporary Navajo young women. One focus in this research is the goals and purposes of the Kinaaldá and how it shapes young girls' identity, well-being, perspective of Hózhó, and leadership skills. It is essential to incorporate the perspectives of cultural insiders on both the practice of Kinaaldá and its meaning.

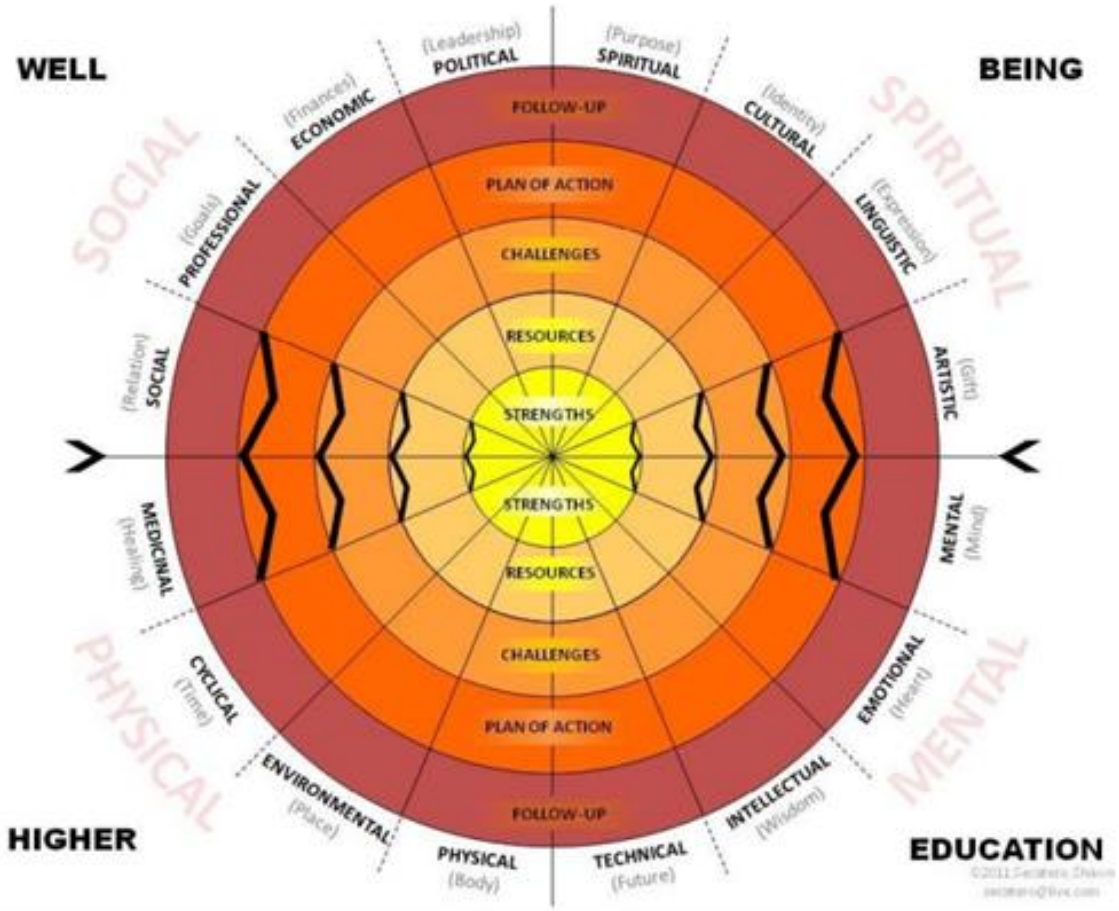
## INDIGENOUS WELL-BEING MODEL OF LEADERSHIP AND WELLNESS

In the book *Indigenous Leadership in Higher Education* (Minthorn & Chávez, 2015), Secatero stated that his Indigenous well-being model of leadership and wellness is "an Indigenous based framework which served as the seed of the Indigenous rural leadership and incorporated an Indigenous based holistic model that consists of spiritual, mental, physical, and social well-being frameworks" (p. 113). In discussing Indigenous well-being, Secatero quoted Miller (2009) as saying "holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections in the community, the natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion and peace" (p. 113).

Within Diné lifestyle, it is our overall well-being stems from the philosophy of being good and in a state of positiveness. It is best understood by describing characteristics of a Diné individual who excels in his or her journey to achieve this revered state of being.

**Figure 1**

*Secatero's Indigenous Well-Being Model in Leadership and Wellness* (2017)




In Figure 1, Secatero's well-being model is depicted through a design that represents a tree. This holistic approach has four overarching quadrants of well-being—spiritual, mental, physical, and social—which are placed in the four directions of east, south, west, and north. The east direction signifies the root of the spiritual well-being quadrant because Diné meet the sun each day to pray for all aspects of life, which is sacred. The south direction signifies the fruits of knowledge and the mental well-being quadrant, which allows each individual to effectively think and plan their life endeavors. The west direction links the physical well-being quadrant to the trunk of a tree, which involves implementing plans and includes motivation, observance of time,

and time for healing. The north direction includes the social well-being quadrant, which connects the branches of each pillar of the model to allow for analysis or synthesis of one's self. Secatero (2017) indicated:

> each layer of the circle represents the inner layers of a tree, which include strengths, resources, challenges, plan of action, and follow-up. If you look carefully at the well-being model, an individual will begin at the center where all lines meet. In the inner circle, an individual must identify their inner strengths and attributes. (p. 113)

Next I discuss Secatero's descriptions of strengths, resources, challenges, plan of action, and follow-up.

**Strengths**

Secatero (2015, cited in Minthorn & Chávez, 2015) stated that "a leader always acknowledges personal strengths as the core of the well-being model that contributes to a positive self-concept. Strengths are connected to positive attributes each person embodies which include talents, thinking skills, friendliness, perseverance, and other positive factors" (p. 113). In context, this holds true in working with Indigenous leadership and Indigenous communities. Wagner (2022) stated that "leadership does not occur in isolation. Leaders influence change by helping group members to accomplish their objectives" (section 1.1). Additionally, Wagner (2022) wrote that "behaviors are associated with terms such as leadership, management, mentorship, and followership" and that "the development of emotional and social intelligence is an integral aspect of effective leadership" (section 1.1).

Similarily, de Padua and Rabbitskin (2017) stated,

> as First Nations people we acknowledge the Creator and the principles of creation. We uphold natural law, our ways of being, and how to live in harmony on askîy pimâtisiwin (Earth Life). Knowledge is transferred to each generation through the oral tradition and is renewed in ceremony starting with the creation story. Culture is a way of life; this maintains and preserves the sacredness of life and teaches us how to live in harmony within the Circle of Life and with all relations on this Earth. Keytayak (old ones) role

> modelled a gentle integrative process where every individual envisions their full capacity and well-being to achieve their potential. (section 3.2)

Wagner (2022) further cited Rabbitskin (2017) in stating that being an effective leader involves developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes that foster good working relationships with Indigenous communities, leaders, and individuals (section 3.2). Rabbitskin's statement that "leadership is about being grounded by our principles rooted in the values and practices of our culture" (section 3.1) reflects the strengths of Secatero's well-being model.

**Resources**

Secatero (2015) described resources as

> instrumental to leadership and success and at all levels at higher education. Resources can be identified as a mentor, a student support, specialist, an Elder, communities, activities, a coach, or even a family member. In addition, communities have various forms of resouce centers that can assisst individuals or leaders with academic, professional, and personal growth. (pp. 113–114)

Within the current research, having an effective, strong, culturally relevant and, responsive approach takes into consideration several of the overall Indigenous leadership structures that Nichols (2004) listed: professional support, program design and delivery, program direction, program support, program evaluation, educational materials, supervision of educators and professionals, advocacy, data collection, report preparation, and capacity building, including training, education,community development, peer support, and networking.

**Challenges**

Secatero (2015) stated that "learning to identify challenges is another essential layer of the well-being model. Challenges can be identified as obstacles to succeeding as a leader. Many of those challenges include lack of mentors, community resources, family issues, shortage of finances, or capital" (p. 115). De Padua and Rabbitskin (2017) wrote of the need "to understand that during the process of learning, students may experience a variety of cognitive, motivational

or affective challenges that affect their learning" (section 3.3). Additionally, de Padua and Rabbitskin said that

> our Elders teach that all aspects of a person—the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual—must be addressed, and in balance, in order to promote holistic health and healing. Good health implies an optimum state of well-being in all four areas. Well-being flows from maintaining balance and harmony between all of these areas and with nature. A holistic approach to health also takes into account the importance of culture, language, and tradition. Elders are sought for emotional guidance. (section 3.3)

**Plan of Action**

Secatero (2015) described a plan of action as "a vital layer of the well-being model that identifies a possible solution in reference to addressing challenges. In this plan of action, an individual may also list a step-by-step action process to address each issue" (p. 115). In a study of nursing school leaders, Nichols (2004) pointed out that nursing schools prepare people to become nurse leaders, but they do not prepare people to become leaders "in the Indian way" (p. 177). Other researchers (Julien et al., 2010) recognize that current leadership theories often reflect cultural ideas of Western societies and do not take into account Indigenous worldviews. One of the biggest takeaways from Julien et al.'s study is that there are a number of differences between Indigenous and other types of leadership styles. One such example is the Indigenous use of traditional imagery and storytelling (Julien et al., 2010; Nichols, 2004). Lessons are taught through stories and also have a connection with the land and Indigenous identity (Nichols, 2004; Wolfgramm et al., 2016). Although Nichols's (2004) study was in reference to nursing students, it brought forth her idea of a holistic model of leadership using the Circle of Life teachings:

> Our Elders tell us that the human maturational and learning process is not linear, but rather that life is a circle, reminding us that wherever we go and whatever we experience, the self is still present, bringing us home to ourselves, families, and community with all that we have become during our learning process. Teachings of natural laws create a foundation for healing and understanding the interconnectedness of our Indigenous development (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually) and our human relations (family, community). The Circle of Life teachings represent a way of life that promotes

> health and wellness. This approach reflects a holistic and earth-centred philosophy of life and healing that is not often found in Western approaches to health. Elders say that the Circle of Life teaches us about interconnectedness: when you do your own healing as an individual, you help your family heal. When families begin to change or heal, then communities also change. As our communities come into wellness, our people will heal. When planning or developing programs, we need to consider everyone, as in the holistic view: the individual, family, and community. (section 3.3)

**Follow-Up**

Secatero (2015) indicated that "it is essential that each individual follow up to analyze each layer of the [well-being model] process. Follow-up includes an analysis of strengths, resources, challenges, a plan of action, and a follow-up" (p. 115). Secatero's holistic approach to the theoretical framework solidified the importance of what Angela Bunner (2015), a member of the Muscogee Creek tribe, stated. According to Bunner (2015), "the definition of Indigenous leadership cannot be simply defined by an entry in a dictionary, that there are personal and outside contributing factors that have profound effects" (p. 81). Secatero's framework has taken a more in-depth approach to the correlation between Western and Indigenous worlds. According to Miller (2009), not only does holistic education give meaning and purpose in life through connections in the community, the natural world, and to humanitarian values, such as compassion and peace, it promotes and unearths a person's self-identity.

Additionally, Bunner (2015) wrote that "leadership depends on being cognizant of one's own strengths and dispositions as well as understanding the community in which they belong. It all depends on who you are, where you are, what you do, and how you do it" (p. 81). Through Bunner's personal upbringing and lived experiences and through her grandmother, she came to believe that leadership was a personal responsibility to herself, to her ancestors, and to future generations. Bunner also believed that cultural identity and values are a must for effective and strong leadership. The current study sought to instill this shared vision of Secatero and Bunner in

Diné girls so that they could have shared personal experiences to bring them closer together and compel them to be more interpersonally connected with the community and the world we live in.

## THE GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Founded on March 12, 1912, by Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low, the GSUSA is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls aged 5 to 18. With approximately 2.6 million members—1.8 million girls and 800,000 adults—the approach of the GSUSA (2016) provided the Western Eurocentric framework that guided this study. More specifically, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience Program (GSLEP) was the backbone of this research analysis. Through the GSLEP, girls are provided with

> opportunities to try new things that guide them to cultivate important self-positive skills needed to take the lead in their own lives and the world. Furthermore, the Diné girls will learn and grow in a safe, all-girl environment, discovering who they are, connecting with others, and acting to make the world a better place. (GSUSA, 2008)

As Girl Scouts, girls have many opportunities to have fun, make friends, and take part in activities that can have a positive impact on their life, school, and world. Any girl in grades K–12 can join the fun at Girl Scouts. For a girl who wants to be part of a troop, sign up for exciting events, explore the outdoors, or travel the world, each age level has something for her.

Girls are placed in levels according to the grade in which they are enrolled in school: grades K–1 are Daisies, grades 2–3 are Brownies, grades 4–5 are Juniors, grades 6–8 are Cadettes, grades 9–10 are Seniors, and grades 11–12 are Ambassadors. This study focused on grades 4–5; a girl in those grades is typically 8, 9, or 10 years old, which is when she might experience her first menstrual cycle and when she can go through the Kinaaldá. In grades K–5, Girl Scouts earn badges, join troops, hike and camp, and participate in their traditional cookie-sales program. In middle school and high school, girls can explore careers in science and

technology, travel the world, discover nature, and take on projects that transform their communities.

**Origin**

Born Juliette Magill Kinzie Gordon on October 31, 1860, in Savannah, Georgia, Daisy, as she was known to her friends and family, descended from a long line of strong and independent women (GSUSA, 2020). The GSUSA (2020) website stated she was "a sensitive, curious, and adventurous girl known for her sense of humor, compassion, and concern for others. She was interested in athletics, the arts, animals, and nature—attributes that would one day become central to the Girl Scout Movement" (para. 2). According to GSUSA (2020), the most interesting fact about Juliette was that "as a child and young adult, she experienced several ear injuries resulting in almost total hearing loss that affected her for the remainder of her life" (para. 3). As a result, the GSUSA believed that this gave her the compassion and driving desire to advocate for people with special needs.

Juliette could not have gotten the Girl Scouts off the ground without the inspiration and guidance of Sir Robert Baden-Powell. Baden-Powell, the founder of Boy Scouts, inspired Juliette to establish the Girl Scouts in 1912. Upon the conclusion of a meeting with Baden-Powell, Juliette was full of eagerness and excitement when she made the declaration that "for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we're going to start it tonight!" (GSUSA, 2020, para. 2). After that, the first gathering of a small troop of 18 culturally and ethnically diverse girls took place. It was then that Juliette broke the conventions of the 1900s by reaching across class, cultural, and ethnic boundaries to ensure that all girls, including those with so-called disabilities, had a place to grow and develop leadership skills (GSUSA, 2020).

Having a natural talent for raising money and being in the public eye, Juliette leaned on her very close network of friends and supporters, she led the Girl Scouts with passion and determination. Her focus was to have an organization that was “girl-led” and brought forth leadership skills. This remained the focus up to the time of death, from breast cancer, January 17, 1927 (GSUSA, 2020).

After Juliette’s death, she was honored with the establishment of the World Friendship Fund, which helped fund many Girl Scout projects around the world, as well as having a postage stamp created in her honor, having many biographies written, and an opera depicting her life and her achievements. In 1912, Juliet received one of the highest honor from President Barack Obama-Presidential Medal of Freedom (GSUSA, 2020). To date, Juliette Gordon Low is not forgotten. She continues to have an impact across the nation and globe. Her honor and legacy continue to impact the lives of across the nation and by generations of people that are directly involved with Girl Scouts and its premier leadership organization (GSUSA, 2020).

**History**

Girl Scouting has continued to expand its reach, with the first Girl Scout troops launching outside the United States in China, Syria, and Mexico. One of the earliest Native American troops formed on the Onondaga Nation Reservation in New York State in 1921, and Mexican American girls formed a Girl Scout troop in Houston, Texas in 1922. The first lone troop on foreign soil (later called USA Girl Scouts Overseas) registered in Shanghai, China with 18 girls in 1925. To date, many more councils and troops have been registered among a vast number of Indigenous tribes across the world including the Navajo Nation.

Under the Arizona Cactus-Pine Council, the Navajo Nation Girl Scout Unit has emerged and serves troops throughout the Navajo Nation reservation in Arizona and Utah. This unit is open to all ethnicities; however, the majority of the Navajo Nation troop members are Diné girls. Since the advent of the scouting movement, Diné girls have been involved. The first Navajo troop was established in 1935, and as of 2012, there were approximately 346 Girl Scouts on the Navajo Nation, many of whom were enrolled in one of 44 troops and a few of whom choose to participate independently by following the approved and published curriculum (Yurth, 2012). The recent *Annual Report 2021*: *Adventuring into the Future* (GSUSA, 2021; see Table 1) stated that there are over 18,604 total members of the Arizona Cactus-Pine Council. Of those members, 12,268 are girls and 6,336 are adults. An in-depth breakdown of race/ethnicity shows they are 67% White, 17% Hispanic, 6% multiple race/ethnicity, 4% Black/African American, 4% American Indian, and 2% Asian American. The report also listed counties of residence with percent of representation: 85% Maricopa, 4% Pinal, 3% Yavapai, 2% unknown, 2% Mohave, 2% Navajo, 1% Coconino, 1% Apache, and 1% other (Clark, Gila, La Paz, McKinley, and San Juan). Additional statistics given in the report were: the overall percentage of Girl Scout levels, grade levels, percentage of badges earned within specific areas of focus, the number of High Awards earned at each level, and the amount of financial assistance that was provided to operate a troop by assisting with membership for both girls and adults and to defer the costs of activities, materials, and camps.

> a girl will grow in ways that change everything about how she holds herself, the way she expresses herself, and how big she dreams. This kind of growth is the most important outcome of her Girl Scout experience and will help her harness her potential and live her best life. The program comprises meaningful experiences that have been proven to teach girls about themselves and their potential in their schools, communities, and society at large. When a girl takes part in Girl Scouting, she's following in the footsteps of numerous female world leaders, astronauts, inventors, entrepreneurs, and artists. (p. 2)

**Table 1**

*Annual Report 2021 Statistics*

| % Membership by Girl Scout Levels & Grade Levels | % Badges Earned in Specific Focus Areas | # of High Awards in 2021 | Financial Assistance for 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Daisy (Grades K-1)<br>• 17%<br>Brownie (Grades 2-3)<br>• 24%<br>Junior (Grades 4-5)<br>• 24%<br>Cadette (Grades 6-8)<br>• 23%<br>Senior (Grades 9-10)<br>• 8%<br>Ambassador (Grades 11-12)<br>• 5% | Entrepreneurship<br>• 19%<br>Life Skills<br>• 46%<br>STEM<br>• 15%<br>Outdoors<br>• 19% | Bronze Award<br>• 18 Girls<br>Silver Awards<br>• 197 Girls<br>Gold Awards<br>• 288 Awards | Girls<br>• $97,407<br>Adults<br>• $7,281 |

A key finding found growth in five key areas: a strong sense of self, positive values, challenge seeking, healthy relationships, and community problem-solving. When taking a closer look at the key findings, there is a correlation with that of the Diné philosophy of Hózhó and the 16 pillars of Secatero's (2015) Indigenous well-being model in leadership and wellness.

While the Indigenous component of Girl Scouts has been a weakness, over the years the Navajo Nation Girl Scout Unit has begun to increase, include, and encourage more Diné girls to participate and learn more about their cultural heritage by incorporating it into the scouting experience. Navajo Girl Scouts, drawing from the Diné ideal of living in harmony with nature, comprise large numbers of participants in the council's "It's in the Bag" program of collecting and recycling plastic bags. It is through this program and taking care of Mother Earth (Diné deity) a girl learns to respect herself, her family, her lifestyle, and her heritage and traditions.

The following are a few examples of how Diné girls are encouraged to learn about their own cultural heritage, traditions, values, morals, and teachings, and incorporate it into their scouting experience:

- Changing the name of a Girl Scout of the Navajo Nation to Girl Scout of Diné Bikeyah
- Translation of the Girl Scout Law and Pledge into the Navajo language
- 3-day STEM Camps hosted annually by Navajo Nation colleges, Navajo Technical University, and Diné
- Girl Scouting incorporated as an afterschool, school-based youth program to combat problems such as bullying and domestic violence
- Partnering with local national parks, community businesses, and local schools to bring forth preventive skills and techniques to address risk factors such as bullying and domestic violence

These examples speak directly to the research question and sub questions of this study.

**Accomplishments, Successes, and Contributions**

The recognitions, successes, and contributions that GSUSA has achieved is exhaustive. Described below are a few, dating to the 1920s. To not lose its honor and glory, the descriptions come directly from the GSUSA (2021) website section entitled "The Girl Scout Difference: Our History, Our Timeline."

- 1930s
    - During the Great Depression, the Girl Scouts aided in relief efforts by collecting clothing and food for the those in need.
    - Published *Who Are The Girl Scouts?* promotional booklet in the languages of Yiddish, Italian, and Polish

- 1940s
    - During World War II, Girl Scouts who were interested in learning to fly participated in the Wing Scouts program.
    - Created and operated a bicycle courier service
    - Created and operated Farm Aid projects
    - Collected fat and scrap metal
    - Grew victory gardens
    - Sponsored Defense Institutes that taught women survival skills and techniques for comforting children during air raids
    - Establishment of Japanese-American troops in Utah and California.
- 1950s
    - Responded to the Korean War by assembling “Kits for Korea”—pouches of items that Korean citizens needed for daily survival
    - Pressed issues of inclusiveness and equality, through a publication in the 1952 *Ebony* magazine. Girl Scouts found a need to address the racial barriers of the South.
- 1960s
    - Girl Couts held “Speak Out” conferences around the country, to promote and address the issues of racial equality. This was later referred to the “Action 70” project which focused on address the issues of prejudice and to build better relationships between people.
    - Invited as special guests to Cape Kennedy, Florida, to view the Apollo 12 landing on the moon

- 1970s
    - Gloria D. Scott was elected by the Girl Scouts as the first African American national board president.
    - Took a stand against environmental issues, by launching the national “Eco-Action” program
    - When Vietnamese refugee children were brought to America, the Girl Scouts helped the children adapt to their new life.
- 1980s
    - Girl Scouting is expanding and the Daisy level for kindergarten-aged girls.
    - Began to distribute The Contemporary Issues series, as a way to address the most serious issues that were affecting teen girls: drug use, child abuse, and teen pregnancy.
- 1990s
    - As a reactor effect of the massive growth of personal computers, Girl Scouts introduced the Technology badge for Girl Scout Juniors.
    - Tackled illiteracy with the Right to Read project. There were nearly 4 million Girl Couts and leaders that participated in the program.
- 2000s
    - Focusing on healthy development among girls, the Girl Scout Research Institute to conduct studies and report the findings.
    - Hosting a National Conference on Latinas in Girl Scouting, as a way to emphasize inclusiveness.
    - Elected the first Hispanic, Patricia Diaz Dennis, as chair of the National Board.

- 2021s
    - Continue to use technology as a way to stay connected to nature and the great outdoors, as a result new badges to promote outdoor activities and encouraging girls an early start into computer science.
    - Partnered with Goggle for “Made with Code” program.
    - Launched the Digital Cookie portion of the Girl Scout Cookies program. This is where cookies are sold online and was the first time in history of the iconic cookie program.

As a researcher, I feel a personal connection to this history that stems from having been a Daisy and a Brownie and from currently being a troop leader of 30 Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors. This is my third year of facilitating, guiding, and supporting a group of unique, motivated, and strong-minded Diné girls. Assisting me are four active volunteers and several engaged and dedicated parents, grandparents, and extended family members. With the Girl Scouts being the preeminent leadership development organization for girls aged 5 to 18 and because of the successes GSUSA is known for, the scouting framework guided this study.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching research question that guided this comparative analysis was: How does analytically comparing the GSUSA Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophy of Hózhó (harmonious way of life) and the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony) positively affect the unique diversity of each Diné girl and give attention to leadership skills, self-identity, and the Diné language? In addition, there were three sub questions:

1. How does aligning the GSUSA Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá build leadership skills, positive self-identity, and a healthy social and emotional well-being of Diné girls?
2. How does aligning the GSUSA Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá build positive relationships with Diné girls, their families, their school, and their community?
3. How does aligning the GSUSA Leadership Experience program to the Diné philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá build connections between the Diné philosophies and Western educational systems/values?

## APPROVAL FOR ACCESS

Approval to conduct this comparative study was granted by three entities: a University of New Mexico dissertation committee, the University of New Mexico Internal Review Board, and the Navajo Nation Heritage and Historical Preservation Department. The details of the requirements for each of these entities are further discussed in Chapter Three.

## CONCLUSION

As stated in the Girl Scout Impact Study (GSIS; GSRI, 2017b),

> Today's youth need a broad set of skills, behaviors, and attitudes to effectively navigate their environment, work well with others, perform their best, and achieve their goals—competencies that are central to the development of human capital and workforce success around the world. Unfortunately, there is a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most youth learn in school and the knowledge and skills needed in 21st-century communities and workplaces. Indeed, many employers worldwide report that job candidates lack the social and emotional skills needed to fill available positions. (p. 1)

In addition to being more competitive job candidates, youth who develop competencies like perseverance, self-esteem, and sociability have lower rates of obesity, depression, and aggression, and show greater life satisfaction, and emotional well-being than youth who do not

develop such attributes. And, significantly, when youth develop these competencies early on, the benefits are long-term (GSRI, 2017). The 2017 GSIS study demonstrated:

> kindergarteners who learned how to share, cooperate with others, and be helpful were more likely to have a college degree and a job 20 years later than youth who lacked those social skills. They were also less likely to have substance-abuse problems and run-ins with the law. (p. 1)

In conclusion, it is evident that being academically knowledgeable is not enough. It is also evident that "building confidence, forming healthy relationships, solving problems, and developing other such strengths is crucial to the well-being of youth" (GSRI, 2017, p. 1). Vygotsky's belief that "culture was a primary determinant of knowledge acquisition" and that "children learn from the beliefs and attitudes modeled by their culture" (Kurt, 2020, p. 1) confirms the need that our Diné girls need opportunities that positively affect their unique diversity. Additionally, it will bring forth a focus of turning their attention to establish strong leadership skills, portray a positive self-identity, and learn and revitalize the Diné language. As a result, it will prepare our Diné girls to be successful in both the Indigenous and Western worlds.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## DAY ONE OF MY KINAALDÁ

It is day one of my Kinaaldá. Family, close friends, and the medicine man were contacted, and they now have arrived for the ceremonial practice of tying my hair and beginning the race that my sisters (cousins) and I have challenged one another, to be the one that ran the furthest, by the final morning. Since my early childhood days, I was always very active and involved in sports, and at this particular time, cross-country running was a big accomplishment for me, so I think that 6+ miles would be a great target for my final early morning run.

Dressed in my most comfortable traditional attire, moccasin, and jewelry, I sit and wait for all of my family and guest to enter the hogan so that the medicine man can begin. On this day, there is so much that happens, and all I can think of is to listen very carefully and do what is asked of me, by the medicine man, my chosen mentor, and all my aunties and grandmothers. What I remember the most and very distinctively are the harmonious and powerful sounds of the songs, the feeling of warmth, closeness, serenity, peace, calmness, and blessings from my family and everyone in the hogan. (Belone, 2022)

## INTRODUCTION

By comparing theorists, frameworks, philosophies, and models, it can be determined that Indigenous people think and interpret the world and its realities in different ways from non-Indigenous people because of Indigenous experiences, histories, spirituality, culture, and values. It is important to learn about these realities and worldviews in order to provide optimal learning opportunities for Indigenous school children. In much of the literature I read, Indigenous authors have a common theme: the survival of Indigenous people is more than a question of physical existence. It is an issue of protecting, preserving, and enhancing Indigenous worldviews,

knowledge systems, languages, and environments. It is a matter of sustaining spiritual links with oneself, one's family, one's community, and the world.

## CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Research has shown that no one teaching strategy will consistently engage all learners. The key to learning is to help students relate lesson content to their background. To be effective in multicultural classrooms, a teacher must relate teaching content to the cultural backgrounds of the students. According to research, teaching that ignores student norms of behavior and communication provokes student resistance, while teaching that is responsive prompts student involvement (Olneck, 1995). There is growing evidence that strong, continual engagement among diverse students requires a holistic approach—that is, an approach where the how, what, and why of teaching has a personal connection and is meaningful (Ogbu, 1995).

Culturally relevant and responsive teaching is pedagogy that crosses disciplines and cultures to engage learners while respecting their cultural integrity. Furthermore, cultural relevancy and responsiveness accommodate the dynamic mix of race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contribute to every student's cultural identity (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Additionally, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) found that "motivation is inseparable from culture" and that "engagement is the visible outcome of motivation, the natural capacity to direct energy in the pursuit of a goal" (p. 1). That indicates that one's emotions influence one's motivation. In turn, emotions are socialized through culture—the deeply learned confluence of language, beliefs, values, and behaviors that pervades every aspect of one's life. Thus, a student's response to a learning activity reflects their culture.

Research by Cajete found evidence similar to that of Brayboy (2005), Brown (2007), and Skinner (1999), which suggested that a major challenge to Indigenous students' academic success is cultural discontinuity. In general, the researchers found that students achieve better educational outcomes if reared in a culture that has expectations and patterns of behavior consistent with those of their school. Moreover, cultural inclusion is a necessary component for Indigenous students' academic success. Cultural inclusion reflects the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of society. Students learn in a supportive environment free from prejudice and discrimination. Teaching and learning activities provide students with equal opportunities to learn, share experiences, and succeed at school (Ruggs & Hebl, 2012). Thus, the need for increasing cultural awareness and Indigenous language and culture in schools is obvious. Similarly, there is a firm belief within many Indigenous communities and among professional Indigenous scholars, researchers, and educators, asserting that cultural content is essential if students are to succeed academically and build meaningful lives as adults (Cajete, 2005). Unless the educational community begins to support the interests and values of Indigenous groups and validate Indigenous knowledge forms and experiences, the education of Indigenous people will continue to be mediocre in quality.

Revitalization and retention of the Diné heritage and language and a strong cultural identity are the most important factors in predicting the academic achievement of Diné students. Because the educational system plays an extremely influential role in the lives of children, beginning at an early age, it is crucial that impressionable youth be exposed to information and leaders who reflect back to them their own worth.

Indigenous views of the world and approaches to education continue to be jeopardized by the spread of Western social structures and institutional forms of cultural transmission. As a

foundation for learning, it is crucial to now demonstrate the importance of culture by shifting the emphasis in education from teaching about culture to teaching through the local culture (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008). Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008) asserted that "the tide has turned and the future of Indigenous education is clearly shifting toward an emphasis on providing education in the culture, rather than education about the culture" (p. 139).

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) made three important statements that I found to be imperative to this study:

1. "While the internal logics, motivation, engagement, and desire, to why a student would want to participate in a lesson, to complete a lesson, and/or achieve an academic goal might not match that of the teacher, it is, nonetheless, existent" (p. 1).
2. "Internal logic means a framework for a formal investigation of learning that allows for discussing and comparing concepts and representations and makes it possible to view learning processes as iterations of a certain type of functions, such as contractions, compound words, blends, and vocabulary, and to be effective, a teacher must understand that perspective" (p. 1).
3. "Rather than assuming how to be culturally relevant with students, a teacher must work with students to interpret and deepen their existing knowledge and enthusiasm for learning. From that viewpoint, motivationally effective teaching can be culturally relevant and responsive" (p. 1).

It is this internal logic framework that brings awareness to concepts such as Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) and learning trajectories.

ZPD is a notion that teachers recognize in their praxis: it is ineffective to teach learners what they can successfully manage to learn on their own or to give students tasks too hard to

manage at all. In the case of mathematics, where attempts have been made recently to merge ideas from the philosophy of mathematics with ideas from the philosophy of education, a formal framework such as the one presented here, may constitute a common arena of discussion (Bennet, 2019. From a philosophy of education perspective, knowing the development of the students' learning in terms of "learning trajectories" (Daro et al., 2011) may deepen our understanding of ZPD by explaining the relationship between representations and concepts in a learning process beyond a common Venn diagram (Bennet, 2019). According to a basic definition by Education World, Inc. (2021),

> Venn diagrams are used to teach elementary set theory and the elements of a set are labeled within each circle. A Venn diagram illustrates simple set relationships by using circles help to visually represent the similarities and differences between various concepts and the relationships among things or finite groups of things. The intersection (overlap) of the sets is all the elements they have in common. (para. 2)

One model of culturally relevant and responsive teaching is based on theories of intrinsic motivation. Such a model is respectful of different cultures and is capable of creating a common culture that all students can accept. Within this framework, pedagogical alignment—the coordination of approaches to teaching that ensure maximum, consistent effect—is critical. The more harmonious the elements of teaching are, the more likely they are to evoke, encourage, and sustain intrinsic motivation (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

The intrinsic motivation framework names four motivational conditions that the teacher and students continuously create or enhance. They are (a) establishing inclusion—creating a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another; (b) developing attitude—creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice; (c) enhancing meaning—creating challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include student perspectives and values; and (d) engendering

competence—creating an understanding that students are effective in learning something they value. Those conditions are essential to developing intrinsic motivation are sensitive to cultural differences. They work in concert as they influence students and teachers, and they happen in a moment as well as over a period of time (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

## NARRATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION

*Explorations in Narrative Research* by Stephens et al. (2012) explained the importance of bringing lived experiences into a classroom, as well as why and how doing that is the basis of teaching. The researchers stated,

> teaching is most effective when students come to feel that the subject matter is worth caring about, that it has something to do with not only the world around them but with their own lives. And so, it is how she structured her teaching in such a way that there is room for personal storytelling. (p. 34)

Stephens et al. (2012) provided further insight by stating that:

> learning with and through narratives is a very effective tool for bringing people into discussions who might otherwise be excluded. If we believe, as I do, that personal lived stories are vital to who we are and how we are in the world, that these stories change over time and that they are both unique and culturally unscripted, then it follows that these stories have a great potential for bridge building, making vital connections between individuals and the world of ideas. (p. 34)

In the book, *Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire*, Cajete (2015) wrote that "Indigenous community is about living a 'symbolic' life within a 'symbolic' culture. Indigenous culture includes the natural world as a necessary and vital participant and a co-creator of community" (p. 30). He goes on to state that "'symbolic culture' refers to how Indigenous communities have traditionally mirrored, through a rich and dynamic oral tradition, the stages of creative evolution and the characteristics of the animals, plants, natural phenomena, ecology, and geography found in their place" (p. 30). Moreover, Cajete maintained that "the vitality of Indigenous cultures has utterly depended on individuals living in community with the

natural world" (p. 30), and that "Indigenous cultures are extensions of the story of the natural community of a place" (p. 30). He claimed that "the oral tradition, therefore, becomes an essential aspect of traditional teachings" (p. 30), and that "through the oral tradition, stories become a source of both content and method for Indigenous community education" (p. 30). Lastly, Cajete brought forth the idea that "when the story of a People is nourished properly through the special attention given it by its tellers and those who listen to them, the story is vitalized and the people are too" (p. 30), concluding that "when a story finds that special circumstance in which its message is fully received, the story induces a direct and powerful understanding that becomes a real teaching" (p. 30).

According to Friese (2006), narrative research methods "are considered real-world measures that are appropriate when real-life experiences are investigated" (para. 1). Friese also noted that "in a basic, linear approach, narrative stories encompass the study of the experiences of a single individual embracing stories of his/her life and exploring the learned significance of those individual experiences" (para. 2). Friese concluded that "in the case of personal stories and experiences, one creates an aggregate of narratives, each bearing on the others" (para 2).

The use of narratives to show one's life history is a method of narrative research. Using narrative research methods to identify and document patterns or themes of personal beliefs, values, morals, and experiences of individuals and groups is an alternative to empirical methods. Using narrative methods allows a researcher to explore a person's individual experiences within a specific period of time, which is referred to as a history-of-the-time framework. This narrative life history information challenges a researcher to understand an individual's current attitudes and behaviors and how they might have been influenced by decisions made at other times and in other places.

Growing up on the reservation and spending summers in the care of my grandparents for weeks at a time, my sister, brother, and cousins were told many stories, and in those stories were personal lived experiences. Now, as a researcher, it is reassuring to read that "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 63). Taking this approach, my research relied on the written or spoken words or visual representations of the participants, as told through their personal experiences and reflections on the Diné philosophy of Hózhó and their own Kinaaldá.

The main purpose of this narrative approach was to gain entrance into culture, to immerse myself in culture, to acquire informants, and to gather data through direct observations and interactions with subjects. Paulo Freire (1998) emphasized that relevant learning can occur only in the classroom when teachers have a sense of the world in which their students live. Freire wrote that:

> educators need to know what happens in the world of the students with whom they work. They need to know the universe of their dreams, the language with which they skillfully defend themselves from the aggressiveness of their world, what they know independently of the school, and how they know it. (p. 72)

Aside from vibrant and relevant classroom teaching is the technique of immersing students in field trips and field work and in engaging, interactive, and participatory lessons. Narrative-based research methods (e.g., personal stories and experiences) in education can be useful, in that (a) listening to the stories that students tell about their lives provides educators with an insight into their worlds outside of the classroom, (b) being sensitive to what the students are not sharing and telling compels educators to be attentive to trying to make the lessons of daily teaching inclusive, and (c) students who tell stories about their experiences project a sense of empowerment and connection to the lessons (Stephens et al., 2012).

In *Bringing Navajo Storytelling Practices into Schools: The Importance of Maintaining Cultural Integrity*, Eder (2007) quotes several authors in depicting a concise meaning of storytelling:

> Stories are the means by which many Navajos have constructed the meaning of life, of human beings, and of the universe: they are the means by which this knowledge is passed on (Farella 1984). Ceremonies are structured by stories and given meaning through stories (Toelken and Tacheeni 1981). Families who use stories to teach children important life principles have raised their children "right." Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso expresses this sentiment when she writes: "To know stories, remember stories, and to retell them well is to have been 'raised right'; the family of such an individual is also held in high esteem" (1993: xi).
>
> Like many other Navajo teaching practices, stories are a means for conveying principles implicitly. This teaching practice allows children to formulate ideas based on "their own experience levels and perspectives" (Stairs 1995:141). Although stories are occasionally used to teach moral knowledge in Western teaching practices, Western practices rely more on explicit forms of conveying principles such as including a summary moral.
>
> To many of the Diné who embrace traditional values, storytelling is a core practice by which to teach children the important principles necessary to live well. For these people, living well is grounded in the concept of "sa'a naghai bik'e hozho": wholeness; continuity of generations; one's relationship to the beginning, to the past, and to the universe; responsibility to future generations; life force; and completeness" (p. 279)

## THE DINÉ PHILOSOPHY OF HÓZHÓ

Several authors, ethnographers, and researchers collectively define the word Hózhó as being good, positive, and within harmony. In the book *The Main Stalk: A Synthesis of Navajo Philosophy*, Farella (1984) references Haile and Witherspoon's theory of Navajo religion. Farella refers to these ethnographers as "dualists." Their description of Navajo worldview is that everything in the universe, including but not limited to knowledge, people, gods, behavior, ritual, thought, and language, are divided into the good and evil. Hózhó is taken by the dualists as the meta term for good or for goodness. The word is comprised of the stem -zhó and the prefix ho-. The stem refers to things like beauty, excellence, and quality. It refers to the essence or the

essential feature of that which we regard as aesthetically positive. Additionally, Witherspoon (1974) wrote that "the prefix -ho refers to environment in a total sense—to the world or the universe as a whole" (p. 32). Witherspoon (1974) also stated that "Hózhó then can be said to refer to …the positive or ideal environment. It is beauty, harmony, good, happiness, and everything that is positive" (p. 54). Additionally, Farella (1984) quotes Wyman as stating,

> the Navajo term includes everything that a Navajo think is good—that is, good as opposed to evil, favorable to man as, opposed to unfavorable or doubtful. It expresses for the Navajo such concepts as the words beauty, perfection, harmony, goodness, normality, success, well-being, blessedness, order, ideal, do for us. (p. 32)

Kahn-John and Koithan (2015) used Hózhó wellness philosophy in the alignment of integrative nursing principles. The authors work "illustrated the power that integrative nursing offers as a meta-theoretical perspective that can transform health care system so that it is inclusive and responsive to the needs of Indigenous populations" (p. 1). Kahn-John and Koithan also wrote that Diné people must never forget to embody the origins of the Diné cultures because it is the natural way to promote the wealth of rich and diverse healing wisdom and mechanisms. These researchers recognized that many of the characteristics used to teach and convey Hózhó are conceptually vague and open to multiple interpretations and that Hózhó is difficult to convey because it encompasses both a way of living and a state of being. They looked to other researchers and authors for the definition and philosophy of Hózhó, including this from Begay and Maryboy (2000):

> A complex wellness philosophy and belief system comprised of principles that guide one's thoughts, actions, behaviors, and speech. The teachings of Hózhó are imbedded in the Hózhóójí Nanitiin (Diné traditional teachings) given to the Diné by the holy female deity Yoołgaii Asdzáá (White Shell Woman) and the Diné holy people (sacred spiritual Navajo deities). Hózhó philosophy emphasizes that humans have the ability to be self-empowered through responsible thought, speech, and behavior. Likewise, Hózhó acknowledges that humans can self-destruct by thinking, speaking, and behaving irresponsibly. As such, the Hózhó philosophy offers key elements of the moral and behavioral conduct necessary for a long healthy life, placing an emphasis on the

> importance of maintaining relationships by developing pride of one's body, mind, soul, spirit and honoring all life. (p. 24)

Wyman (1970) described Hózhó as "everything that a Navajo thinks as good—that is, good as opposed to evil, favorable to man as opposed to unfavorable or doubtful" (Farella, 1984, p. 32). Hózhó "expresses for the Navajo such concepts as the words beauty, perfection, harmony, goodness, normality, success, well-being, blessedness, order, and ideal" (Farella, 1984, p. 32). Additionally, Kahn-John (2016) cited Witherspoon (1974) in describing Hózhó as "everything that is positive, and it refers to an environment which is all inclusive" (p. 25). Hózhó reflects the process, path, or journey by which an individual strives toward and attains this tranquil state of wellness. Thus, translating the complex meaning of Hózhó without reducing its expansive meaning is difficult.

Upon completion of their concept analysis of the wellness philosophy of the Diné Hózhó, Kahn-John and Koithan adopted the wellness philosophy in their research. As a result, six conceptually distinct attributes emerged pertaining to what Hózhó is: spirituality, respect, reciprocity, discipline, thinking, and relationships. According to the researchers,

> *Spirituality* represents expectation to respect and honor spirit through prayer, paying homage to spirit, ritual, ceremony, and spiritual/religious practice. *Respect* is the act of maintaining loyal reverence by offering respect to self, others, nature, spirit, animals, the Creator, and the environment. *Reciprocity* represents the constant graceful and respectful exchange and receipt of support, acts of kindness, helpfulness, and tokens of appreciation or honor—nothing is ever received without giving, and the characteristic of generosity is essential for authentic reciprocity. *Discipline* represents the commitment to achieving life goals through sustaining disciplined productive daily activity in the form of study, self-care, physical activity, and helpfulness to others. *Thinking* represents the cognitive functioning required to maintain consistent positive thought while planning and organizing the present and future. The honoring of *Relationships Ké*—the Diné connectedness to family, clan, tribe, community) is a central theme, requiring a constant awareness of the relationships and interconnectedness between one and the environment (others, family, community, tribe, spirits, people of the world, all living creatures, nature, and the universe). (p. 25)

Kahn-John (2016) additionally stated that these attributes are "necessary elements to whole-person and whole-systems well-being described as the Diné wellness ideal" (p. 25).

In relation to Kahn-John's Diné wellness ideal, below is a poetic excerpt from *The Fundamental Law of the Navajo Nation—Declaration of the Foundation of Diné Law* (2015) reflecting a similar idea.

> The Holy People ordained:
> Through songs and prayers,
> That
> Earth and universe embody thinking,
> Water and the sacred mountains embody planning,
> Air and variegated vegetation embody life,
> Fire, light, and offering sites of variegated sacred stones embody wisdom.
> These are the fundamental tenets established.
>
> Thinking is the foundation of planning.
> Life is the foundation of wisdom.
> Upon our creation, these were instituted within us and we embody them.
>
> Accordingly, we are identified by:
> Our Diné name,
> Our clan,
> Our language,
> Our life way,
> Our shadow,
> Our footprints.
>
> Therefore, we were called the Holy-Earth-Surface-People.
> From here growth began and the journey proceeds.
> Different thinking, planning, life ways, languages, beliefs, and laws appear among us,
> But the fundamental laws placed by the Holy People remain unchanged.
> Hence, as we were created with living soul,
> we remain Diné forever.

As demonstrated by Kahn-John (2016), the attributes of the Hózhó philosophy are universally relevant to all Indigenous individuals, communities, and agencies that might be interested in novel or ancient ways to promote the health and well-being of Indigenous people of the world (p. 29). Kahn-John (2016) stated that although the Hózhó well-being philosophy

served as a framework in which biomedically focused health care providers could become acquainted with cultural views of AI/AN people, she pointed out that a careful and thoughtful approach should be made. In such an approach, the honor and respect of cultural experts in a planning and implementation process are present. Along with early Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors, researchers and cultural experts stated that the AI/AN worldview honors knowledge, stories, and cultural wisdom as sacred entities, ensuring accurate implementation of unique, culturally tailored approaches for Hózhó well-being. Although Kahn-John (2016) specifically addressed the alignment of integrative nursing principals to the Hózhó well-being philosophy and showed how the health care system can be transformed into a more culturally inclusive and responsive delivery approach that would meet the needs of Indigenous people, I used the same approach in this comparative analysis study of the Diné philosophy of Hózhó, the Kinaaldá, and the GSUSA.

Lastly, Kahn-John (2016) found that:

> it is critical that we embrace the benefits of cultural wisdom while recognizing the inherent wholeness of Indigenous individuals. Cultural wisdom is essential to the well-being of the Diné and all Indigenous people populations who experience considerable disparities that have not been adequately addressed. Culture is a component of the existential core of a person's identity. Removing someone's cultural wisdom is destructive and leaves an existential hole in the body, mind, spirit, creating vulnerabilities to the physical, mental, and social skills" of life. (p. 29)

Roessel (1981), in *Women in Navajo Society*, quotes a young mother who questions her identity and role as a Diné woman:

> Who I am, and what can I teach my kids?
>
> I do not know who I am. I don't know much about my culture, and yet my kids want to learn. But I don't have the information nor the answers. What took place in the past? What is Navajo culture? What made us so strong in the past? My parents never taught me. I guess they thought they were helping me by just teaching me the White Man's way. I don't want to make the same mistake that my parents made and not teach my children about their own Navajo culture. (p. VIII)

Diné identity is distinctive and personal. It is a mixture of traditions, customs, values, behaviors, technologies, worldviews, languages, and lifestyles. Diné identity is analogous to Diné weaving in that it interweaves all of life's elements together (Lee, 2020). Specific to this analytical comparison is the identity, role, and viewpoint of Diné girls and women. Lee (2020) wrote that "Diné women are an integral part of cultural continuance, family dynamics, and a Diné way of life. When a child is born, the child is of their mother's clan. The child(ren)is a mother's possession" (p. 4). Lee (2020) continued, "Diné woman have direct power and authority to determine the leadership in the extended family networks and community systems" (p. 4) and indicated that "Diné women are a reflection of Changing Woman, the mother of the Diné people" (p. 4). In addition to Lee, Roessel (1981) quoted Marion E. Gridley (1974), author of *American Indian Women*, in acknowledging that

> the Navajos believed that there were many Holy People, or spirit beings, and that Changing Woman was the most sacred of all. She helped to create the people of the earth, who were the ancestors of the Navajos….. Changing Woman taught the people how to live in harmony with all things – the elements, the mountains, the plants, the animals. (p. 179)

## THE KINAALDÁ: THE NAVAJO PUBERTY CEREMONY

Whether an embarrassment or an amazement, the transition from childhood to adulthood—the coming of age of boys who become young men and girls who become young women—is a significant stepping stone in everyone's life. But the age at which this happens and how a child celebrates their rite of passage into adolescence depends entirely on where they live and what culture they grow up in (Nuñez & Pfeffer, 2016). To Diné people, this transition is referred to as Kinaaldá, which is also the name of the ceremony that is performed. This coming-of-age ceremony marks a crucial turning point in one's life and calls for celebration.

At the time of publication of Frisbie's (1967) book *Kinaaldá: A Study of the Navaho Girl's Puberty Ceremony*, only 42 accounts of the ceremony were available. To date, there are many more accounts, including my own. Being a Navajo woman and having gone through the rite of passage myself, this analytical research will focus on the Navajo version of the Kinaaldá.

Lee (2020) referenced Wyman and Kluckhohn, who wrote in 1938 that "the Kinaaldá is classified as one special rite" and "is viewed as part of the Blessing Way Ceremony (Hózhójí)" (p. 9). Additionally, Lee (2020) referenced Frank Mitchell in stating that "one of the main things that we, Navaho, have is the Blessing Way Ceremony in which the Kinaaldá is included" and that the Kinaaldá is, for him, the most important Navaho ceremony. Other singers have said that the Blessing Way actually "began with the Kinaaldá" (p. 9). It is important to note that "being part of the Blessing Way complex, the Kinaaldá is prophylactic, rather than curative; it ushers the girl to society, invokes positive blessings on her, ensures her health, prosperity, and well-being, and protects her from potential misfortune" (Frisbie, 1967, p. 9). It is also important to note:

> Kinaaldá is built on procedures that derive from the Blessing Way ceremony (Hózhójí). For example, all the songs are Hózhójí, or Blessing Way songs. There are however, important differences between Hózhójí and Kinaaldá. The ceremonies differ in length, bathing rituals, type of prayers, manner of applying corn pollen, racing (running), making a corncake, manner of obtaining the yucca root, ritual of orienting the ceremonial basket, ownership of property which may be displayed, and the goods with which the singer is paid. (Frisbie, 1967, p. 10).

Frisbie (1967) brought forth the myth that the Kinaaldá is rationalized around. He wrote, "Like all Navaho ceremonies, the Kinaaldá is rationalized by myths which present the legendary origin of the ritual and its transmission to mankind. The myth mentioning the origin of the puberty ceremony is usually included in the Creation Story" (p. 10). Lee (2020) stated that "during the time of the Kinaaldá, the girl has all the power of Changing Woman and a woman is

the embodiment of Changing Woman and the values exemplified by her" (p. 4). Again, "Changing Woman is the chief deity associated with the ceremony" (Lee, 2020, p. 9).

Roessel (1981) remarked:

> Kinaaldá is a puberty ceremony developed by the Holy People in response to the beautiful and significant maturity change in the life of Changing Woman. It was looked upon by the Holy People as a time of pride and happiness because now she was a woman. (p. 38)

He went on to say that

> a major part of the Kinaaldá is the foundation in Hózhójí (Blessing Way); the Puberty Ceremony was based upon and reflected Blessing Way. Using this foundation ceremony, the Holy People taught the Navajos; and it became the backbone to all Navajo life and the one ceremony that most nearly reflects the Holy People-the one which was the richest gift the Holy People ever gave the Navajos and the rock upon which Navajo life and culture was built. (p. 38)

To have a true understanding and essence of the Kinaaldá, one needs to know the myth that surrounds it. Frisbie (1967) includes the story of "The Kinaaldá and Its Myth" by Frank Mitchell. The story consists of a description of three Kinaaldá: the original ceremony done for Changing Woman and the two puberty ceremonies of the first girl born to the Navaho after their creation by Changing Woman.

Over the years, the Navajo language has evolved tremendously. For respect to the researcher, I include the story as it was written; nothing has been changed.

**The Kinaaldá and Its Myth**
**Frank Mitchell's Kinaaldá Myth (1963)**

> I am going to tell the story I know about the beginning of the Kinaaldá ceremony, its purpose, and why such things were laid down for the people.
>
> *Kinaaldá of Changing Woman*
>
> It was a long time ago that Changing Woman had her Kinaaldá. She made herself become Kinaaldá. This happened after the creation of the Earth People. The ceremony was started so women would be able to have children and the human race would be able to multiply. To do this. women had to have relations with men.

The Kinaaldá was created to make it holy and effective, as the Holy People wanted it to be. They called many meetings to discuss how they should do this ceremony.

In the beginning. there was fog at the top of Blanca Peak. After four days, the fog covered everything down to the base. Coyote, of course, went there to find out what was happening. When he went running over there, he saw a baby floating on the lake which was at the top of Blanca Peak. He wanted to pick up the baby and bring it back, but he was not able to. So, he came back and reported it to Hashch'ehooghan (Hogan God). Hashch'ehooghan went over there and could not get it either. Then Talking God went there, got the baby out of the lake, and brought it to the top of Gobernador Knob.

The one who was picked up as a new baby was Esdzaanádleehé (Changing Woman). She was taken home to be raised. In four days, she grew up and became Kinaaldá. When this happened, they decided to have a ceremony for her.

At this time, the Holy People were living on the earth. They came to her ceremony. and many of them sang songs for her. They did this so that she would be holy and so she could have children who would be human beings with enough sense to think for themselves and a language with which to understand each other. The first Kinaaldá took place at the rim of the Emergence Place in the First Woman's home. All kinds of Holy People were there. The first time that Changing Woman had it, they used the original Chief Hogan Songs. The second time, they used the Hogan Songs which belonged to Talking God.

The first ceremony took place at Ch'ool'i'i (Gobernador Knob); this Is a place that is now on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation. When Changing Woman became Kinaaldá, Salt Woman, who was the first White Shell Woman gave her own name, "White Shell Woman". She dressed her in white shell clothes. Changing Woman was also painted with white shell; that is why she was called "White Shell Woman".

The Kinaaldá started when White Shell Woman first menstruated. It is still done the same way today. At her first ceremony, White Shell Woman ran around the turquoise that was in the east. That is why the Kinaaldá today wears turquoise. During her second ceremony, she started from the west, where there was white shell. The second menstruation was connected with a white shell.

Nine days after that, Changing Woman gave birth to Naaghee'neezghani (Monster Slayer) and to bajishchini (Born for Water), twin boys. These two were put on earth so that all the monsters which were eating the human beings would be killed. They rid the earth of all these monsters; that is why they were called Holy People. As soon as they had done this, their mother, Changing Woman, who was then living at Gobernador Knob, left and went to her home in the west, where she lives today.

After she moved to her home in the west, she created the Navaho people. When she had done this. she told these human beings to go to their original home. which was the Navaho country. Before they left, she said, "After this, all the girls born to you will have periods at certain times when they become women. When the time comes, you must set a day and fix the girl up to be Kinaaldá; you must have these songs sung and do whatever else needs to be done at that time. After this period. a girl is a woman and will start having children."

She also told the people to make a round cake representing Mother Earth during the Kinaaldá. She said that this cake should be given to the singers who helped with the singing during the ceremony. She told the people how to make the cake; one of the things that she mentioned was, that the cornhusks were to be placed in the east. south. west. north (in the four directions), and in the center of the pit.

That is what Esdzaanadleehe told the people she made in the west. She told them to go to their own country and do this.

When Esdzaanadleehe created the people in the west, she made four groups. These were the four original clans of the Navaho people: Todichi'iini, Bitter Water Clan; Kiiya'aani, Tall House Clan; To'ahani, Short Distance to Water Clan; and Hashtli'istni, Mud Clan. They were told to go to their own country. When the four clans were created by Esdzaanadleehe, pairs, male and female, were made to each clan. They were ordered to be man and wife so there would be more children. The first child that was born was a girl.

When the people were ready to leave, Esdzaanadleehe said. "You must go right back to my first home (Gobernador Knob). There is a cornfield there by the name of Da'ak'eh jigishi (Where One Gazes on a Cornfield). That field is mine; when you go back, you are to settle there and let it be yours."

*The First Kinaaldá of the First Girl Born on Earth*

These people did what Esdzaanadleehe told them to do; they went to Gobernador Knob to the cornfield and settled there. They were living there when the first-born girl became Kinaaldá. That was where the first Kinaaldá, which was directed by Esdzaanadleehe, took place. She came there supernaturally and directed the making of the cake.

The only songs that have come down to this day from the first ceremony over that girl without being changed are the Hogan Songs which were sung by the Holy People who were there. After these songs, the Holy People sang others about fabrics, jewels, journeys, mountains, and other things they happened to have in their possession.

When this girl was being prepared for her Kinaaldá, Esdzaanadleehe directed how she was to be fixed. Of course, Esdzaanadleehe had gone through the same things when she had hers for the first time, and she did the same things for the first-born girl. She combed her hair, and fixed it in a ponytail. and dressed her in her ceremonial clothes.

After these things had been done, the girl lay on her stomach, and she was molded and pressed so she would have a good figure. When she got up, she ran to the east for her first run. At that time, just as now, anyone could run with her. When she returned from her first run, she started grinding corn for the cake. The people were told to shell the corn, winnow it, bring it in, and start grinding. Esdzaanadleehe said, "For two full days, the girl shall do this grinding." The first-born girl spent all her time grinding.

On the third day, they started preparing the mush for the cake. The first thing they were told to do was to dig a pit, build a fire in it, and let it get hot. They kept the fire going all day long, so the pit was hot when the mush was ready. Dry

cornmeal was stirred into the hot water. Then they rubbed the mixture between their hands to get the lumps out of the mush. Late in the afternoon, at sundown, all of the mush was ready to be taken out to the pit.

They cleaned all the ashes and charcoal from the pit. The four cornhusks were put down to the east, south, west, and north. A middle piece was then put on. After this had been done, they started to pour the mush in. Cornhusks were put down at the same time so that no mush would get on the bare earth. They started from the center and worked out to the edges of the pit; then they went up the sides, busily putting husks down all the time. When all the mush. had been poured in, the girl stood with a basket of cornmeal in the east and tossed a pinch. of cornmeal to the east, to the west, and back to the east, and then to the south, to the north, and back to the south. Then she took a handful of cornmeal and sprinkled it in a circle around the pit.

After she had done these things, anyone who wanted to was allowed to take a pinch of cornmeal and do what she had done while praying for good luck, plenty, good vegetation, and no hunger, hardships, or suffering. When this had been done, husks were placed, starting from the edge of the pit and going into the center. Then the gap was closed and husks were put in the center as had been done earlier. The pit was covered with more husks and then with dirt. That is the way they were told to do it in the beginning, and that is how they have been doing it since.

The cake was covered with a thin layer of dirt because the mush was too soft to have any weight put on it in the beginning; twigs and little pieces of wood. were used until the mush had settled and hardened. Then more dirt was put on, and a big fire was built. The fire was kept going all night, so the cake would cook. In the evening, the original Chief Hogan Songs were sung; then the Singing was turned over to the people. After all these songs, at that time, the Twelve Word Songs were not sung. The cake was cut up and given to the singers. The last thing that the people did after cutting the cake was to take four pinches of the cake from the four directions, east, south, west, and north. These pinches were buried in the center of the pit where the cake had been baked. They offered these to Mother Earth, who produces vegetation and makes it possible to grow corn. This was done to say thanks to the Earth. It is done today. After this, the people ate. Lots of prayers were offered for good luck and good life.

That is what happened at the first ceremony. From then on, these things have been carried on by the Navaho. When a girl has her period, she becomes Kinaaldá and has the ceremony.

In the days when the first girl born on earth had her ceremony, the Holy People were still on the earth. Sometimes they would come around and check on the Earth People to see if they were following the rules laid down for them. As time passed. they realized that the Earth People were getting careless about these things. When this happened, Esdzaanadleehe decided to take two young boys of the To'ahani Clan, the 'original clan made by Esdzaanadleehe in the west, to her home in the west. There she taught them about everything in the past, present, and future.

The boys were given the power to make Blessing Way Songs. They became good at doing this. It was at this time that the Blessing Way Ceremony

> was started. The Blessing Way Ceremony concerns everything good for the people to live by.
>
> *The Second Kinaaldá of the First Girl Born on Earth*
>
> The next time they had Kinaaldá, after the first one, they only made a few changes in what they had done before. Because it was the second Kinaaldá, the Hogan Songs of Talking God were sung. When evening came, Talking God came there for a special reason: to sing his Hogan Songs. He sang twelve songs in the first group, twelve in the second, and then one long one. After he sang his songs, he turned the singing over to the rest of the people. During that ceremony, when dawn appeared in the east, the two boys, who by that time had returned to the earth, sang the Dawn Songs for the first time. Since then, these songs have always been sung at dawn. At dawn, the girl ran to the east again, as she had done the first time. Four songs were sung for the racing. The people also added the Twelve Word Songs at this time.
>
> After that ceremony, the Holy People and Earth People talked. The Holy People told the Earth People that they would now go away. The Holy People said that some of them would go into the mountains, the rocks, the water, the mountain ranges, and all the sacred places. They said, "But that does not mean that we will not see what is going on with you, because we will. You will be in our sight every day. If you keep the things holy that you have been told about, you will have a long, good life on earth. If you do not, then hardships and evil will come to you, and it will be your own fault for not following these things. We Holy People will not see each other again because we are going to different places to live, out of your sight."
>
> One of the things we are to observe is the Blessing Way Ceremony. The Kinaaldá is included in this. We keep it the way it was when it was started in the beginning so that it will always be sacred and holy.
>
> You asked me for the story of the Kinaaldá. This is it. I have told you what I know and what I have learned from others. I cannot tell you anything that I do not know (Frisbie, 1967, pp. 11-15).

Today, most girls continue the practice of the Kinaaldá but not all. Over time, from 1967 to 2010, the Kinaaldá has changed in some procedural practices but its purpose and intent remain. In the most simplistic procedural view, Carey (2010b) explained what happens in the ceremony from day one to day four. I found Carey's description of these days the most clear, straightforward, and relative to my own Kinaaldá. Again, with respect to author, I include Carey's (2010b) writing verbatim.

> On the first morning following the moment of this change in life the girl bathes and dresses in her finest clothes. Later she stretches herself face downward on a blanket

> just outside the Hogan, with her head toward the door. A sister, aunt, or other female relation, if any happen to be close at hand, or if not, a male relative other than her father, then proceeds symbolically to remold her. Her arms and legs are straightened, her joints smoothed, and muscles pressed to make her truly shapely. After that the most industrious and energetic of the comely women in the immediate neighborhood is called in to dress the girl's hair in a particular form of knot and wrap it with deerskin strings, called tsklólh. Should there be any babies or little tots about the home, the girl goes to them, and, placing a hand under each ear, successively lifts them by the neck, to make them grow faster. Then she darts off toward the east, running out for about a quarter of a mile and back. This she does each morning until after the public ceremony. By so doing she is assured of continuing strong, lithe, and active throughout womanhood. The four days preceding the night of the ceremony are days of abstinence; only such foods as mush and bread made from corn may be eaten, nor may they contain any salt. To indulge in viands of a richer nature would be to invite laziness and an ugly form at a comparatively early age. The girl must also refrain from scratching her head or body, for marks made by her nails during this period would surely become ill-looking scars. All the women folk in the Hogan begin grinding corn on the first day and continue at irregular intervals until the night of the third, when the meal is mixed into batter for a large corn-cake, which the mother bakes in a sort of bean-hole outside the Hogan. The ceremony proper consists of little more than songs. A medicine-man is called upon to take charge, being compensated for his services with blankets, robes, grain, or other articles of value. Friends and neighbors having been notified and they assemble at the girl's Hogan fairly early in the evening. When dusk has settled, the medicine-man begins his songs, singing first the twelve 'Hogan songs' of the Bahózhonchi. After he has finished, anyone present who so desires may sing songs taken from the ritual of the same order. This motley singing and hilarity continue until well toward sunrise, when the mother brings in a bowl of yucca suds and washes the girl's hair. Her head and hair are dried with corn-meal, after which the girl takes her last run toward the east, this time followed by many young children, symbolically attesting that she will be a kind mother, whom her children will always follow. The hatál, or medicine singer, during her absence sings eight songs, generally termed the Racing songs. On her return the great corn-cake is brought in, cut, and divided among the assemblage, when all disperse, and the girl may once more loosen her hair and partake of any food she pleases. (pp. 3–6)

## GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership is the fundamental goal of Girl Scouts. Founder Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low recognized that developing girls' leadership skills was critical to ensuring they could be the change-makers of the future. But even if girls develop leadership skills, Low realized that traditional models of leadership were essentially top-down and would not necessarily be the most

effective or engaging for girls and women (GSUSA, 2008). The Girl Scout's own research confirmed Low's insight that a complex world required a collaborative leader—one who values diversity, inclusion, and teaming together—to bring about sustainable change. That is also the type of leadership that girls value most and want to become involved in, according to one of the findings in the 2016 GSIS. Moreover, when girls think of leadership, they think of someone who has a solid sense of self, displays strong ethical behavior, brings people together, and works collaboratively. That Girl Scouts research became the foundation for the organization's leadership model released in 2016, which became known as the Girl Scouts Leadership Experience Program (GSUSA, 2016). The GSLEP (GSUSA, 2016) consists of the attitudes, skills, and behaviors essential to effective leadership: strong sense of self, positive values, challenge seeking, healthy relationships, and community problem solving.

Via the Girl Scout national curriculum, girls learn about themselves and their values and stretch to seek and meet challenges beyond what they might do in other settings. They also learn to connect with friends, family, and community to create positive relationships and band together on issues of importance to them. Girls are challenged to look and think critically at the world around them and consider how they can best address significant problems they are passionate about solving (GSUSA, 2008). The first reason I chose the GSUSA program for this research was to create a sense of positive self-identity and to portray cultural pride within each girl.

The GSLEP complements school learning in fun, interactive, and age-appropriate ways, allowing girls to develop a positive sense of self, build healthy relationships and strong values, engage in sustainable community service opportunities, and seek out and deal with challenges (GSRI, 2017a).

## GIRL SCOUT: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Another reason I chose the GSUSA program as a framework for this research was that when I looked at the values and goals of the Girl Scouts, it was evident that there was a correlation between the format, makeup, and structure to that of social and emotional learning (SEL), which speaks to the holistic well-being and positive balance needed in life. At an early age, such as that of elementary school youth, this is huge. The SEL approach integrates competence promotion and youth development frameworks for reducing risk factors and fostering protective mechanisms for positive adjustment (Benson, 2006; Catalano et al., 2002; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Weissberg et al., 2003).

Benson (2006) pointed out that SEL is the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively. The proximal goals of SEL programs are to foster the development of five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2005). Those competencies, in turn, provide a foundation for children to effectively engage and respond to school and academic performance, as reflected in positive social behaviors, fewer conduct problems, and less emotional distress. Over time, mastering SEL competencies results in a developmental progression that leads to a shift from being predominantly controlled by external factors to acting increasingly in accord with internalized beliefs and values, caring and concern for others, making good decisions, and taking responsibility for one’s choices and behaviors (Bear & Watkins, 2006).

During the past dozen years, there have been many informative research syntheses of school-based prevention and promotion programming. Promotion programming allows a Girl Scout to practice different skills, explore her potential, take on leadership positions—and even feel allowed to fail, dust herself off, get up, and try again. Those reviews typically included some school-based, universal SEL program evaluations along with an array of other interventions that targeted the following outcomes: positive affect, positive self-esteem, positive academic performance, and positive SEL. Although the reports differed substantially in terms of which intervention strategies, student populations, and behavioral outcomes were examined, they shared a similar conclusion—that universal school-based interventions generally are effective. However, no review to date has focused exclusively on SEL programs to examine their impact across diverse student outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011).

## GIRL SCOUTS: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The 2017 *State of the Girls Report* (GSRI, 2017) stated the Girl Scouts are "poised to help bridge the gap for girls in low-income families so that all girls may live healthy and happy lives" (p. 4). However, as a unique risk, "more girls are living in poverty and low-income households today than 10 years ago" (p. 4). This is significant because "low social economic status (SES) girls face considerable challenges that affect their health, happiness, and achievement. Low-SES girls are more likely to be of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latina, and American Indian descent" (p. 4).

To increase health literacy, self-management, and cultural competency in health care and public health settings, the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, in partnership with Diné cultural experts, philosophers, and traditional healers, has developed the Navajo Wellness Model curriculum. It is titled "A Journey with Wellness and Healthy Lifestyle Guided by the Journey of

the Sun" (Nelson, 2018). The curriculum integrates the traditional ways of Navajo teachings into how one approaches daily health: through exercise, healthy eating, and maintaining a balance in all aspects of life and in accordance with the natural daily cycles of dawn, day, evening, and nighttime. The curriculum is designed to increase awareness, knowledge, and understanding among health care and public health providers of the core Navajo teachings about personal and family health, healthy communities, and a healthy environment. The core teachings emphasize four domains of health and wellness from the Navajo perspective: self-identity, self-respect, self-care, and resiliency. My vision is to use Diné traditional teachings and Diné roots as a foundation for Diné people to be empowered (Nelson, 2018).

## GIRL SCOUT: COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Girl-led activities are the secret sauce of Girl Scouting, and it's easy to see why. When girls step up and take ownership of their decisions, they grow into confident leaders who can make informed and empowered decisions—a valuable skill they can carry throughout their lives (GSUSA, 2020). A Girl Scout on the Navajo reservation would work with the Diné Community Development Corporation, Inc. (DCDC). DCDC is dedicated to building sustainable, self-sufficient, independent, sovereign Navajo Nation rural communities through the efficient allocation, concentration, and preservation of Native American resources (DCDC, 2020).

## GIRL SCOUT: FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

As Cajete (2015) stated, "communities reform around the shared values of participation, communication, commitment, collaboration, and trust. Participants use a community process held together by conscious choice, shared responsibility, mutual acceptance, accountability, respect, reciprocity, and demonstrated effectiveness" (p. 233). A National Education Association (NEA) Education Policy and Practice Department policy brief titled "Parent, Family,

Community Involvement in Education" quotes the popular proverb *It takes a village to raise a child* and offers a clear message:

> the entire community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of its young people. In addition to the vital role that parents and family members play in a child's education, the broader community too has a responsibility to assure high-quality education for all students. (p. 1)

Epstein's (1992) framework on involvement identified and explained the significance of the following key areas of building connections between families, communities, and schools.

- Parenting: Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children.
- Communicating: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress. Create two-way communication channels between school and home that are effective and reliable.
- Volunteering: Improve recruitment and training to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations. Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school.
- Collaborating with the community: Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities. (p. 2)

## GIRL SCOUT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The GSRI, formed in 2000, is a center for research and public policy information on the healthy development of girls. Its main goal is to elevate the voices of girls and understand the key issues that affect their lives (GSRI, 2017). As its 100th anniversary approaches, the Girl

Scout movement aims to "create a completely new approach for what girls do in Girl Scouting, how they do it, and how they will benefit," recognizing that "social, cultural, and economic shifts that once took shape over a generation or more are now rapid and often have a global impact" (GSUSA, 2008, p. 9). Today, the Girl Scout organization "is, as it always has been, the organization best positioned to offer girls the tools they need to be successful leaders now and throughout their lives" (GSUSA, 2008, p. 9).

Girl Scouts is the world's most successful organization dedicated to creating girl leaders, with 3.2 million active members and more than 59 million alumnae. Since its inception in 1912, Girl Scouting has enabled women to explore new fields of knowledge, learn new valuable skills, and develop strong core values. As of the 2017 GSRI report, the Girl Scout organization had shaped the lives of the majority of the nation's female executives, and 60% of women in the U.S. Congress. The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the world's largest business and financial literacy program for girls, generating revenues of $790 million in 2018 (GSRI, 2020).

Because my analysis is specific to the Diné, I have focused on the published research, studies, and reports that address on diverse-minority populations. Significant information can be found in *The Resilience Factor: A Key to Leadership in African American and Hispanic Girls* (Chavez, 2011); *The State of Girls: Unfinished Business* (GSRI, 2013); *The State of Girls: Thriving or Surviving* (GSRI, 2014); and *State of Girls 2017: Emerging Truths and Troubling Trends* (GSRI, 2017). These GSRI publications are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Girl Scout Research Institute Publications*, 2011–2017

| Author | Origin | Purpose | Type of Source | Target Population | Major Themes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Girl Scout Research** | Resilience Factor: A | 1. As an extension of *Change It Up!* | Discussion | Youth age girls 8-17 of two | 1. Youth-serving organizations, |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Institute Paula Fleshman Judy Schoenberg** | Key to Leadership in African American & Hispanic Girls (2011) | *What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership* (2008), the goal was to explore that girls are not a monolithic group and there are differences among girls of diverse racial and ethnical backgrounds (p.4) 2. To explore the question, What are some of these differences and how can they be understood within diverse cultural contexts? (p.4) | | racial/ethnic groups: African Americans/Blacks and Hispanics or Latinos | schools, communities, community institutions, and society at large have great opportunities and potential to develop not only the resilience of African American and Hispanic girls, but also to further develop their leadership skills (p.16) 2. Together with families, supportive adults during and after school, mentors, "other mothers", church and community elders, and other adults, African American and Hispanic youth can develop the resilience and leadership required to take ownership of and participate in their own healthy development (p.16) |
| **Girl Scout Research Institute Judy Schoenberg, Ed.M. Kamala Modi, Ph.D. Kimberlee Salmond, MPP Population Reference Bureau Mark Mather,** | The State of Girls: Unfinished Business (2013) | 1.To stake out key issues and major trends affecting girls' healthy development in the United States (p.7) 2. To have up-to-date, accurate data about the state of girls' physical, social, and psychological well-being (p.7) | Research Studies and Reports | Youth age girls 5-17-year-olds of six racial/ethnic groups: Caucasians/Whites, African Americans/Blacks, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians, and Multiracial | 1. There has been promising development for girls regarding their educational attainment; extracurricular, volunteer, and pro-social activities; reduction of risk behaviors; and connection to the digital world. However, the report also demonstrates that many girls are |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ph.D. Linda Jacobsen, PhD** | | | | | being left behind and as a result face many significant challenges in making successful transitions to adulthood. Girls struggle in their everyday lives at school, at home, and in other social environments-with issues such as relational aggression, bullying, depression, and even suicidal ideation (p.8)<br>2. Not all girls faring the same. In terms of overall well-being, white girls fare much better than black/African American and Hispanic/Latina girls across various indicators. Poverty and lack of resources limit many Hispanic/Latina and black/African American girls from having access to good health care, nutrition, and general wellness; the opportunity to prioritize education; and the chance to explore constructive extracurricular activities. As a result, their overall quality of life is compromised (p.8) |
| **Girl Scout Research Institute Kamala Modi, Ph.D.** | The State of Girls: Thriving or Surviving (2014) | 1.To examine girls' well-being in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each | Research Studies and Reports | Youth age girls of 5-17 years old and of various ethnic/racial | 1. In the United States, where girls live matters. When it comes to well-being, there are differences |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Judy Schoenberg, Ed.M.**<br>**Population Reference Bureau**<br>**Mark Mather, Ph.D.**<br>**Rena Linden** | | state is ranked according to a state index of girls' well-being that relies on five indicators:<br>-Physical health and safety<br>-Economic well-being<br>-Education<br>-Emotional Health<br>-Extracurricular and out-of-school activities (p.2) | | groups, including immigrants. | between girls who live in the north and those who line in the south. Girls generally fare better in the northern states than in the southern states, the latter of which rank the lowest in terms of girls' well-being. Girls living in the Midwest, Northeast, and Mid-Atlantic regions fare the best overall (p.3)<br>2. In considering girls' well-being, the best states in which a girl can live are New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Massachusetts, and Vermont, while the most challenging states are Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma (p.3) |
| **Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI)**<br>**Authors are not listed.**<br>**National and Government Sources** | The State of Girls 2017: Emerging Truths and Troubling Trends (2017) | To focus on national- and state-level trends across key indicators affecting girls' overall health and well-being: economic, physical, and emotional health, education, and extracurricular/out-of-school activities (para.1) | Research Studies and Reports | Youth age girls of 5-17 years old and of various ethnic/racial groups, including immigrants. | 1. Regardless of an increase in high school graduation rates, economic conditions affecting girls in the United States have not fully recovered from the 2007-2009 Great Recession. These conditions are leading to increased emotional and physical distress among girls, with obesity, marijuana use, and low self-esteem on the rise (para.2) |

All the GSRI publications used in this analytical research share the thematic implication that “Girl Scouting does indeed enhance the lives of girls” (GSRI, 2017, p. 1) and express a need “for organizations such as Girl Scouting to become even more attuned to the culture and context in which youth live, and understand how the implementation of programs and advocacy efforts related to those forces” (GSRI, 2017, p. 1). The *State of Girls: Emerging Truths and Troubling Trends* (GSRI, 2017) found that “girls are growing up in a period of rapid demographic, social, and economic change. Since 2007, which marked the beginning of the Great Recession, girls have faced challenges to their health, happiness, and opportunities for success” (p. 1). The *Enhance Study* (GSRI, 2008) showed “that many girls in the U.S. today experience problems with their physical and emotional health; lack access to extracurricular activities that promote positive development; and have lower educational outcomes” (p. 1).

Additionally, the *State of Girls Executive Summary* (GSRI, 2017) summarized that “all girls deserve an even playing field with educational and enrichment opportunities that help them thrive throughout their youth and into adulthood” (p. 14). The summary further stated that “providing girls with leadership experiences for discovering the world around them, connecting to supportive peers and adults, and taking action in the world now and in the future will ensure that all girls will develop to their full potential” (p. 14).

The latest report in the *State of Girls* series, *Thriving or Surviving* (GSRI, 2014), “examined girls’ well-being in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia” (p. 2) and found that “it does matter where girls live” (p. 2). Findings from that report are summarized in Table 3. With the Navajo reservation consisting of parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, data from these states are highlighted. As the researcher, focusing on these states was important because the Navajo reservation consists of these states.

**Table 3**

The State of Girls *State Data for Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah (2014)*

| | Arizona (p.12) | New Mexico (p.68) | Utah (p.96) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total # of Girls | 577,892 girls | 182,206 girls | 306,149 |
| Targeted Population | 5–17-year-olds | 5–17-year-olds | 5–17-year-olds |
| State Ranking | 47th | 48th | 10th |
| Racial & Ethnic Composition | Hispanic/Latina: 43%<br>White: 42%<br>**American Indian/Alaskan Native: 5%**<br>African American: 4%<br>Other Race: 3%<br>Asian/Pacific Islander: 3% | Hispanic/Latina: 59%<br>White: 26%<br>**American Indian/Alaskan Native: 10%**<br>African American: 2%<br>Other Race: 2%<br>Asian/Pacific Islander: 1% | Hispanic/Latina: 17%<br>White: 76%<br>**American Indian/Alaskan Native: 1%**<br>African American: 1%<br>Other Race: 3%<br>Asian/Pacific Islander:3% |
| Well-Being Areas of Focus & Ranking | Physical Health & Safety: 48th<br>Economic Well-Being: 46th<br>Education: 47th<br>Emotional Health: 35th<br>Extracurricular Activities: 47th | Physical Health & Safety: 47th<br>Economic Well-Being: 49th<br>Education: 49th<br>Emotional Health: 26th<br>Extracurricular Activities: 33rd | Physical Health & Safety: 9th<br>Economic Well-Being: 11th<br>Education: 32nd<br>Emotional Health: 3rd<br>Extracurricular Activities: 2nd |
| Poverty % | **Overall: 25%**<br>White: 12%<br>Hispanic/Latina: 36%<br>African American/Black: 30%<br>American Indian/Alaskan Native: 45%<br>Other Race: 22% | **Overall: 28%**<br>White: 13%<br>Hispanic/Latina: 32%<br>American Indian/Alaskan Native: 45% | **Overall: 14%**<br>White: 10%<br>Hispanic/Latina: 30% |
| Girls from Immigrant Families | 28% | 21% | 16% |

## GAPS IN LITERATURE

Though predominately successful for non-Indigenous populations, the Girl Scouts leadership goals are expected to have the same results for all racial and ethnic groups. However,

this has yet to be demonstrated. To date, the literature and published reports regarding these outcomes are limited and scarce, comprising a gap in the literature.

In this study, I addressed gaps in the literature by reporting the results of my investigation of how GSUSA's unique goals can be integrated and infused with the Diné philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá to positively affect and align attention to the cultural diversity within each girl, her family, her school, and her community.

## CONCLUSION

Current literature demonstrates the importance of being culturally relevant and responsive to Indigenous children. Indigenous views of well-being are not based on the Western model of illness and disease; instead, they are holistic and grounded in balance and harmony in human relationships and in the natural and spiritual worlds. Indigenous views require a description of children's well-being that is based on strengths and reflects the web of connections among the child, family, and community; cultural and spiritual practices; and individual health and stability. When working with AI/AN families, well-being indicators need to include meaningful measures that reflect these perspectives when describing the status of children (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008).

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, AND METHODOLOGY

## DAY TWO OF MY KINAALDÁ

Day 2: On this day, I did so much of grinding corn, cleaning the hogan and the main house, working outside, filling all the water barrels, chopping wood, filling the wood boxes insides the hogan and main house, herding sheep, tending to the horses and dogs, helping with cooking, washing dishes, and just being busy. Although this day was not as busy as the first day, it was still a day that I had to continue to show focus, hard work, and perseverance, in all that I did: grinding corn, housework, cooking, and tending to the livestock. My grandmothers, aunties, and mom had always told us children to always work hard and during this time, it was even more important than ever. By doing so, the Holy Beings would see us and bless us with strength, endurance, and perseverance. Among all these duties, there were the three runs that were completed, and I am still determined to work my way to the goal of 10+ miles, by the end of the final day. My older sister and cousins made sure to stay with me and placed a long sagebrush stick into a sagebrush bush to mark the last place I turned around. It wasn't much of a gain, but I will be looking to achieving my goal on the final run. (Belone, 2022)

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an overview of my philosophy and paradigm and is followed by a discussion of the methodological approach best suited to my research questions. It supports and accounts for the positioning of my research within an interpretive paradigm, as well as the use of a qualitative research design. The following sections shed light on the suitability of my research method and explain the basis for using semi-structured interviews for the data collection. I then explain my data analysis techniques and validity and reliability factors, and the chapter

concludes with an examination of ethical and cultural considerations. Lastly, my philosophy stems from the cultural and traditional upbringing that I received as a young girl.

## RESEARCHER'S PHILOSOPHY AND PARADIGM

My philosophy of leadership is (a) to take responsibility for the successes and the failures of the school where I am employed; (b) to put the needs of others (students and families) before my own; (c) to advocate for school improvement by addressing critical needs; (d) to be skilled in building relationships with people; (e) to find common ground and build trust; (f) to be supportive; (g) to be prepared to deal with a variety of emotions; (h) to maintain a balance between tough love and earned praise; (i) to be fair and consistent; (j) to be organized and prepared; (k) to be an excellent listener; and (l) to be a visionary. My philosophy of education and building cohesiveness and shared leadership adheres to the following statement by Hughes and Pickeral (2013): "Schools need to recognize and develop leadership among many different kinds of individuals representing all education stakeholders to effectively model and develop a school climate that engages adults and students in a shared mission that improves student development" (p. 3).

Early in my doctoral course work, I took a leadership quiz that indicated I am considered to be a *steward.* Stewards are the rocks of an organization (Block, 1993). Block's definition of stewards and the Diné legends of clans signify that I am dependable, loyal, and helpful and that I provide a stabilizing and calming force for employees; that I value rules, process, and cooperation; that I believe that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link and I move only as fast as the entire chain will allow; that I take care to help those who struggle (Twin Rocks Trading Post, 2019); and that I understand and am cognizant of comparing and analyzing the

differences between Navajos and Eurocentric peoples so that each people can live in peace and comfort with each other.

For a steward, the act of promoting/purpose in schooling offers one an opportunity to be part of a well-oiled machine providing security, consistency, and cohesion. Stewards drive the change that is needed to improve; a school might not offer great opportunities for individual glory, but the devoted and steady educational process is critical to the success of the school's vision and student body. Vision serves as a source of energy that drives all decisions related to the welfare and improved education of a school's student body and staff. It is the force that shapes the practices within the school. Without a vision, our teaching and learning activities will not contribute to significant student learning, and our efforts will be less meaningful. The vision for helping students to achieve academic excellence should be shared by all of a school's stakeholders. Stewards often are found in mission-critical areas of an organization and are relied upon by leaders in other divisions (Owings, 2003). According to Block (1993), that is great for the organization in which a steward participates.

Block (1993) also noted that:

> We cannot be leaders without followers, and we cannot be good parents unless we have good children. This dependent mind-set justifies and rationalizes patriarchy and keeps it breathing. If we were not looking so hard for leadership, others would be unable to claim sovereignty over us. Our search for great bosses comes not from a desire to be watched and directed but rather from our belief that clear authority relationships are the antidote to crisis and ultimately the answer to chaos. (p. 19)

With empowerment there is a result of being involved, having enhanced leadership skills, and strengthening capabilities among a team. Moreover, as Block (1993) stated,

> "Empowerment embodies the belief that the answer to the latest crisis lies within each of us, and therefore we will all buckle up for adventure. Empowerment bets that people at our own level or below will know best how to organize and innovate, make a dollar, serve a customer, get it right the first time, or invent an alternate future. We know that a

> democracy is a political system designed not for efficiency but as a hedge against the abuse of power. Empowerment is our willingness to bring this value into the workplace. It is our willingness to claim our autonomy and commit ourselves to making the organization work well, with or without the sponsorship of those above us. This requires a belief that my safety and my freedom are in my own hands. No easy task—therefore the adventure. (p. 19)

The act of stewardship by leaders in an organization can be invaluable, and achieving is empowerment.

From my perspective as a Diné, researcher, and educational leader, I feel that my goals in life align to the 16 pillars of Secatero's (2015) Indigenous well-being model in leadership and wellness and I want to share these goals with the young Diné girls. Within each of the 16 pillars, various characteristics explain and demonstrate the cultural relevance of lived experiences that I and other Diné family have had. It is these lived experiences and characteristics that are examples of how living a life of Hózhó guides strong leaders, educators, and the Diné people. They have achieved many successes. Alongside the viewpoints and beliefs of the Indigenous authors that I reference and quote in this study, I envision Diné girls experiencing life from the past and the present and setting goals for their future while also developing and feeling a sense of pride in being Diné and a leader of stewardship.

## RESEARCHER'S POSITIONALITY

As a Diné woman, grandmother, aunt, niece, sister, granddaughter, and daughter, my identity shapes me as a person. I am Kiyaa'áanii (Towering House People), born for Hashtl'ishnii (Mud People), my maternal grandparents are Totsohnii (Big Water People), and my paternal grandparents are To'dich'ii'nii (Bitter Water People). Each area of my clan holds a unique cultural representation of my identity and a true representation of what Changing Woman had envisioned and what guides my mission as an Indigenous educator and leader: a respected leader, one who guides and teaches (Kiiyaa'aanii); a skilled, naturally gifted, and creative person

(Hashtl'ishnii & Totsohnii); a philosopher and an educator, sharing my knowledge with others (Todich'iinii; NativeStudy.com, 2002).

## SITE OF STUDY

Originally, this study was to take place on the Northern Agency of the Navajo reservation. However, due to the COIVD-19 pandemic and all the CDC guidelines and restrictions, this was not feasible. To continue with the research, I went from a full 6-week qualitative, narrative study that involved a culturally relevant and responsive instructional design within a rural school to a straightforward qualitative comparative and critical analysis study that involved participants who resided off the Navajo reservation as well as published literature, studies, and research. The analysis continued to emphasize the theories, frameworks, philosophies, and models of Vygotsky, Hózhó, the Kinaaldá, Secatero's Indigenous well-being model, narrative stories, cultural relevancy, cultural responsiveness, and the GSUSA.

## MODE OF INQUIRY AND METHODOLOGY

In accordance with Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) description of qualitative research, this qualitative research was multimethod-focused, meaning it involved an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter. As the researcher, I took into consideration the participants' natural settings and attempted to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings the participants brought to them. The mode of inquiry involved the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting non-numerical data, such as lived experiences and interpretations of the Navajo language. This inquiry was used to understand how participants subjectively perceived and gave meaning to their personal experiences.

Qualitative data were defined as non-numerical data, or the items of the in-depth interviews and audio recordings. In-depth interviews were conducted by Zoom, phone call, or

email and were then analyzed using thematic analysis. Additional data were collected through empirical materials, ranging from the interviews to the analysis of published literature, artifacts, documents, and cultural records, to the use of visual materials or personal experiences.

The aim of this qualitative research was to understand the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures as nearly as possible to the way participants feel it or live it. Thus, people and groups were studied in their natural settings.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative comparative analysis was the methodology implemented to explicitly align the Diné philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá ceremony to GSUSA leadership goals in such a way as to illuminate Indigenous leadership, rekindling of self-identity, and revitalizing the Diné language. Recognizing and supporting cultural diversity, Indigenous self-identity, leadership, Native language, and community relations is an approach that promotes Indigenous youth as individuals and focuses on how they are socialized into a culture or society. In addition to the above goals, there is a promotion of multiculturalism through the structure of experiential delivery and seeing learning as beneficial and effective to Diné girls. Qualitative techniques were a powerful tool for understanding the significant need for the continuity and sustainability of culturally relevant and responsive programs within the Navajo social setting. In particular, these techniques included the use of semi-structured interviews derived from questioning and thematic comparative analysis of published literature, artifacts, documents, and cultural records.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic constraints, a comparative analysis was ideal for exploring perceptions of Indigenous literature, authors, and participants with the cultural and traditional knowledge of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá ceremony. A qualitative comparative analysis study as proposed by Bryman (2008) can give insight into the experience of everyday

organizational life. As time and financial resources for the current study were restricted, employing semi-structured interviews was the most feasible option. As suggested by Holdaway (2000), semi-structured interviews facilitate the ability to compare and contrast individual's experiences and to interpret rich description. Qualitative design can give meaning to data those previous quantitative techniques have failed to address.

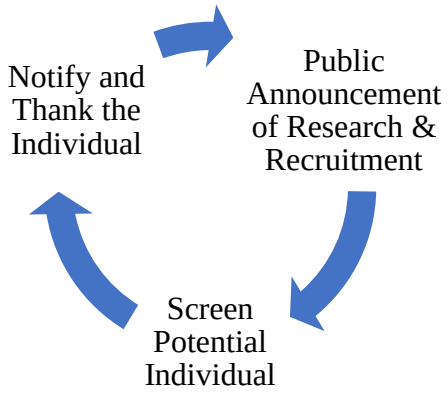
## METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Within this study, several types of participants were sought: three Diné language and culture teachers, and three Traditional Healer, Medicine Man, Medicine Woman, and/or Diné Specialists. Additional and more specific criteria to determine these participants were used during the screening process. The timeframe for recruitment was set at 6 weeks. If needed, this time frame could be extended to 8 weeks.

In the data collection, two main processes could occur one for person(s) who did not meet the inclusion criteria (see Figure 2) and one for those who did (see Figure 3). For those who did not meet inclusion criteria, the process ended at step 3; for those who did, the process continued into an additional three steps.

**Figure 2**

*Process for Person(s) Who Did Not Meet Inclusion Criteria*

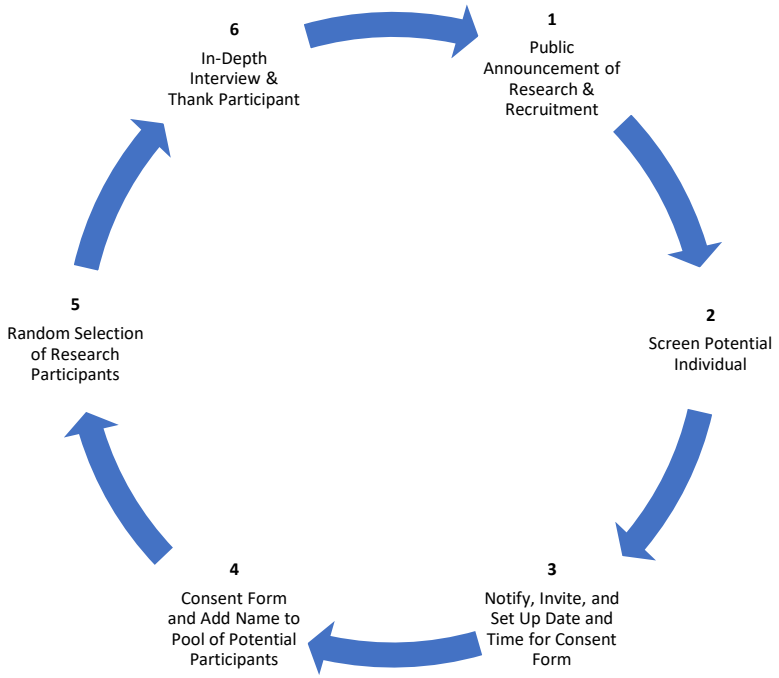


First, a public announcement was shared on several social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and off-reservation school webpages. In doing so, this method reached out to potential participants who may have worked on the Navajo reservation but resided off the reservation. It was also a goal to contact family members or Navajo members who may have known of a potential medicine man/medicine woman, traditional specialist, or healer. The public announcement information was also emailed to principals of off-reservation schools so it could be shared with their Navajo language teachers and specialists.

Second, potential participants were screened to see if the more specific criteria were met. If criteria were not met, there was only one final step. The third and final step involved a brief conversation with the person(s) to thank them for their interest and time and to ask if they could share the research study information with anyone that they believe to be a potential participant.

**Figure 3**

*Process for Person(s) Who Met Inclusion Criteria*



For person(s) who met the inclusion criteria, the process took a different route at with step 3. In step 3, qualified person(s) was notified and invited to participate in a Zoom meeting or phone call or to have the consent form emailed to them. If the participant chose a Zoom meeting or a phone call, a date and time was set. For those who chose email, the consent form was sent immediately with a 1-week deadline to return it. Once the consent form was returned, the individual's name was added to the pool of participants. With the goal of recruiting six or more potential participants, at the end of the 6- to 8-week recruitment time frame, all names were entered into the online random selection app named Picker Wheel (www.pickerwheel.com). Picker Wheel is a fast and easy random picker comprised of only three steps: insert inputs, spin the wheel, and get the result. It has many features which make decisions random and non-biased. The goal was to identify three final Diné language and culture teachers, and three Traditional Healer, Medicine Man, Medicine Woman, and/or Diné Specialists. Once the participants had been selected, they were notified and given a date and time for a Zoom meeting that would be the in-depth, 60-minute interview. At the conclusion of the interview, each participant was thanked for his/her time and participation.

There was a possibility that a participant's first language was Navajo rather than English. In the event that this occurred, an interpreter was available during the interviews. The reason for this was that although I am of the Navajo tribe and fully understand the Navajo language, I am not fully fluent with speaking it. When speaking Navajo, I am able to have a basic conversation, ask basic information, and give basic directions. When it comes to in-depth conversations, elaborating, and discussions, I have trouble. Each Zoom meeting was recorded to allow accurate and verbatim transcribing.

As previously discussed, the data collection instrument employed in this research was semi-structured interviews. These were informed by Morgan's (2017) research, which critically examined the perception and understandings of culturally responsive practices carried out by secondary school leaders in a low-decile, multiethnic school setting in New Zealand. This approach enabled the researcher to focus on two topic areas: culturally responsive practices and culturally responsive leadership. This also allowed participants to discuss other topics of importance, initiated by the researcher probing to discover unanticipated information.

## SAMPLING

The sampling method applied to undertake this research was purposive sampling (Gray et al., 2007). This involved selecting participants whose main credential was their experiential relevance to the study. As claimed by Tilly (1989), individualizing comparison contrasts "a small number of cases in order to grasp the peculiarities of each case" (p. 82). This involves describing fully the characteristics or features of each case being studied. This helps to broaden our knowledge and gives us the insight to see cases in-depth. Thus, it was essential to include participants' views in this study. Consequently, three Diné language and culture teachers and three traditional healers, medicine men, medicine women, and/or Diné specialists were selected. Although qualitative research usually varies in sample size, this research comprises a smaller sample. I found this sample size was necessary to understand a variety of experiences; furthermore, I found each participant yielded unique responses. My access to teachers, traditional healers, medicine men, medicine women, and Diné specialists proved to be less troublesome with those who lived on the Navajo reservation than off it. I accessed the former via acquaintances and colleagues. To gain trust of participants, I sent the consent form (see Appendices 1 and 2) and interview questions (see Appendices 3 and 4) in the form of an email to

give clear information about the study and interview. As these participant(s) had busy schedules, interviews were conducted in accordance with their availability, as this enhanced their accessibility. In contrast, some interviews were conducted through phone calls.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, other data sources were artifacts, published literature, documents, and research studies. While studying about the beliefs, behaviors, and diversity of Western and Navajo cultures, collecting documents that fell within the public sphere was of key importance. These documents included articles, documentaries, educational material, and books that may have been produced by or used by members of the Diné culture or in the Diné social setting. A criterion that was of key importance was that artifacts, documents, and literature had to have been published in the last 15 years. Although the last 15 years of publication were my main focus, I made some exceptions due to the limited number of Indigenous authors, research, and literature.

This study drew parallels between knowledge derived from interviews and knowledge derived from books, and it constructed new knowledge in the learning–teaching process. It included materials based on natural and community resources and experiential learning activities in the surrounding environment as means of acquiring local cultural knowledge.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The recording and verbatim transcription of interviews is often considered to be one of the more tedious but necessary aspects of the in-depth qualitative research process. While transcription is undoubtedly a necessary methodological tool for researchers focusing specifically on discourse and language, it has also been widely adopted by researchers across the social sciences, and it is sometimes advocated as a means of inherently improving the rigor of qualitative research (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2007). The

software Transcribe by Wreally (www.transcribe.wreally.com) was the transcription software used in this project. Self-transcribing was used as well for interview responses that were in the Navajo language.

As recommended by Bryman (2008), the transcription took approximately 4 to 6 hours of analysis for every hour of speech recorded. Although this was a labor-intensive process, transcribing interviews as soon as they had been conducted had the most effective outcome. Interviews were replayed before pulling out thematic patterns to pick up on specific areas to explore, enabling me to immerse myself in the transcripts to construct meanings. Keeping exemplary records of data collection allowed me to conduct a second order analysis, consistently reviewing my findings.

For both interviews and pulling out and identifying patterns from texts, I used the thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis involves a creative process that utilizes codes to create a diagram of naturally emerging themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This process was originally developed for psychology research; however, thematic analysis is a flexible method that can be adapted to many different kinds of research and is a good approach to research where one is trying to find out something about people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values from a set of qualitative data. As part of this approach, this study followed a six-step process: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up.

For statistical software, IBM SPSS was my preferred choice. It enabled me to dig deeper into the data, making it a much more effective tool than spreadsheets, databases and/or standard multi-dimensional tools for analysis. With this being Indigenous analysis research, Secatero's (2015) Indigenous well-being model in leadership and wellness, interviews, and narratives were

chosen to bring forth cultural relevancy and responsiveness to a Western Eurocentric program of GSUSA, as well as to align and integrate the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá and build leadership skills into the research-proven program of GSUSA. The end goal of doing so was creating an increased sense of positive self-identity and a healthy social and emotional well-being among Diné girls.

## RESEARCH DESIGN INTEGRITY/RIGOR

Tobin and Begley (2004) wrote of establishing rigor in research studies. Their research described six criteria of reliability, validity, and generalization and explored some of the issues relating to establishing rigor in qualitative research. In addition to reliability, validity, and generalization, Tobin and Begly discussed goodness, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, and credibility. Among those six criteria, goodness is an application for rigor and becomes "an overarching principle of qualitative inquiry and interactive processes that takes place throughout the study" (p. 391). When goodness is prioritized in this way, it is "viewed as developmental, leading to growth of understanding, surfacing of clarity, emerging of criteria (Lincoln 1995), and stretching of epistemologies (Janesick 1998)" (p. 391).

Transferability requires a study to have dependability, confirmability, authenticity, and credibility (Tobin & Begley, 2004). I take this as meaning the ability to move forward and not abandon our held beliefs but to refocus our lens on the future. I believe that the research of the current study falls within Tobin and Begley's criteria. This research involved a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different groups in different disciplines and institutions, as well as ethical standards that promoted the values essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness.

Within the scope of the semi-structured interview and data analysis, honesty, objectivity, integrity, respect, and confidentiality were all achieved. Keeping in mind the ethical values that I hold true for myself allowed me to see through a different lens and possibly hone in on a more specific and related focus of my research topic: closing the academic achievement gap of our Native American students through culturally relevant educational approaches and developing possible working frameworks.

For this qualitative research, I referred to Guillemin and Gillam's (2004) dominant approach. Confidentiality was addressed during the research planning (i.e., proposal writing and securing approval from ethic review boards) and at three points during the research process: data collection, data cleaning, and dissemination of research results. Here I discuss these three points in turn.

First, confidentiality was addressed at the time of data collection via a confidentiality agreement and consent forms. These forms made assurances of confidentiality to participants through statements such as, "All identifying names will be replaced with a pseudonym." The confidentiality agreement and consent form were presented at the beginning of the data collection process, which helped in building trust with the participants.

Second, confidentiality was addressed during data cleaning by removing all identifiers such as names and addresses (i.e., names of participants, school, and community were replaced with pseudonyms and addresses deleted from the file once they were no longer needed). However, contextual identifiers in the individual life stories remained. As the researcher, I had to decide which aspects of stories and life circumstances to change to maintain confidentiality, though my intention was to change as few details as possible.

Last, during the research dissemination, all effort was made to not alter the context of the stories and to share detailed, rich data while respecting the participants perspectives' on how their data should be used. The goal was to use their personal stories as examples of Indigenous leadership and living by the philosophies of Diné and Hózhó, as well as to align them to the curriculum of the GSUSA Leadership program.

By keeping within ethical guidelines, I clearly and notably demonstrated unbiased and dedicated effort in my interpretation of the interviews, thematic analysis, and data analysis, as well as a determination and passion for working with the participants. The primary purpose of the research questions and observations focused on the underlying goals to:

- Build the capacity of the tribal community through forums, meetings, collaboration, and cooperative partnerships, as well support programs so they are better able to improve the lives of Native American youth and families.
- Improve the educational system and quality of life of the people by providing direct academic and service learning programs.
- Encourage respect, relevance, responsibility, love, appreciation, and understanding for one's culture by incorporating cultural learning components in the schools and various community events and activities.

## APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Integral to this research was the incorporation of culturally responsive research approaches and practices. From the outset of the project, the commitment was made to conduct culturally responsive research that (a) was respectful to and inclusive of the diversity of the participants and (b) provided findings that were applicable and useful to a diversity of

communities. The research was also an opportunity to further develop culturally competent habits of mind and culturally responsive research practices in the participating organizations.

The Girl Scout program focuses on leadership and is a programming model developed to allow girls to achieve real leadership skills. Guided by adult sponsors and peers, Girl Scouts develop their leadership potential through age-appropriate activities that enable them to discover their values, skills, and the world around them; connect with others in a multicultural environment; and take action to make a difference in their community and globally. The leadership activities are designed to be girl-led, cooperative, and hands-on processes that create high-quality experiences conducive to learning.

Each Girl Scout's journeys and badges are earned through their enrollment in the GSUSA program, which is tailored specifically to hands-on activities that encourage girls to discover, connect, and take action in everything they experience and encounter. In the past with the Girl Scout program, that is conducted on the Navajo reservation, the girls had the opportunity to design a badge that represented them as Navajo troop and council. More specifically, the structure of the meetings allows for each girl to (a) develop a strong sense of self, or have confidence in themselves and their abilities and form positive identities; (b) develop positive values, or act ethically, honestly, and responsibly and show concern for others; (c) be challenge-seeking, or take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes; (d) understand what healthy relationships are, or develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively; and (e) engage in community problem-solving by having a desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create action plans to solve them (GSUSA, 2017).

## ETHICS

Ethical considerations proposed by the University of New Mexico Internal Review Board and the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) were adhered to throughout the research process. This required a full review by University of New Mexico Internal Review Board and my completion of online CITI training prior to carrying out the research (see Appendix 6 and 7). A full ethical review of the Navajo Nation Internal Review Board was not required due to the study being taken off the Navajo reservation; however, an application and approval of the Navajo Nation Heritage and Historic Preservation Department was obtained (See Appendix 8). Issues of informed consent as proposed by Miller et al. (2012) were addressed during the study. Participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and confidentiality of findings was agreed. This agreement was obtained and recorded with written consent forms establishing participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time (see Appendix 1 and 2). To ensure participants' anonymity, no direct or indirect identifiers are used in this dissertation. Furthermore, to reduce the impact of harm and invasion of privacy, no personal questions were asked unless participants felt it was relevant to introduce this information themselves (Diener & Crandall, 1978) Finally, data were stored securely on a personal laptop, and participants consented to these recordings with the understanding that they would be destroyed after the research was completed.

## CONCLUSION

The constraints and challenges of creating an Indigenous community and culturally based learning experiences are evident. Although many schools have begun to make substantial progress in developing an effective structure, many programs have been seriously compromised by the growing influence of externally imposed standards for accountability. The Diné

community recognizes that the hopes and dreams we have materialized for our children have been jeopardized by forces that could rob them of their Diné language, culture, and identity and which threaten to drive them into the lowest educational and economic stratum of the national society. As stated, most Diné communities have as a primary focus a goal of hopefulness. We want to ensure the survival of Indigenous education within current educational structures by striving to develop a comprehensive program that meets the educational and developmental needs of Diné children.

# CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

## DAY THREE OF MY KINAALDÁ

Day 3 was the day that my uncles and other men went to get the stirring sticks, yucca root (for soap), and continuing to work and portray who I want to be when we get older: a hard-working, determined, strong, intelligent, knowledgeable, and successful young lady. In the last couple of days, not only had I worked hard, helped in every way possible, and ran, but I also sat and listen to stories that were shared with all young grandchildren, while we all contributed to the grinding of the corn and helping inside. Our aunts and grandparents talked to us and shared their experiences with their childhood, their upbringing, and their own Kinaaldá. (Belone, 2022)

## INTRODUCTION

Included in this chapter will be the interview participant's responses, experiences, beliefs, and perspectives to each of the interview questions of the three Diné teachers (pseudonyms – Summer, Autumn, and Wynter). The teachers shared their personal experiences of growing up as a Diné woman and as a Diné language and culture teacher, as well as their cultural and historical stories that were passed down to them, and their experiences of participating in several Kinaaldá ceremonies. As for the Traditional Healers and/or Medicine man/woman, I approached six potential participants, however, due to the location of their residence being on the reservation, they did not qualify and were not interviewed. Additionally, two medicine men chose not to participate unless they were compensated. This research was rewritten so that participants did not reside on the Navajo reservation and that there will be no compensation given. Again, the one thing to note is that due to the COVID-19 restriction, the interviews were mostly done by telephone and ZOOM. Lastly, the information on the actual historical and cultural stories and experiences will be taken from various authors that have published literature.

## PARTICIPANTS

*Summer (2021)*

Summer (2021), the eldest of the three Diné language and culture teachers was the first to be approached and asked if she would be interested and willing to be a participant. She openly agreed and felt that my project was very much overdue and needed. Born and raised, as a very young child, on the reservation, Summer stated that she learned the Diné language and the cultural and traditional teachings from her mom and dad, as well as the other elders in the family. She learned from an early age that Hózhǫ́ ways a way of life filled with happiness, having respect for others, nature, and life, knowing your kinship, saying daily prayers, making good choices, and working hard. Aside from knowing your traditional identity, roots, and culture, she also believed in being educated and making a contribution in life and being able to bring that home and use a tool to help the Diné to be successful in Western Eurocentric life. The story that Summer shared was valuable and very personal. She shared how she went off the reservation to attend school at and it was hard and lonely. Despite being off the reservation and away from home, Summer continued to wake early in the morning, pray with her corn pollen, run to stay fit, and reminisce about the times she ran in her own Kinaaldá. She strongly believes that the Kinaaldá was the ceremony that made her strong, gave her the mindset to know she could overcome hardship, and was the introduction to what Hózhó meant. She always kept in her heart who she was (her clanship) and her language. When she ran into other Diné people she used her language and knew that was one thing that would ever be taken from her. As she got into her college years, she had to deal with many daily living hardships, such as having to work more than one job, having to camp in parks before making enough money to get an apartment, walking

and taking a bus because she had no car, and being disciplined to be in class on time and get honor grades.

While in college, Summer studied to be a teacher and Navajo Language and Culture, as well as went through a 5-year leadership program. Once she came back to the reservation and begin teaching, she stressed to the children, parents, and families the importance of never forgetting your cultural identity, cultural teachings, cultural songs, prayers, and a desire to get an education.

Lastly, Summer shared that she herself was a Girl Scout and knew what the program was about. She shared that by integrating Diné values, morals, and teachings would be a great thing and it will allow many Diné to live successful lives.

*Autumn (2021)*

Autumn (2021), middle-aged and having participated in a Kinaaldá, along with 25 years of experience as a Diné language and culture teacher, believes that there is indeed a connection between Kinaaldá and Hózhó, as well as the importance of being culturally relevant in the educational system.

In her own words, Autumn (2021) stated that "Hózhǫ́ is a primary Diné philosophy of living well, in harmony, beauty, wellness, prosperity, and all things synonymous" and growing up, there were her personal experiences:

> I had many experiences of Hózhǫ́ when I was growing up. One example is my late grandmother and how she symbolized SNBH-Są'ąh Naagháii Bik'eh Hózhǫ́ǫ oodáát – living a beautiful life-long journey. She lived to be over a hundred years old, never had health issues, and exuberated love and kindness in her modest ways. She reminded us grandchildren all the time that we need to respect ourselves, our family, and everyone else around us, that we use our Diné K'é relationship terms and address our relatives appropriately in our language, to say shimá yázhí instead of "Auntie," to say shiche'é instead of "niece." Valuing our sacred ceremonies and Diné philosophy of Hózhǫ́ was important to her, and she instilled those philosophies in us. She emphasized that if we respect Nihimá

> Nahasdzáán and Diyin Dine'é, they will give provide us support and guidance to a long life. We value and continue those teachings of Hózhǫ́ from her.

Autumn (2021) also shared that "each of the five pillars consists of foundational skills necessary to become a leader; moreover, each also is embedded with the importance of self-identity. Yes, they could be aligned to a Western program, such as the Girls Scouts of the USA program, by implementing the universal concepts of self-identity, respect, and growth, to value oneself and develop an awareness of self-worth individually and socially, with appropriate cultural relevance to each Western program".

As for whether there is a connection between the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony) and Hózhó (Harmonious way of life, Autumn believed so. She went on to say that "there is a strong connection between Kinaaldá and Hózhǫ́, for the correlation is about living a life-long pathway of harmony, beauty, wellness, and prosperity. Kinaaldá is a phase of Są'ąh Naagháii Bik'eh Hózhǫ́, as is the Laughing ceremony for an infant, as is the Sweat lodge ceremony for a young man, as is the eating of the mush during a Navajo wedding ceremony, for example.

When it came to leadership, Autumn stated that "from a traditional Diné perspective, there is no word for "leader" as defined in English terms. In Navajo, to lead is to represent; therefore, there is no distinct difference between a male and a female leader. In Navajo, a female is considered to symbolize Changing Woman, hence the matriarchal and matrilineal significance of our people. All Diné people are their mothers and maternal relatives; in that sense, decisions and planning take place among the Diné woman's family and clan. When this cultural norm is juxtaposed with Western ideologies of leadership, however, it becomes challenging. A strong female "leader" is, regardless, someone who recognizes her place in her Diné family and

community; she demonstrates all characteristics that are embedded with Są'ąh Naagháíi Bik'eh Hózhǫ́ (SNBH) philosophies".

*Wynter (2021)*

Wynter being the same age as me, definitely is way more knowledgeable than I was when it came to our Diné teachings and language. I admired her tremendously and could have sat and listened to her for hours. Just like the other participants, she had a very rich story to tell. She was an educator-teaching the Diné language, culture, history, and traditional values. Wynter may not be a traditional practitioner/medicine woman, but her first teaching came from her parents and grandparents, as well as having more in-depth experiences in the ceremonial practices of the Kinaalda and many more ceremonies.

Wynter's own experience was rich with both cultural and historical relevance to why a young girl follows a specific ceremonial process and path.

> Kinaalda, has been a birthright passage for women of Dine decent. It is given to us as a milestone and teaching from Changing woman as she became Whiteshell woman. (I couldn't type in Navajo my new computer doesn't have the Dine keyboard and won't install)
>
> The teaching we have from our Family oral history of our family lineage. My grandmother has informed us of her oral teaching of Kinaalda. Girls always disclosed they had their spotting and family would prepare for the tying of the hair on the next day. It was ok to not to be prepared, (ideally if birthing a daughter, you should be prepared) because the family would step up and help gather the essentials needed in this ceremony.
>
> We were always instructed to prepare to observe an individual that was going to take your place as a mother or father figure when you are not able to or can replicate your being and family unit to support your daughter.
>
> The morning of it was a practice that a medicine person is brought to the Hogan and in the presence of the sun (oral teachings that the Sun was the father to Changing Woman and had Talking God given the honor of 1st man and 1st woman to raise her and have Talking God guide her and establish the first ceremony) Medicine man would sing as they are dressing her and as he is singing, he guides the new person that is tying the hair to dress her as Changing Woman. We were

told that a woman becomes Changing woman and relives the moment of infancy to adolescents in the process. So, she is dressed first with the moccasin right first and left. Then clothes into traditional outfits. It was after she is dressed the sang a song (I can't recall the name) but it brushed and tied in sequence with the singing. She will now run and then run before dusk. The person tying the hair must conduct themselves with reverences as well, be beside Kinaalda the whole time and not be with their partner even after the 4 days after the ceremony.

In the next days, she will run 3xs a day and her final 12$^{th}$ run would end on the morning of the final day when the Hozhooji sin is conducted and the ground cake is cut out in the morning.

As she is dressed, she is given Chiih (red natural pigment/dirt) in a deerskin pouch and tied to her sash belt, she is given a corn cob to use as a stretcher, and when her hair was brush she has it parted in the middle for balance and equal knowledge of right and left brain. Hair is left to cover he sides and I was told at one time it was use as a guide, balance and also shield to not be so overly impulsive and look into other to judge or ever become greedy or want materialistic items.

If the family had sheep or horses, it was her responsibility to feed, water and then cook and clean and begin the process to grind corn. Grinding stones were brought to family from extended and the Hogan becomes a sacred place. It was stressed it was a peaceful place and anyone entering was to remain reverence to character and self-governance. No laughing or overly inappropriate jokes. No harsh talking, crying and NO one their period was not to enter or partake in the preparation of the ground cake. Always were a skirt no pants. Jewelry was much at least turquoise. (Turquoise gave you the ability to speak, retain, and impower yourself with knowledge through the ceremony).

As the days go by, male figures, worked on the outside, first day is when the cake size is determined. In our family traditions, the size depended on the circumference of the jump of Kinaalda (that was the name for the girl and no longer called her by her English name but only as Kinaalda) Kinaalda would stand with feet close and do like a bunny hop or jump and where her feet land from toes a circle was created. A rope would use to find the center and the used the center to outline the circle.

It is then a person that can carefully and with minimal disturbance of mother earth is the task to make a cake circle and remove dirt to make a 12-inch depth with smooth edges and flat bottom. A fire is built and it is then that the ground is heated for the next 4 days. The person in charge of the first is taught the reverence of not chipping the edges and not roughing the wood burning or adding logs. Almost as if it was quietly and gracefully done to want good vibes with earth and fire.

Kinaalda will run 3xs for 3 days. (2 on 1st day, 3, 3, 3, and 1 on the morning of the last day) and that should equal 12.

During these 3 days up the pouring day, she is grinding corn and other women with grinding stones can help. Corned that is used white, yellow, little blue, and red. These will be carefully mixed and continuously from the four directions. Hot water is used to mix and, in our teachings, people mixing are adults or have become woman. No children or someone that has not had their period. When mixing use of the stirring sticks are used, we use gopher sand to make mounds in the earth around the fire and place our pots center of them and mix. Careful to not move or rotate the pots. And mix. Men will help with the hot water and we mix and mix until good running consistency. The hot water will cook the mixture a bit and prep for the ground oven.

During pouring which is done before dusk and in the presence of the Sun again. The ashes are removed carefully and swept smooth and offering is made to the center and four directions before the corn husks are placed. Corn husk is place carefully with the growth rotating clockwise. The mixture is poured and many women and men help with the pouring, before the top is placed, kinaalda and tsii yi'astloo'i will offer white corn meal in the four directions center to the cake. The top is placed and then covered.

During this entire time of working, she is also taking time from grinding to do chores, cook, and clean but not tending the fire, blood, or cutting. Mostly serving and using water to clean. Feeding animals and most of the time grinding corn. The Blessing way is conducted on the 4th night. Using parents are there and their family stays with her all night. She runs in the morning after her hair is washed. She then offers the cake again with corn meal and makes the four cuts and it is removed. She is massaged again. This will place them away from the Hogan and on her second ceremony, she will be placed facing the Hogan. In our family, kinaalda will do this twice. First on her first spotting and the whole time she is menstruating. The second time is when her second menstruation occurs. (This gives the family to prep for the second one as now there is a timeline).

When doing a second one, her hair will be retied with the buckskin and not placed in a bun. (It will be placed in a bun at the conclusion of the second ceremony) This is a very delicate and strict process. There are so many aspects of teaching from many points of action and process points. This could take a very long time to explain.

The purpose of this was to mold a woman to resemble Whiteshell Woman after she transitioned from Changing woman. The person is embodied with various skills through the experience and equipped with the knowledge and almost imprinted with resiliency and ambition to be a good, humble, and knowledgeable Dine woman. Founded on the oral histories and traditions of our ancestors and family (Interview, # 6)

When it came to the question of defining Hózhó, she stated that "Hozho is the path of Są'ąh Naagháii Bik'eh Hózhǫ (SNBH). The Rainbow path is defined in my perspective that a person is embodied by the moral and ethical teachings of the Hozhoji (the beauty way) nanitin (teachings) and Naayaaji nanitin. Being self-disciplined and hardworking with traits of kindness, sternness, and drive to be efficient and productive to make a living. The understanding of "taahwi'ajit'aago" is up to you (Wynter, 2021 #7).

To live a life of Hózhó, Wynter (2021) explained that her own experience was helping one another, that as children she was taught to respect her elders, not speak while they are speaking, or listen when spoken to, when told to do something, you do it with your best ability, and to not lie, cheat or even cause hardship.

She went on to say that her family always got up early to clean their home, make their beds, and wash up. When you are home as a female, you tend to your brothers, uncles, or dad however it her brothers, uncle and dad would tend to them in ways of caring for our horses, and sheep and keeping us warm and fed.

Aside from the basic household and nurturing duties, there were the teachings of prayer, ceremonies, and discipline. Wynter stated that she always attended ceremonies and was encouraged to sing at Blessing Ways ceremonies, pray for protection in the Protection Way ceremony, and to dance, cook, and work at the Enemy Way ceremony. Participating and being a part of the ceremonies brought laughter, joy, and good jokes, but there was always discipline that had to be followed and when we were wrong, we were corrected.

For instance, I was fighting with my little sister and took a screwdriver out at her and my father saw me, he spanked me. He also told me that I am never to brandish a weapon on family because we need one another and we are to be kind and not cause problems that will cause

family ills. There was also no name-calling, no hitting, and no hate. Aside from all these teachings, Wynter pointed out that was her most important teaching was-As the oldest daughter in her family, she makes it a point to keep family cohesiveness strong and intact. As Dine, we are to remind one another to not create unnecessary harm to anyone.

The bottom line is to be humble and respectful and surround yourself with positive people. You are in charge of your own life and what you bring into it and you are empowered and strengthened with song and prayer. (Interview #8)

Lastly, there was the question of whether leadership: describes the definition, whether there is a difference between male and female leaders, and what are some characteristics of a strong female leader.

> Leadership can mean many aspects. A person can be down, at rock bottom, but overcoming the challenges and leading others out of any challenges with equipment learned information, or tools of resiliency is a leader in a sense. You also have the people that can lead with the ideologies of the government such as the traditions of clan gathering and sharing at ceremonial gatherings, chapter meetings, council meetings, and meeting with foreign people or nations. I was always told anyone that is not Navajo is an enemy, anai. But we treat them as human.
>
> A strong female first and foremost is the ability to keep the family intact. Keep the marriage and children equipped with stability by using their knowledge or lifelong learning knowledge of experience to mold their children and strengthen their union with their spouse. They are vested with the pray (Sodizin) and sin (songs). Song and prayer are their responsibility to establish. When they are able to transfer that knowledge or strategy or method into areas of leadership in weaving, teaching, managing, or leading outside their home where their water and fire is… it is powerful. Very knowledgeable and with the ability to analyze and articulate situations and moments without biased thoughts but founded on Si'anaaghai bek'ehozhoon (SNBH) knowledge (Interview #10).

When it came to the question of whether the Kinaaldá, Hózhó, and leadership had a connection, Wynter believed that the connections were infused, and embodied one another and

that it is a continuous process in the four directions and transitional changes of moments in life (Interview #11).

With Hózhó, Wynter believed that "a leader is a person that is the impediment of living a with the knowledge and trait they are mold with or gifted with. Leaders living a humble life and leading with the foremost insight or futurist vision of leading their family or people to live with the knowledge of being Dine and proud and walking in the colonized encroachment of western society and have the ability to function and navigate through that world is a warrior" (Interview #12).

## KINAALDÁ, HÓZHÓ, AND LEADERSHIP

*The connection between Kinaaldá, Hózhó, and leadership go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other. The teachings originate from Hózhó.*

Wynter, Diné teacher's response to interview questions.

By participating in the Kinaaldá, I've learned the manner, behavior, and choices that I make are what will allow me to live a life of Hózhó, as well as the hard work that I would need to do to be a leader. Through Nicolle Gonzales's Changing Woman Initiative (2021), she "seeks to renew cultural birth knowledge to empower and reclaim indigenous sovereignty of women's medicine through women's stories and life ways" (p. 1). Additionally, the Changing Woman Initiative's mission is to renew cultural birth knowledge to empower and reclaim indigenous sovereignty of women's medicine and lifeway teachings to promote reproductive wellness, and healing through holistic approaches and to strengthen women's bonds to family and community. By creating a physical space for education and healing for Native American women, Gonzales feels this will help reclaim cultural identities through birth and motherhood that have been

shaped through our cultures (Gonzales, 2021, p.1). This was the main goal of what the Kinaaldá is.

As Diné people, we are a matrilineal society and we were created by the sacred deity known as Changing Woman, who in the Navajo language is named Asdzáá Naadleehi. It is Changing Woman that was the first Navajo leader. It is Changing Woman who leads the Diné people in a life full of prosperity with songs and prayers. Alongside Changing Woman there are other female deities that guide the Navajo girls and women to hold and carry the family tradition and values: Shimá Nahasdzáán (Mother Earth), Dził Asdzáá (Female Mountain/Mountain Woman), Tó Asdzáá (Water Woman), Ch'il Naad'ąąh Asdzáá (Corn Woman), and many more. Within our traditional ceremonies, the prayers and songs are based on these female deities (Gonzales, 2021, p. 2).

Perfected stated is Gonzales (2021),

> "When Changing Woman reached puberty and experienced her first woman menstrual, Kinaaldá, the Holy People came together, each bringing a white shell they held precious. They dressed her up in a white buckskin, adding the shells onto her dress. She stood there, glowing in such beauty and they gave her the name Yoołgai Asdzáá, White Shell Woman. Her hair was brushed and tied into a ponytail at the nape of her neck with a strip of buckskin that was cut from a deer called Doo K'aak'ehii, unharmed buckskin.
>
> The gathering and tying of Changing Woman's hair with the buckskin signified the importance of gathering one's own thoughts, focus, determination, and life goal accomplishments.
>
> Changing Woman represents transformation and a rebalancing of the male and female energies in the universe. We chose her name and likeness for our organization, because we look to be a force to rebalance, create harmony, and space for the ceremony in all the transformations women experience in their lifetimes".

Through these teachings instilled in our Diné girls, there is the likelihood of living a life of Hózhó and in turn leadership will follow. When one thinks of the word "leaders/leadership" we think about holding high-paying and high-status jobs however, it

also means that women are keepers of the cultural flame – and caretakers of the many people around them. Women in this matriarchal society have been putting themselves at risk, taking on ever more responsibilities, culturally and in everyday life. We need to remember that women are the home – they're matriarchs, they're mothers. When a person says, 'I'm going home,' it's to where Mom is. If you lose a matriarch, you feel that you have no home to go to.

## SPIRITUAL, MENTAL, PHYSICAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Secatero's *Indigenous Well-Being Model in Leadership and Wellness* (2015) stated that "the leadership and well-being model for Indigenous students was most useful and relevant when centered on social/relational content, linked to spiritual/cultural roots, in harmony with Indigenous wisdom, and grounded in place and well-being" (p. 1).

Figure 4 is a visual glimpse of how Secatero's leadership and wellness model is structured and what the16 pillars are. In the *American Indian Graduate Magazine* (2010), Secatero states that "it is these three elements of well-being that ignited Dr. Secatero's thinking into a broader view of helping all students succeed in higher education. As he continued his education at the doctorate level, he expanded his well-being model, which served as a major component of his dissertation that involved success and persistence factors pertaining to American Indian Graduate and professional students. The overall purpose of developing the holistic American Indian Well-being Model in Higher Education was to create a blueprint for American Indian college students by addressing well-being factors that include: spiritual, cultural, social, professional, mental, emotional, physical, and environmental pillars. The well-being model can be used as a primary means of helping college students, college practitioners, and researchers in addressing issues that concern higher education. Prospective college and

graduate students may find themselves asking the following questions, which are relevant to well-being factors when considering higher education" (p. 16).

On the July 14, 2020, Indian Country News, the Diné Hataałii Association's made a release on how the COVID-19 had made a huge impact on the Diné and all the Hataałii (medicine man) on the Navajo Reservation. "As Diné, we have a distinct culture and language, and time-honored wellness and healing system that predates colonial, western health interventions. When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived amongst our people, the Navajo Nation and other agencies launched various mitigation efforts hoping to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. As COVID-19 rages on, it is becoming clearer that a huge gap exists in the overall response – there is a lack of proposed plans or interventions to address the psychological and spiritual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our people. Our overall system of care must include ways to deal with such things as mental anguish, emotional distress, complex trauma, and the collective grief this pandemic has brought" (Press Release, 2020, para. 1).

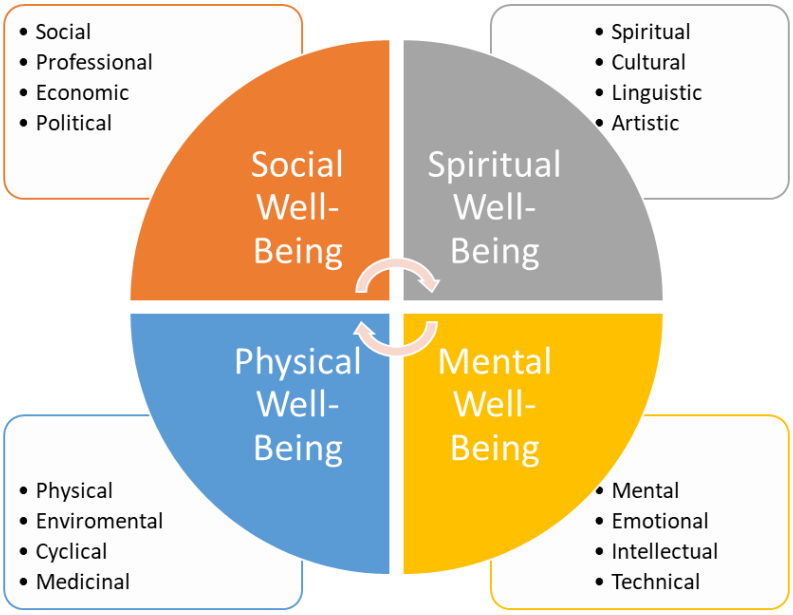
The Hataałii no longer could go from home to home to conduct ceremonies for people in need due to curfew laws and stay-at-home orders of the Navajo Nation government. The coronavirus also restricted the Diné from having close contact and created a disconnect between Hataałii and community members and/or patient-patient referring to the community member that is seeking holistic/traditional help. The Hataałii still were able to conduct ceremonies from home without patients, but that became difficult because ceremonial practices needed to have the patients there to utilize herbs and sandpainting. Diné Hataałii saw this coming and diagnosed COVID-19 as ch'osh doo yit'iinii, or ha't'íishíí na'ałniihi (deadly and unseen sickness or ghost-virus) (Quintero, 2020). Furthermore, the Hataałii did what they could from home but preferred to conduct ceremonies on their patients face to face. The Diné people suffered and could not

resort to their primary source of healing. However, the Hataałii remained vigilant and continued to offer their prayers and songs to aid the Diné (Sage et al., 2020).

In the inner circle are four overarching pillars: spiritual, mental, physical, and social. Within each overarching pillar are four additional pillars. It is the 16 pillars, along with the Diné philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá, that will be brought forth the cultural relevancy and cultural responsiveness to the GSUSA that in turn illuminate self-identity, leadership, and the importance to revitalize the Diné language.

**Figure 4.**

*The 16 Pillars of Secatero's Well-Being Model of Higher Education*




In the first pillar, the Spiritual Well-Being gives meaning and purpose to Indigenous peoples' lives through the lens of ceremony, hope, self-acceptance, dreams, life/death, and achievement. The second pillar is Cultural Well-Being, which is based on the identity of Indigenous tribe, family, clan, norms, history, background, and subgroups. The third pillar, Linguistic Well-Being, encompasses the Diné language through home, school, and work

language, as well as literacy, teaching, and revitalization. The fourth pillar, Artistic Well-Being, reflects the Diné expression through gifts, song, dance, stories, rituals, food, and crafts (Secatero, 2015).

Because I am a Diné woman, all 16 pillars play a critical role in my thinking, my philosophy of life, and my philosophy of leadership. With spirituality, the Girl Scouts are given the opportunity to become familiar with how our Diné ancestors lived and why Diné grandparents, parents, and family members do what they do. The Scouts learn about the process of Hózhó as part of having a positive self-identity. In technical terms, spiritual health is a highly individualized concept that is measured by the amount of peace and harmony an individual experiences in day-to-day life (Kahn-John, 2016).

As an Indigenous leader, I see spirituality as a feeling, with a base on connectedness to the past, ancestors, and the values they represent, such as respect for elders, respect for self, respect for family, and the desire to live on a moral/ethical path. Additionally, being an Indigenous leader is about being in a cultural space, experiencing community and connectedness with land and nature, with proper nutrition and shelter, feeling good about oneself, and being proud of being a Diné, and a leader. Lastly, spirituality is a state of being that includes knowledge, calmness, acceptance and tolerance, balance and focus, inner strength, cleansing, and inner peace, feeling whole, an understanding of cultural roots, and well-being. Spiritual well-being is a strength for me.

Cultural and linguistic well-being speaks to culturally relevant and responsive teaching. Such teaching is aimed at improving academic success by embracing and integrating students' cultural and linguistic heritage, including their home and community cultures and languages in the school curriculum and learning environment. Such teaching calls for using cultural and

linguistic knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them. Cultural and linguistic well-being teaches to and through these students' strengths. Culturally and linguistically responsive educators believe that culture and language deeply influence the way children learn. By recognizing their students' life histories and embracing their families and communities, teachers can help these students achieve success and develop a positive self-identity (Secatero, 2015).

On a personal note, and as an example of how Secatero's 16 pillars have allowed me to recognize my positive attributes about myself, I went through the different pillars and identified attributes that answer the questions of who I am, where do I come from, and where I am going in life.

1. **Spiritual Well-Being**
    - Spiritual Well-Being (Purpose)
        - Honoring our Diné children, families, and communities
        - Closing the achievement gap
        - Mastering high expectations
        - Visionary outlook

    - Cultural Well-Being (Identity)
        - Respected leader, who guides and teaches
        - Philosopher
        - Skilled, talented, and naturally gifted
        - Supportive and sharing knowledge

    - Linguistic Well-Being (Expressive)
        - Understanding the educational system
        - Surviving in both the Indigenous and Western worlds
        - Motivating for positive change
        - Learning new ideas and initiatives

    - Artistic Well-Being (Gift)
        - Language revitalization and preservation efforts
        - Learning language through song and dance
        - Storytelling
        - Fun and creative ways to teach children

2. **Mental Well-Being**
    - Mental Well-Being (Mind)
        - Learning new styles, strategies, and models
        - Critical thinker
        - Open-minded
        - Optimistic
        - Humble
        - Respectful

    - Emotional Well-Being (Heart)
        - Making healthy nutritional choices
        - Plenty of rest
        - Manage stress
        - Physical exercise-walking

    - Intellectual Well-Being (Wisdom)
        - Life-long learner
        - Knowledge of educational history, leaders, laws, and initiatives
        - Visionary

    - Technical Well-Being (Future)
        - Researcher
        - Indigenous scholar
        - Create and contribute to positive change
        - To motivate, empower, and enable

3. **Physical Well-Being**
    - Physical Well-Being (Body)
        - Exercise daily
        - Healthy nutritional choices
        - Get plenty of rest
        - Making the time
        - Consistent and balanced schedule

    - Environmental Well-Being (Place)
        - Schools
        - Reservation
        - Respect Mother Earth, Father Sky, and all other spiritual deities

    - Cyclical Well-Being (Time)
        - Prioritizing
        - Staying focused
        - Keeping with timelines of events, and goals

    - Medicinal Well-Being (Healing)

- Motivational speakers
- Ceremonies
- Balance among work, education, and family
- Make time for self

4. **Social Well-Being**
   - Social Well-Being (Relations)
     - Communication
     - Collaboration
     - Respect and rapport
     - K'e
   - Professional Well-Being (Goals)
     - Determination
     - Dedication
     - Indigenous scholar
     - Indigenous leader
   - Economic Well-Being (Finance)
     - Scholarships/Grants
     - Balance budget
     - Smart choices in spending
     - Accountable
     - Purposeful
   - Political Well-Being (Leadership)
     - Contributor
     - Accountable
     - Shared Leadership
     - Honest
     - Humble

Although this is a model for higher education students, it very well can be adjusted for elementary students, as a starting point for building a positive self-identity, understanding their culture, history, and traditions, creating a sense of belonging, and promoting the enthusiasm for learning and suing the Diné language.

Cajete (2005) prioritized that being culturally relevant was critical to the cultural perspectives of health and wholeness. Cajete (2005) also designed culturally responsive curricula geared to the special needs and learning styles of Native American students. These curricula are

based upon Native American understanding of the "nature of nature." He utilized that foundation to develop an understanding of the science and artistic thought processes expressed in Indigenous perspectives of the natural world.

Leaders are the guides in an organization and create the culture of which they are a part. It is critical for leaders to focus on their own health in order to stay grounded, focused, disciplined, and to be able to guide others in the right direction. The more that leaders can stay centered on the strengths of themselves and others, the better they are able to inspire the growth of others in an organization.

As a result of learning and living in a school environment that is welcoming, equitable, inclusive, and respectful, every student in every classroom would feel a strong sense of well-being and connectedness. Parallel to Secatero's view of artistic well-being, Cajete (2005) affirmed that every student is encouraged to take risks, be creative, and be innovative in a learning culture that is caring and safe, "a place where healthy relationships are nurtured and students are inspired every day to participate actively and with confidence, a place where conditions enable every student to achieve to the best of their ability and be successful in all aspects of learning and life" (Crazy Bull, 2003, p. 1).

Additionally, Crazy Bull (2003) believed that "one of the most important teachings is that leadership and wellness go hand-in-hand. Traditional tribal leadership is compassionate, generous, and accountable. Leadership that is grounded in relationships, spiritual practice, and healthy intentions is the most effective in our communities. Such leadership finds a path through the many struggles and hardships that individuals and organizations face today" (p. 1) Those words resonated with me because they justify the need to integrate cultural relevance and culturally responsive teaching into the classroom. That belief speaks solely to cultural well-

being. Cultural well-being allows for students, parents, and families to feel as if they belong and are welcomed. Cultural well-being gives a sense of self and most importantly allows for healing of the negative impacts of colonization and generational colonization.

There is also evidence that both non-Indigenous and Indigenous-specific programs and services that adhere to the decline in achieving academic success, the delivery of cultural relevancy, access, integration, and accountability are more effective than programs and services that do not.

As part of being culturally relevant and responsive to educational activities or lessons, a more effective mechanism to involve Indigenous families and communities in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs will be present and effective. Additionally, the educational activities and lessons will be not only more culturally responsive to local contexts but will foster a culturally safe environment for program participants.

Student engagement in cultural activities is an indicator of positive cultural identity that is associated with better mental health among Indigenous populations. These are the guidelines I pledge to follow:

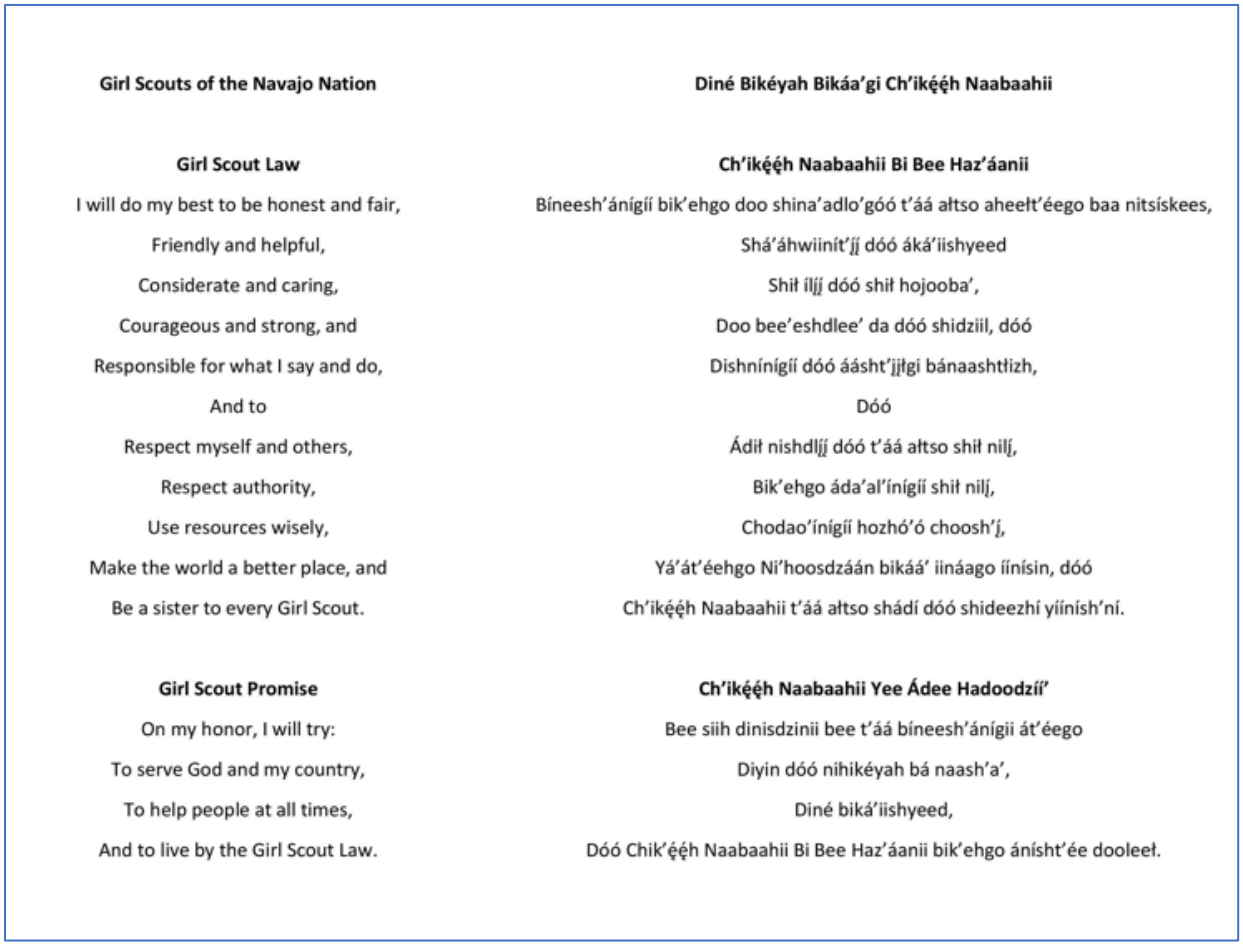
“With the responsibility of leadership comes the privilege to practice the values of traditional leadership—compassion, generosity, and accountability. As we move into the graduation season, this is a good time to reflect on the way that leadership and wellness go hand-in-hand. It is a good time to think about what our elders and spiritual leaders have taught us about our roles and the practices of our values. It is a good time to let our spirit guide us” (Crazy Bull, 2003. p. 8).

## DINE FRAMEWORK OF GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

By the mission, traditions, and 100-plus years of preparing girls for a lifetime of leadership, the Girl Scout organization has taken bold action to increase awareness of its purpose and relevancy and to ensure the organization continues to evolve to serve new generations of girls and volunteers. The Girl Scouts have truly worked collaboratively to increase the strong leadership impact, and offer the opportunity to build hard skills like coding or running a business, Girl Scout ties these skills to leadership development so that girls also build the confidence, grit, collaborative spirit, and critical-thinking skills that enable them to be successful in any path they choose (GSUSA, 2017, p. 4).

**Figure 5.**

*English and Navajo Version of the Girl Scout Law and Promise*



**Girl Scouts of the Navajo Nation**

**Girl Scout Law**

I will do my best to be honest and fair,
Friendly and helpful,
Considerate and caring,
Courageous and strong, and
Responsible for what I say and do,
And to
Respect myself and others,
Respect authority,
Use resources wisely,
Make the world a better place, and
Be a sister to every Girl Scout.

**Girl Scout Promise**

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

**Diné Bikéyah Bikáa'gi Ch'ikęęh Naabaahii**

**Ch'ikęęh Naabaahii Bi Bee Haz'áanii**

Bíneesh'ánígíí bik'ehgo doo shina'adlo'góó t'áá ałtso aheełt'éego baa nitsískees,
Shá'áhwiinít'įį dóó áká'iishyeed
Shił ilįį dóó shił hojooba',
Doo bee'eshdlee' da dóó shidziil, dóó
Dishníníígíí dóó áásht'įįłgi bánaashtłizh,
Dóó
Ádił nishdlįį dóó t'áá ałtso shił nilį,
Bik'ehgo áda'al'ínígíí shił nilį,
Chodao'ínígíí hozhó'ó choosh'į,
Yá'át'éehgo Ni'hoosdzáán bikáá' iináago íínísin, dóó
Ch'ikęęh Naabaahii t'áá ałtso shádí dóó shideezhí yíínísh'ní.

**Ch'ikęęh Naabaahii Yee Ádee Hadoodzíí'**

Bee siih dinisdzinii bee t'áá bíneesh'ánígii át'éego
Diyin dóó nihikéyah bá naash'a',
Diné biká'iishyeed,
Dóó Chik'ęęh Naabaahii Bi Bee Haz'áanii bik'ehgo ánísht'ée dooleeł.

The Girl Scout Promise is the way Girl Scouts agree to act every day toward one another and other people, and the Girl Scout Law outlines a way to act towards one another and the world. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individual troops and girls may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.”, therefore as a Diné, the translation was made and the girls learn both the English and Navajo version. (See Figure 4)

As Indigenous epistemologies are firmly rooted in relationality and in the interconnectedness of sacred and secular, we must engage the social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of knowledge when moving toward the Indigenization of the curriculum. Elders play a key role in the sharing and passing on of ancestral knowledge, and therefore, are integral to efforts to Indigenize a Eurocentric curriculum.

As an educator, when creating lessons, other aspects to consider in making a connection of Indigenous culture and tradition is to keep in mind that the: (1) cultural information needs to be tribally specific; (2) Historical and cultural information needs to be accurate. The traditional knowledge included in classroom lessons needs to be accurate and maintain the cultural integrity of the tribe being represented; (3) Represent Indian people in a balanced context between the past and the present; (4) Lessons need to provide real meaning and understanding; (5) The content needs to have a meaningful connection to the curriculum; (6) The content/concepts need to address problematic curricular areas. (7) The teacher needs to consider the students' prior knowledge. (8) Assessment should match what was taught. Assessment does not have to be a formal test, and often a pen and paper test may not give us a clear idea of what students actually learned.

In this research, curriculum building was not the purpose, but rather taking a small snapshot of a portion of the 5 Positive Outcomes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and

weaving it to the Pre-K-3rd Diné Character Building Standards together. By doing this will give real meaning and understanding of being Dine. (See Table 4)

**Table 4**

*Correlation of GSUSA to Diné Philosophy of Hózhó and Purpose of the Kinaaldá*

| GSLE 5 Positive Outcomes | 1 Sense of Self (GSLE) | 2 Positive Values (GSLE) | 3 Challenge Seeking (GSLE) | 4 Healthy Relationships (GSLE) | 5 Community Problem-Solving (GSLE) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSLE 5 Positive Outcomes Descriptors | Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities and form positive identities.  | Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly and show concern for others.  | Girls take appropriate risks, try new things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.  | Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.  | Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create "action plans" to solve them.  |
| Navajo Nation Diné Character Standards | Concept 1<br>PO<br>I will recognize self-respect<br><br>Concept 2<br>PO 2<br>I will recognize Diné teachings of self-identity.<br><br>Concept 3<br>PO 2<br>I will demonstrate self-respect. | Concept 3<br>PO 3<br>I will demonstrate and express kindness.<br><br>PO 4.<br>I will speak kindly to others.<br><br>Concept 4<br>PO 4<br>I will express and value my grandparent's way of life teaching | Concept 2<br>PO 4<br>I will demonstrate self-discipline by following Diné teachings. | Concept 4<br>PO 1<br>I will demonstrate ways to be thankful for my home and immediate family<br><br>PO 2<br>I will express and value my parent's way of life teaching. | Concept 2<br>PO 1<br>I will listen and observe cultural teachings. |
| Diné Philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá  | | | | | |

## SUMMARY

In the book, *Pulling Together: A Guide for Indigenization of Post-Secondary Institutions. A Professional Learning Series* (2018), authors: Asma-na-hi Antoine; Rachel Mason; Roberta Mason; Sophia Palahicky; and Carmen Rodriguez de France state that "the journey to indigenizing curriculum fosters self-development. Whether you are an Indigenous or non-Indigenous person, through this journey you will gain insight into your own culture and background, privileges, or oppressions that have affected your life, and you will identify biases or gaps in your knowledge. You will question the pervasive dominance of Western epistemologies, pedagogies, and resources within the curriculum, and make space for including Indigenous ways of being that can benefit all learners. You will engage in the emotional work of confronting the trauma of colonization and building stronger relationships with Indigenous people and communities, and actively participate in the hands-on work of revising your curriculum and pedagogical approaches. And finally, you will reflect upon your own agency in regards to Indigenization, and take action toward systemic change in your institution" (p. 13).

More so, Indigenous scholars and activists (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Pete, 2015), stated that "if we want to contribute to systemic change, we need to understand the concepts of Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. These terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they are separate but interrelated processes" (p.21).

Indigenization is a process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of education, this involves bringing Indigenous knowledge and approaches together with Western knowledge systems. This benefits not only Indigenous students but all students, teachers, and community members

involved or impacted by Indigenization (Asma-na-hi Antoine; Rachel Mason; Roberta Mason; Sophia Palahicky; and Carmen Rodriguez de France, 2018. p. 21)

Indigenous knowledge systems are embedded in relationship to specific lands, cultures, and communities. Because they are diverse and complex, Indigenization will be a unique process for every educational institution.

It is important to note that Indigenization does not mean changing something Western into something Indigenous. The goal is not to replace Western knowledge with Indigenous knowledge, and the goal is not to merge the two into one. Rather, Indigenization can be understood as weaving or braiding together two distinct knowledge systems so that learners can come to understand and appreciate both. Rather, it refers to a deliberate coming together of these two ways of knowing.

Academic curricula have primarily been developed in ways that privilege the dominant, Euro-Western culture through the content, approaches to teaching and learning, and values about knowledge. The experiences, worldviews, and histories of Indigenous Peoples have been excluded from education systems because they were seen as less valuable or relevant. Perceptions of Indigenous Peoples were often misrepresentative and perpetuated stereotypes. This exclusion and misrepresentation were one of the most damaging impacts of colonialism and one of the strongest tools of assimilation. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) writes, “Imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized” (p. 1).

# CHAPTER 5: THEMATIC FINDINGS

## DAY FOUR OF MY KINAALDÁ

It is Day 4, and this was an extremely packed and full day of excitement, anticipation, and paying attention to detail. Waking early morning, fix my bedding, and move it aside to make room for a large number of relatives and guests to join in on mixing the cake batter, getting it poured into the circular pit, as well as getting ready for all night of sitting up, singing, praying, and blessings. The final run will take place at about 4 AM, taking the cake out of the pit, handing pieces out to all families and visitors, and winding down to staying busy, staying awake all day, and not being able to fall asleep until sunset. There was no time to sleep!!!

The day was so busy, and as I made the last evening run, I pondered on the day and knew that I made my mom, my aunts, and my grandmothers proud. It was hard, but I did everything that was asked of me. I did not complain, did not whine, did not hesitate, and did not drag my feet. Not only was my family proud of me, but I was proud of myself. I knew at that point that my tiredness, my sore muscles, and my rough and hard hands were indications that I was going to be what my mom, my family, Changing Woman, and I wanted for me. I was going to be a strong and hard-working woman. I smiled as my feet took one step onto the dirt road, giving me the extra endurance to run further. This was it-the last evening run, and it would be in the early morning hours that I would be making the final run of 10+ miles. I wasn't quite sure how many miles that I was up to, but I turned around and made the steady-paced run back to the hogan. We raced back into the hogan and circled the woodstove; I walked out and took slow breaths in and out, in and out, and cooled off. Finally, I heard the phrase that I so waited to hear: "you need to eat dinner, lay down, and get some sleep before the singing and prayers begin around 10 -11 PM.

I was not going to argue. I ate a bowl of stew, took my moccasins off, rubbed my feet for a bit, then laid back, closed my eyes, and was OUT.

## INTRODUCTION

The qualitative research presented in this report approached the critical analysis from a different viewpoint and, using thematic analysis, participants' personal lived experiences were extracted and identified for similarities. Three female participants, who varied in age: elderly and middle-aged took part. Analysis of interviews identified three major themes. These were: (1) cultural relevancy and responsiveness; (2) building on an educational system founded on the relevancy of Dine beliefs, culture, and language; and (3) cultivating Dine teachers and programs to create an Indigenous movement of empowering our Dine girls. These themes evidenced personal growth on the part of service providers receiving training. Explicitly, they demonstrated that the Diné philosophy of Hózhó (harmonious way of life) and the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony) do positively affect the unique diversity of each Diné girl and give attention to leadership skills, self-identity, and the Diné language. Additionally, the themes also included that the GSUSA Leadership Experience program with the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá build leadership skills, positive self-identify, and a healthy social and emotional well-being of Diné girls; they build positive relationships with Diné girls, their families, their school, and their community; and builds connections between the Diné philosophies and Western educational systems/values.

It is the interview participants statements and examples that supported and linked the GSUSA and the GSLEP with the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá to build: (1) leadership skills, positive self-identify, and a healthy social and emotional well-being of Diné girls; (2) positive relationships with Diné girls, their families, their school, and their community;

(3) connections between the Diné philosophies and Western educational systems/values. (See Figure 6)

**Figure 6.**

*Direct Statements that Link and Support Research Questions.*

| | Leadership | Self-Identity | Community | Education | Language |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GSUSA & GSLE** "Girl Scout alumnae display positive life outcomes to a greater degree that women who were not Girl Scouts." Girl Scouting Works: The Alumnae Impact Study (2012) | "Girls experience the GSLE by participating in the three Girl Scout processes (girl-led, cooperative learning, leanring by doing,) and by engaging with the National Leadership Journey." What Works in Girl Scouting retention study (2012); Best Case Final Report (2013) | "Girl Scout girls display a positive sense of self across age groups/generations, social classes, and races, and regardless of engagement in other extracurricular activities." Girl Scouting Works: The Alumnae Impact Study (2012) | "Taking Action isGirl Scouts approach to making the world a better place. Girls who engage in in Take Action projects report that these projects helped prepare them to plan an active role in the commuities." Service Learning Capacity Building Grant: 2009-2011. | "Girl Scouts contributes to girls' academic succes by helping them develop important leadership skills, such as resourceful problem-solving and challenge seeking." Girl Scouts contributes to a positive relationship with teachers and weekly participationin other out-of-school activities." Linking Leadership to Academic Success: The Girl Scout Difference (2012) | Although there are no actual lesson and activities that promotes a direct teaching of the English language, there is the "leadership program that gives them a strong confidence to gain a stronger sense of self and important leadership and relationship skills, such as the ability to resolve conflicts, educate others, and inspire them to act." Outcome-Based Research Is In on Girl Scout Program (2014) |
| **Dine Philosophies, Hózhó, and Kinaaldá** | "Hózhó is a complex wellness philosophy and belief system comprised of principles that guide one's thoughts, actions, behaviors, and speech." Kahn-John (2015)<br>_____<br>"Diné girls' identity revolves around "four words": (1) personal identity (appearance, living with differences, feeling unique); (2) ethnic identity (ethnic ambiguity, sterotypes, racist experiences, confusion, duality); (3) tribal idenity (family. langauge, religion); and (4) moving between worlds (geographic location, changes, visits to grandmother). "Goodluck (1998)<br>_____ "It is Changing Woman that was the first Navajo leader. It is Changing Woman who leads the Diné people in a life full of prosperity with songs and prayers. Alongside Changing Woman there are other female deities that guide the Navajo girls and women to hold and carry the family tradition and values: Shimá Nahasdzáán (Mother Earth), Dził Asdzáá (Female Mountain/Mountain Woman), Tó Asdzáá (Water Woman), Ch'il Naad'ąąh Asdzáá (Corn Woman), and many more." (Gonzales, 2021)<br>_____ "The Navajo Nation Dine Standards derive from the Offiec of Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Development within the Division of Dine Education of the Navajo Nation. It consists of five pillars of knowledge: culture, langauge, history, government, and character building. Each of the five pillars consists of foundational skills necessary to become a leader; moreover, each also is embedded with the inportance of self-identity. Yes, they could be aligned to a Western program, such as the Girl Scouts of the USA program, by implementing the universal concepts of self-identity, respect and growth, to value oneself and develop awareness of self-worth individually and socially, with appropriate cultural relevance to each Western program." (Autumn, 2021) | | | | |
| **Interview Participants' Statements** | "Leadership is a qualitiy that we all have. Yes, men are stronger, physically, but it is the women that holds the family and home together". (Summer, 2021)<br>_____<br>"Everyone is a leader, is what I was told. You are a leader the moment you are born and it is the responsibility of the family to mold you into the vision of a warrior woman or man with leadership qualities of what you are strength in." (Winter, 2021)<br>_____<br>"A strong female "leader" is, regardless, someone who recognizes her place in her Dine family family and community; she demonstrates all characteristics that are enbeeded with Sa'ah Naagháí Bik'eh Hózhó (SNBH) philosophies." (Autumn, 2021) SNBH is the Diné epistemology, a complex system of knowledge encompassing two paradigms: Beauty Way (female) and Protection Way (male), with hózhó at its core. | "Self-identity is learned from the home and from K'e'." (Summer, 2021)<br>_____<br>"Self identity is our character. During a Kinaalda, a young girl is molded to resemble Whireshell Woman after she transition from Changing Woman. The girl is embodied with various skills through the experience and equipped with knowledge and almost imprinted with resiliency and ambition to be a good, humble, and knowledgable Dine Woman." (Winter 2021) | "I learned from an early age, that my family, including both my immediate and extended, is what makes up a community. They are community of people that we respect, that we honor, and that we learn from." (Summer, 2021)<br>_____<br>"Family is community. My experience is helping one another, children were taught to respect our elders, not speak while they are speaking ior listen when spoken to. When told to do something and do it with your best ability. Not to cause hardship." (Winter, 2021) | "Education is important. My education began at home. I learned from my mother, father, and grandparents. They taught me how to speak the Navajo language, how to traditional ways of life and the culture, how to pray, how to use the corn pollen, and how to be strong and how to live a beautiful life." (Summer, 2021) "I went to school off the reservation, but I came back and worked at a school as a Dine Language teacher and regular teacher." It was important to my parents that I get an education, even though it was hard to leave home. I cried when I was away, but I know that I made my parents proud." (Summer, 2021)<br>_____<br>"If you are a knowledgable person and/or have a skill in weaving, pottery, talking, healing, cooking, praying, or singing, you have a purpose." (Winter, 2021) | "I learned to speak Navajo from home, from my mom, dad, and grandparents. It was very important that we knew Navajo because my mom did not understand or speak English. My dad went to some school and so he knew English." "It is very important that our children understand the Navajo language. Some can understand, but they have trouble speaking it and so in the schools it is important that the Navajo langauge is taught. For some, this is the only place that they may hear and speak the language." (Summer, 2021)<br>_____<br>"Many times miseducation of who wer are, because it is mixed with the notion that Navajo is a religion and not a culture or an ethnic society. I would recommend that we remove the religion jargon in all reference of Dine Bizaad and Culture. Acknowledge it as a way of life of a people." (Winter, 2021) |

## THEME 1: CULTURAL RELEVANCY AND RESPONSIVENESS

In the 2019 article, *Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies: Importance, Benefits, and Tips*, it is highlighted that "It is human nature to be curious, to be active, to initiate thought and behavior, to make meaning from our daily life experiences, and to be academically effective at what we see as relevant to our own lives. These primary sources of motivation reside in all of us, across all cultures. When students can see that what they are learning makes sense and is important, their intrinsic motivation emerges" (para.1).

It goes on to say, that "diversity in public schools reached a tipping point and that first time in history, the majority of students in the US public school system are racial and ethnic minorities" (para 2.). Since then, "diversity in classrooms across the nation has continued to increase. But the curricula delivered in those classrooms don't always follow suit. This leaves many students feeling disconnected, disengaged, and disinterested in the educational process—feelings that can have serious, lifelong consequences" (para 3).

Matthew Lynch (2014), an educational consultant and former teacher who now researches policy and education reform points out that "A multicultural society is best served by a culturally responsive curriculum. Schools that acknowledge the diversity of their student population understand the importance of promoting cultural awareness. Teachers who are interested in fostering cultural awareness in their classrooms should actively demonstrate to their students that they genuinely care about their cultural, emotional, and intellectual needs" (para. 1).

A leading example of this is reflected in an article in Education Week. In the article, titled, *Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies* (2019), a prominent and highly respected Superintendent, Qunicy Natay, of a Navajo Nation reservation school district states that "schools have the responsibility to teach all students how to synthesize cultural differences into their

knowledge base, in order to facilitate students' personal and professional success in a diverse world. A culturally responsive curriculum helps students from a minority ethnic/racial background develop a sense of identity as individuals, as well as proudly identify with their particular cultural group. Teachers can play a big role in helping these students succeed through the establishment of culturally responsive classrooms" (pp. 1)

In a more in-depth article titled, *Navajo Leader Fuels Progress by Connecting His Community* (2019), Natay emphasizes that "Navajos believe in the concept of four: four seasons, four sacred mountains, and four directions" (para. 13). Using this philosophy or way of life has influenced Natay's leadership:

- Nitsahakees (Thinking-East) – Think Big About Where You Want to Go: Don't be afraid to define a vision and set goals that others may see as unachievable. Great leaders help others to believe in the possibilities in the big picture.
- Nahata (Planning-South) – Be a Motivated Motivator Who People Believe and Trust: Intentionally involve the people who will implement your strategic plan to conceptualize the plan. Powerful, transformative organizational change occurs during this discourse.
- Iina (Living-West) – Stay the Course: When the hard work of change begins, there will be resistance. It is critical to remain committed to your vision, goals, and strategy while living the plan.
- Sihasin (Reflecting-North) – Lead from a Solution-Based, Results-Focused Orientation: Refine strategy and insist on continuous improvement based on the evidence of committed implementation and achieving outcomes.

## THEME 2: AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOUNDED ON THE RELEVANCY OF DINÉ BELIEFS, CULTURE, AND LANGUAGE

From the very beginning of *Indigenous Grandmas and the Social Justice Movement,* I was drawn in by how Mrs. Gutierrez's foundation was formed by her self-knowledge and how it gave her the ability to understand her role and place in leadership. She went on to say that having a cultural foundation it gave her a sense of who she was and allowed her to see commonalities and differences in human experiences without judgment and with a more open heart (Gutierrez, 2012). Knowing who we are and where we come from helps in establishing, strengthening, and implementing our own unique style of leadership. The ongoing desire for increased effectiveness to our Native American students, parents, families and all shareholders is always the focus for building positive relationships with community members. Central to this important community relationship is a focus on culture and identity as a foundation for strong Indigenous leadership. In other words, culture and community matter!

Secondly, there was chapter 9, *Transformation and Indigenous Interconnectedness*. Although the main focus of the chapter was on postsecondary and higher education, I found it to be relevant at the elementary level, as it explored the key role of Indigenous leadership and how it continues to play in the development and implementation of educational changes for improvement (Pidgeon, 2012).

Education takes place not only in schools but also within families, communities, and society. Despite the various degree of responsibilities taken by each group, none can be the sole agent to take 100% responsibility for educating children. Parents and families cannot be the only group of people for children's education as long as their children interact with and learn from the world outside their families. Communities and society must support parents and families in the

upbringing, socializing, and educating of their children. Schools are institutions that can prepare children to contribute to the betterment of the society in which they operate, by equipping them with skills important in society. Schools cannot and should not operate as separate entities within society.

Since each group plays a different role in contributing to children's education, there must be efforts to make a bridge between them in order to maximize the contributions. Education takes place most efficiently and effectively when these different groups of people collaborate. Accordingly, it is important to establish and continuously attempt to develop partnerships between schools, parents, and communities.

Recently, with all the readings, I have found that many research studies have identified various ways of community participation in education, providing specific channels through which communities can be involved in children's education.

As a principal, I am always looking to find ways and opportunities to enhance our Dine children with a positive educational experience, and knowing our culture, our self-identity, and our community is a beginning point.

Conclusion

As a start, indigenizing the Girl Scout program among girls in kindergarten through fifth grade allows for a re-creating of the cultural relevance of the Dine philosophies of life and girls' journey into womanhood.

## THEME 3: CULTIVATING DINÉ TEACHERS AND PROGRAMS TO CREATE AN INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT OF EMPOWERING YOUTH

By creating a sense of urgency to preserve the Diné culture, language, and tradition, there has to be a sense of urgency to promote indigenous and modern education: It is often said that if

you pursue an indigenous education, you must forego a modern education and that if you pursue a modern education, you risk being educated out of your indigenous culture and identity. This is not true. As a matter of fact, it has the opposite effect and creates a leader finding a voice through indigenous education.

As children of our highly rich and diverse Dine culture and language, it supports efforts to articulate our visions of cultural education and future development, acknowledging that their culture holds a wealth of proven knowledge and wisdom.

By being culturally relevant, teachers and students will identify with their origin and membership in their school and community, but also carry the ethical values and worldviews of their ancestors. It is these values that are crucial for survival and to the aspirations of future generations. Moreover, our students will possess the knowledge and practices that observe and allow them to adapt to changing environments, including utilizing traditional knowledge handed down through generations.

By creating an Indigenous movement of cultural pride and empowerment, it will support the design, management, and execution of their cultural education to ensure that our Dine students are given opportunities to learn about their culture and identity with pride and fearless confidence. It also advocates for the equal recognition and embedding of Indigenous knowledge in both formal and informal education settings.

According to Scott (2000)," if the essential intention of education is to positively impact students' lives by equipping them with critical knowledge and skills through culturally relevant, expert practice, then disparities in curriculum and instruction require that school districts shift their priorities and policies" (p. 5). Scott (2000) goes on to suggest that districts:

- Require each teacher to obtain proper certification, training, and professional development
- Increase teacher motivation to recognize diverse learners' strengths, as well as their needs
- Decrease dependence on packaged instructional materials and increase implementation of strategies and techniques targeted to the needs of specific student groups
- Integrate the use of technology into instructional practice to bridge the generational divide
- Recruit and retain high-quality teachers for schools in rural and remote areas (p.5).

Key aspects of a positive school climate include safety (social, emotional, and physical), respect, and engagement. For a culturally responsive school climate, respecting and valuing students' home culture is key, as well as fully integrating students' culture and language into the curriculum (Klump & McNeir, 2005).

Lastly, Gay (2010) described culturally responsive teaching as "the use of diverse students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them. Gay's experience shows that when academic knowledge and skills are taught within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly" (Gay, p.16).

## DISCUSSIONS & SUMMARY

In the last several weeks, I have discovered a passion for the theme of building culturally relevant schools for student achievement and making changes to closing the long systemic pattern of an educational gap, among rural schools. I see that not all students are learning and succeeding in rural and reservation schools and that this has become a norm and no surprise to

educators, parents, potential employers, and—most profoundly—to students themselves. The reasons why are as diverse and complex as the students we see in our communities and classrooms each day. So, too, are the reasons why I feel that I cannot shake my head, sit idly by, and hope the problem will correct itself.

From the very beginning of history, our nation's school system has treated our Native American Indian students differently, depending on their rural location, culture, their tradition, their socioeconomic status, their social class, and their gender. Today, despite gains in educational opportunities, significant gaps in academic achievement continue to persist among our Native American children. As a nation, we have struggled to correct the flawed doctrine of "separate but equal" and the inequitable policies and practices that persisted for decades. As educators, we must now understand and interrupt the systematic ways that groups of students are still being treated inequitably today. We must explore new ways of thinking about what and how to teach. My goal is to develop strategies for closing the achievement gaps—with the help of building positive community relationships.

Developed through the collaborative efforts of teachers, education support professionals, researchers, community advocates, parents, and practitioners, there need to be strategies that offer concrete ways to examine and change curriculum and classroom practices, while still honoring the culture, abilities, resilience, and effort. As we learn about the cultures that students bring to school, and how to connect these cultures to what students learn, we must also learn about the culture that infuses school and how it advantages or disadvantages certain students. As we learn about the abilities that students possess and how to build on them, we must also learn about what abilities are valued in school and look at alternative ways to assess what students have learned and can do. As we learn about how students are resilient and how to direct that

resilience toward academic achievement, we must also learn about how resilience can manifest itself as a rejection of school success and how protective factors differ in different contexts. Finally, we must learn about how students find the motivation to put effort into their studies and discover ways to foster that effort.

Lastly, I have to go back to what Wynter (2021) stated and be assured that “If you are a knowledgeable person in weaving, pottery, talking, healing, cooking, praying, or singing, you have a purpose. Everyone is a leader, is what I was told. You are a leader the moment you are born, and it is the responsibility of the family to mold you into the vision of a warrior woman or man with leadership qualities in what makes you strong.”

# CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, & CONCLUSION

## FINAL MORNING OF MY KINAALDÁ

It was like it just closed my eyes when I was awoken to get ready for the prayers and singing to begin. The final morning has arrived, and this is the time to give it my all, to run the 10+ miles, and end on a strong and positive note.

Half-asleep, I slip my moccasins back on. I stood up and walked over to the water basin, and washed my face. The water is nice and cool, and it helps wake me. I sit back down, and the medicine man begins. For the next several hours, songs are repeated four times each. Before I knew it, it was early morning, and it was time to wash our hair with the yucca root that was dug the day before. It's not just me, but everyone in the hogan that wash their hair too. It's been four days that I was not able to wash my hair, and so this washing felt so good on my scalp. It smelled of yucca root, a very calming and pleasant smell. With my hair dripping with water and not brushing it, I stand tall, take a deep breath and with a mission and drive on my mind, I dart out of the hogan. My sister, brother, cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents followed suit with just as much energy as I had.

I am jogging on an old road and through the forest. The air was crisp and cold, and my hair froze and felt like icicles, but I was not cold. My body is warm, and I am wide awake. My mind is full of all the past four days and all the things that I did. It's all positive, and I had a positive feeling that I did my best and that my life would be filled with many successes. Before I know it, I have passed the one-mile marker, the two, three, four, and five. It seems as though I got here in such a fast time. All I can see is that the sun has risen, and it is time to turn around. With the sun now beaming all around, the air has begun to warm, and my hair is no longer frozen but damp. It is starting to dry. I keep running steadily and still have a group of runners running

alongside me. They, too, are feeling the strength and the positive feeling all around us. They continue to holler out to the Gods, letting them know that we are running and praying. I can now see the hogan, and my past gets faster; as we approach the hogan, one of my uncles is standing near the door, and I can still hear the medicine man and all those inside still singing, so I am told to continue running in the opposite direction. Later, I was told that when the medicine man had finished singing and I was not returning, he had no choice but to start a new set of songs, and I had to wait until he was done before I could go back into the hogan. This was not a bad thing, but a good thing. I ran another 2-3 miles to the sheepherder's camp and turned around. As we approached the hogan, I heard the singing, but I was allowed to go in. I ran in, and the singing stopped. I made it back just in time. By this time, I was breathing heavily and had to have small beads of sweat coming down the side of my fast, but I was okay. I sat back in my spot for the remainder of the ceremony. It was not long before we all went out to the cake pit. While I was out running, my uncles removed the ashes and the dirt and had the cake start to cool so that it would be able to cut it out. The cake was still hot, but the men and ladies were able to cut sections out one by one. As they did this, I passed the pieces of cake to all my relatives as a thank you for their support, their guidance, their belief in me, and their prayers and blessings throughout the past four days. I felt strong and had a sense of pride that my life would be a great one. As the ceremony winded down and came to a close, I could now relax and get ready for the next four days of observance. This required me to remain at my grandma's and to continue to sleep in the hogan, but it also meant that I could now eat with salt and sugar. It was several hours later that I realized that not only did I reach my goal of running 10+ miles. Having to run in 2 directions, I ran 15 miles.

Going beyond my goal that morning, I relate that to reaching my educational goal of a doctoral degree. Achieving my doctoral degree is not the end. There is more to apply what I learned by contributing to Indigenous research and knowledge that I can apply within our schools and community. (Belone, 2022)

## SUMMARY

In the end, my critical analysis, has lead me to the realization that there is a need to conceptualize and develop a sound culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). I learned that CRP is positioned in a context that distinguishes the rich and varied cultural wealth, knowledge, and skills of diverse learners. It is this method that seeks to develop a philosophical view of teaching that is dedicated to nurturing students' academic, social, emotional, cultural, psychological, and physiological well-being.

In the article by K. Ragoonaden & L. Mueller (2017. pg. 23), it gives a precise meaning of CRP and quotes several authors on the urgency of infusing CRP in the mainstream curricular.

> CRP is an approach that focuses classroom curricula and practice on students' cultural frames of reference (Gay 2000; 2010; 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1994). It is a pedagogy that recognizes students' differences, validates students' cultures, and asserts that cultural similarity of classroom practices increases students' success in schools. In conventional Western school structure, Eurocentric practices focusing on individual disciplines where students are required to learn in a linear fashion abound, to the detriment of those hidden, othered voices (Armstrong, 2005; Claypool & Preston, 2011; Preston & Claypool, 2013). In keeping with this, research indicates that students who are culturally diverse have a tenuous relationship with schools whose educational practices emphasize traditional, Eurocentric, and normative approaches (Battiste, 2002; 2013; Claypool & Preston, 2011; Sharpe & Arsenault, 2009). These types of practices tend to exclude learners from non-mainstream cultural backgrounds by ignoring their distinctive cultural nature and cultural wealth. This culminates in a devaluing of identity and way of being, resulting in cultural discontinuity for learners and the educational institution in which they are enrolled (Egbo, 2005; 2009; 2011; Ogbu, 1982; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011).

As an Indigenous scholar and researcher, I share this vision and perceive that this is the method in which our Indigenous youth will be successful and reclaim their Indigenous pride.

It is known that Western Eurocentric curricular and programs is not intended to facilitate a holistic approach to the social, emotional, and cultural adaptation of Indigenous youth. By emphasizing respect, cultural integrity, relevance to Diné perspectives and experiences, reciprocal relationships, and responsibility through participation, the research questions, goals, and aims brought forth this study-to analyze the GSUSA and GSUSA Leadership programs to the Diné philosophy of Hózhó (harmonious way of life) and the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony)**,** and its respond to their roles and responsibilities aimed at Indigenous education. Lastly, having a better understanding of how educators can support the academic successes of all Indigenous youth is an emergent and important priority in Indigenous educational contexts.

By taking the GSUSA and GSUSA Leadership Experience (GSLE) programs and comparing it to the Diné philosophies and values, there is a strong correlation of positively giving attention to leadership skills, self-identity, and the Diné language. In doing so, it helps Diné girls (and youth) make a successful transition to academic studies on intellectual, social and emotional levels. Additional results included fostering a sense of belonging, promoting engagement in the curricular and co-curricular life of the elementary, articulating the school's expectations of the students and faculty, supporting students' development and application of critical thinking skills, and helping students clarify their purpose, meaning, and direction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In regards to recommendations, I've learned that in recent years, scholars have devoted considerable attention to the importance of aligning classroom experiences with students' home culture as a way of enhancing social, academic and cultural enrichment of all children. Culturally responsive teaching is viewed as one way of implementing the concept of multicultural education in schools. The research, journals, and articles that were referenced and the research

participants considered culturally responsive teaching to be an important part of working with culturally diverse students. It was significant to note that the outcomes demonstrated a perception toward the importance of culturally responsive teaching matched the manner with which they responded to the characteristics of culturally relevant teaching.

Effective education, specifically within the context of this critical analysis, is particularly directed and relevant to the specific and unique learning needs of all students. Because of diverse school populations with diverse backgrounds and unique learning styles and needs in schools today, effective teaching has to address such diversity of learning needs through diverse teaching approaches and strategies. Effective education for cultural diversity is thus viewed in terms of successful classroom practices where all students are sensitively accommodated and thus learn successfully. To manage cultural diversity in school classrooms effectively, such educational situations need to be inclusive in the true sense of the word. An underlying philosophy must be that diversity is valued and that it strengthens classroom dynamics and offers greater learning opportunities for all. It needs to be accepted that all students can learn successfully and indeed belong in the school's mainstream and community life.

Moving forward, my recommendations is to continue my research as it was originally proposed, of having an afterschool program that young elementary aged girls can attend, to learn more about the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá, and simultaneously learning and being a part of the Girl Scouts Leadership program. In doing so, it will address the topic on culturally responsive schooling (CRS) and for being culturally relevant and responsive for our Diné youth with an eye toward how we might provide more equitable and culturally responsive education within the current context of standardization and accountability. Although CRS for

Indigenous youth has been advocated for over the past 40 years, schools and classrooms are failing to meet the needs of Indigenous students.

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

With this educational approach it requires a shift in teaching methods, curricular materials, teacher dispositions, and school–community relations. The growing diversity of students in schools paired with the continued homogeneity of teachers makes the call for CRS more important than ever. (Tippeconnic & Faircloth, 2006, p. 1)

## CONCLUSION

Recognizing that federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribes in the United States are strikingly different in their own culture, geographic region, language, dress, food, ceremonies, philosophies, beliefs, and teachings, I believe that the Diné philosophies of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá, provides an important element of wellness for our Diné girls.

Castagno & Brayboy (2002), make a good point, when they state that "students will learn better and be more engaged in schooling when they can make connections to it. This is certainly neither new nor revolutionary information. But the fact that in 2008 we are still making this same argument and trying to convince educators of the need to provide a more culturally responsive pedagogy for Indigenous students indicates the pervasiveness and the persistence of the problem. Why is it that scholars are still making similar arguments today that were being made in the early

1980s and even earlier in the Meriam Report? We should find this question both frustrating but also, maybe, empowering." (p. 981)

Culturally responsive schools, classes, and teachers subscribe to the basic tenets of the approach, as one that "connects students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with what they learn in school. These connections help students access rigorous curriculum and develop higher-level academic skills. And so, as a result of this analysis, the starting point to make these connections for our students will be to: (1) build a positive classroom culture by establish a nurturing classroom culture; (2) build a culturally responsive classroom, then, we must get to know our students and their families; (3) make sure your students are represented in the books you read, songs you play, practice sheets you use, and movies you show; (4) set high expectations for all students. Differentiation and scaffolding helps push kids to reach their potential because they support students in closing opportunity gaps and allow you to keep high expectations; (5) being in tune with your students' culture and needs. It means believing your students can—and will—meet your high expectations.

Gloria Ladson-Billings introduced the concept of culturally responsive teaching. She saw it as a way to maximize students' academic achievement by integrating their cultural reference in the classroom. More teachers are using culturally responsive teaching to best teach diverse student populations. They're also finding it's a powerful way to reach all students.

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## APPENDIX 1 – INFORMED CONSENT FOR DINÉ LANGUAGE & CULTURE TEACHER RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

### Informed Consent for Diné Language & Culture Teacher Research Participant

December 21, 2020

**Purpose of the study:** Deborah J. Belone from the Native American Leadership Education Program, with the University of New Mexico, Educational Leadership and Policy, is conducting a research project. The Principal Investigator and Responsible Faculty is Shawn Secatero, PhD, of the UNM Teacher Education, Educational Leadership Program. The purpose of this research study is to compare the lifestyle of Hózhó, the Kinaaldá, and beliefs of being Diné to the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), for cultural awareness that would positively affect and support the unique differences of each girl, her family, her school, and her community.

You are being asked to take part in this study because you have been identified as meeting one or more of the following criteria(s):

1. Diné tribal member,
2. Living off-reservation,
3. Diné Language and Culture teacher,
4. Have firsthand knowledge and experience with the Navajo Nation Diné Standards and the Diné Philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá?

In this research, there will be a total of three (3) Diné Language and Culture teachers that are needed. I will be asking and inviting six (6) teachers to participate. As an interested teacher, I will write your name down, assign you to a number, for a random drawing. The random drawing will take place as soon as I get six interested teachers. The random selection tool that I will use is called the Pickerwheel and can be found online, at https://pickerwheel.com. All candidates will be notified (via phone call), of whether they were randomly selected or not.

**What you will do in the study:** As the selected teachers, you will be involved with the choice of either a voice call (telephone) or through an online platform (such as Zoom or a GoTo Meeting). This will assist with identifying the key areas that focus the Diné Philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá.

The interviews are expected to take 60 minutes. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. There may be ongoing conversations between the you and I, that will to explain in detail of your knowledge and experiences as to the Navajo Nation Diné Standards, the Diné Philosophy of Hózhó, and the Kinaaldá, or to clarify other questions that you may have. The importance of this interview method is to reassure you that your responses are accurate and to your satisfaction. At any time during the interview, you are welcome to skip a question or decline to continue participating at no consequences to you.

**Risks:** Your involvement in this research is voluntary, as you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no names or identifying information associated with the responses. Expected risks in this research could be loss of confidentiality and privacy, and the interviews could go longer than the stated time due to your responses to the questions, by sharing many of your own personal experiences, stories, thoughts, recommendations, and comments.

**Benefits:** Although, there may be no benefits to you, the research goals are: (a) to create a process that would address the culturally background of Diné children; (b) to create sample lessons that would teach leadership, restore identity, and regain Diné language; (c) to identify ways that would give opportunities to build positive relationships among families, schools, and the community; and (d) to identify solutions that would "equal the playing field" of joining Indigenous knowledge to Western Eurocentric (White Man's) programs.

**Confidentiality of your information**: Your data will be stored securely in either in a locked file cabinet, where only the researcher has a key, and/or on a thumb drive, that requires a password/passcode to access. Your information collected for this project will NOT be used or shared for future research, even if we remove the identifiable information like your name.

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research may be permitted to access your records. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this study-pseudonym names will be used.

**Payment:** You will not be paid for your participation.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to not participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without penalty.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Deborah J. Belone. UNM Native American Leadership Education Program, Teacher Education, Educational Leadership and Policy. PO Box 704, Fruitland, New Mexico 87416. (928) 225-6394. E-mail: beloned@unm.edu or Shawn Secatero, Ph.D. UNM Teacher Education, Educational Leadership Program. Hokona Zuni Hall Room 388. (MSC05 3040. 1 University of New Mexico. Albuquerque, N.M. 87131. (505) 277-6018. ssecater@unm.edu

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team or have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Main Campus IRB Contact info.: UNM Office of the IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu Website: http://irb.unm.edu/

**CONSENT**

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. By taking the time to have, read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction, you give your informed consent. By agreeing to this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

## APPENDIX 2 – INFORMED CONSENT FOR TRADITIONAL HEALER/MEDICINE MAN OR WOMAN/ DINÉ SPECIALIST RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

### Informed Consent for Traditional Healer/Medicine Man or Woman/ Diné Specialist Research Participant

August 30, 2020

**Purpose of the study:** Deborah J. Belone from the Native American Leadership Education Program, with the University of New Mexico, Educational Leadership and Policy, is conducting a research project. The Principal Investigator and Responsible Faculty is Shawn Secatero, Ph.D., of the UNM Teacher Education, Educational Leadership Program. The purpose of this research study is to compare the lifestyle of Hózhó, the Kinaaldá, and beliefs of being Diné to the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), for cultural awareness that would positively affect and support the unique differences of each girl, her family, her school, and her community.

You are being asked to take part in this study because you have been identified as meeting one or more of the following criteria(s):

1. Diné (Navajo) tribal member
2. Living off the Navajo Reservation
3. Traditional Healer/Medicine Man or Woman/Diné Specialist
4. Have firsthand knowledge and experience with the Diné Philosophy of Hózhó (Harmonious way of life) and the Kinaaldá (puberty female ceremony)

In this research, there will be a total of three (3) Traditional Healer/Medicine Man or Woman/Diné Specialist that are needed. I will be asking and inviting six (6) Traditional Healer/Medicine Man or Woman/Diné Specialist to participate. As an interested teacher, I will write your name down, assign you to a number, for a random drawing. The random drawing will take place as soon as I get six interested teachers. The random selection tool that I will use is called the Pickerwheel and can be found online, at https://pickerwheel.com. All candidates will be notified (via phone call), of whether they were randomly selected or not.

**What you will do in the study:** As the selected person, you will be involved with the choice of either a voice call (telephone) or through an online platform (such as Zoom or a GoTo Meeting). This will assist with identifying the key areas that focus the Diné Philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá. The interviews are expected to take 60 minutes. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. There may be ongoing conversations between the you and I, that will to explain in detail of your knowledge and experiences as to the Navajo Nation Diné Standards, the Diné Philosophy of Hózhó, and the Kinaaldá, or to clarify other questions that you may have. The importance of this interview method is to reassure you that your responses are accurate and to your satisfaction. At any time during the interview, you are welcome to skip a question or decline to continue participating at no consequences to you.

**Risks:** Your involvement in this research is voluntary, as you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no names or identifying information associated with the responses. Expected risks in this research could be loss of confidentiality and privacy, and the interviews could go longer than the stated time due to your responses to the questions, by sharing many of your own personal experiences, stories, thoughts, recommendations, and comments.

**Benefits:** Although there may not be any benefits to you, the goals are: (a) to create a process that would address the culturally background of Diné children; (b) to create sample lessons that would teach leadership, restore identity, and regain Diné language; (c) to identify ways that would give opportunities to build positive relationships among families, schools, and the community; and (d) to identify solutions that would "equal the playing field" of joining Indigenous knowledge to Western Eurocentric (White Man's) programs.

**Confidentiality of your information**: Your data will be stored securely in either in a locked file cabinet, where only the researcher has a key, and/or on a thumb drive, that requires a password/passcode to access. Additionally, your information collected for this project will NOT be used or shared for future research, even if we remove the identifiable information like your name.

The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research may be permitted to access your records. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this study-pseudonym names will be used.

**Payment:** You will not be paid for your participation.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to not participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without penalty.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Deborah J. Belone. UNM Native American Leadership Education Program, Teacher Education, Educational Leadership and Policy. PO Box 704, Fruitland, New Mexico 87416. (928) 225-6394. E-mail: beloned@unm.edu or Shawn Secatero, Ph.D. UNM Teacher Education, Educational Leadership Program. Hokona Zuni Hall Room 388. (MSC05 3040. 1 University of New Mexico. Albuquerque, N.M. 87131. (505) 277-6018. ssecater@unm.edu

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team or have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:
UNM Main Campus IRB Contact info.: UNM Office of the IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu Website: http://irb.unm.edu/

**CONSENT**

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. By taking the time to have, read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction, you give your informed consent. By agreeing to this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

## APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DINÉ LANGUAGE TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

**Pseudonym: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____**

1. Please, state your tribal affiliation, and what region/location of the reservation you are from (name, location)?

2. How long have you been a Diné Language and Culture teacher?

3. Where did you receive your training or educational credentials? Do you currently have a Navajo Nation 520 Endorsement?

4. What is your knowledge and experience with using the Navajo Nation Diné Standards?

5. What part of the Diné Standards involve leadership skills and self-identity? If so, could they be aligned to a Western program, such as the Girl Scouts of the USA program? How?

6. What is your knowledge of the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony)? Purpose? Process?

7. When you think of the term Hózhó (Harmonious way of life), how would you define it?

8. What are some examples of Hózhó, that you experienced growing up?

9. Is there a connection between the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony) and Hózhó (Harmonious way of life)? If so, please elaborate.

10. Describe your definition of leadership. Is there a difference between a male and female leader? What characteristics and personalities do you see in a strong female leader?

11. Can you identify any connections between the Kinaaldá, Hózhó, and leadership?

12. Aside from the Kinaaldá, can you provide examples of Hózhó and leadership?

13. In what ways do you feel acknowledged or honored culturally or as a Diné today?

14. Do you have any recommendations for how you were educated? How can our schools instill a Diné philosophy of Hózhó, strong self-identity, and revitalize the Diné language among our Diné children?

15. How can your educational experience provide a safer and more welcoming relationship with the families and their communities?

16. Do you have any other comments/advice/or questions?

Ahe'hee (thank you) for your participation and time you have given.

## APPENDIX 4 – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TRADITIONAL HEALER/MEDICINE MAN OR WOMAN/ DINÉ SPECIALIST PARTICIPANTS

**Pseudonym: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____**

1. Please, state your tribal affiliation, and what region/location of the reservation you are from (name, location)?

2. How long have you been a Traditional Healer/Medicine Man or Woman/ Diné Specialist?

3. Where did you receive your experience, training or educational credentials?

4. What is your knowledge and/or experience of the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony)? Purpose? Process?

5. When you think of the term Hózhó (Harmonious way of life), how would you define it?

6. What are some examples of Hózhó, that you experienced growing up?

7. Is there a connection between the Kinaaldá (female puberty ceremony) and Hózhó (Harmonious way of life)? If so, please elaborate.

8. Describe your definition of leadership. Is there a difference between a male and female leader? What characteristics and personalities do you see in a strong female leader?

9. Can you identify any connections between the Kinaaldá, Hózhó, and leadership?

10. Aside from the Kinaaldá, can you provide examples of Hózhó and leadership?

11. How can our schools instill a Diné philosophy of Hózhó, strong self-identity, and revitalize the Diné language among our Diné children?

12. Do you have any other comments/advice/or questions?

Ahe'hee (thank you) for your participation and time you have given.

# APPENDIX 5 - UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD (UNMIRB) LETTER

OFFICE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

| | |
|---|---|
| DATE: | August 31, 2020 |
| IRB #: | 08520 |
| IRBNet ID & TITLE: | [1601603-5] Being Culturally Relevant and Responsive: Indigenizing the Girl Scouts of USA Program with the Dine Philosophy of Hózhó and the Kinaaldá, to Illuminate Leadership, Rekindle Identity, & Revitalize Language among Diné Girls |
| PI OF RECORD: | Shawn Secatero, EDD |
| SUBMISSION TYPE: | Response/Follow-Up |
| BOARD DECISION: | APPROVED |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: | August 31, 2020 |
| EXPIRATION DATE: | None |
| RISK LEVEL: | MINIMAL RISK |
| PROJECT STATUS: | ACTIVE - OPEN TO ENROLLMENT |
| DOCUMENTS: | • Consent Form - Consent Healer Medicine Man-Woman Dine (UPDATED: 08/31/2020)<br>• Consent Form - Consent Dine Language Teacher (UPDATED: 08/31/2020)<br>• Letter - IRB Response Letter Aug 26, 2020 (UPDATED: 08/31/2020) |

Thank you for your Response/Follow-Up submission. The UNM IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an acceptable risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks to participants have been minimized. **This project is not covered by UNM's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and will not receive federal funding.**

The IRB has determined the following:

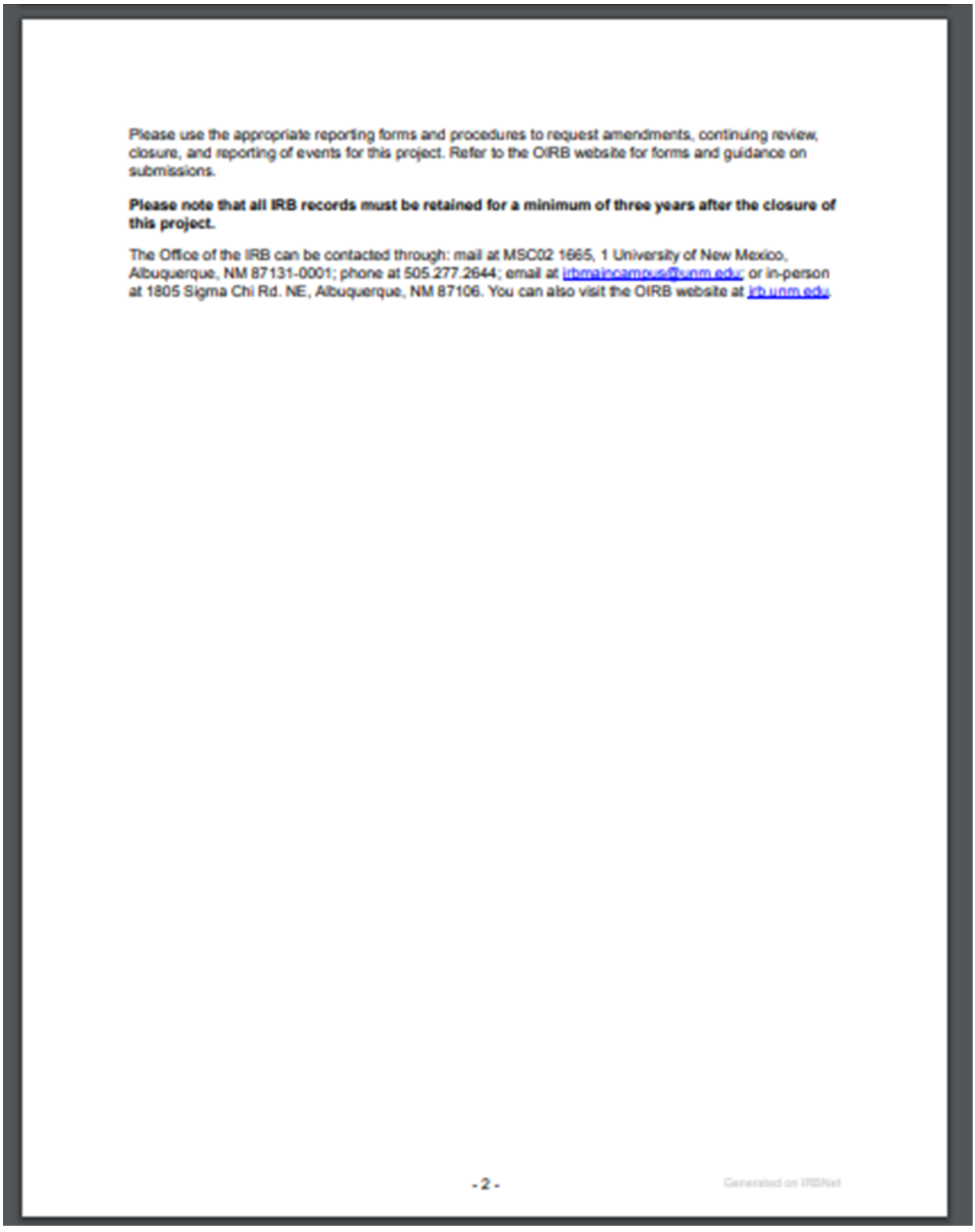
- Informed consent must be obtained and documentation has been waived for this project. To obtain consent, use only approved consent document(s).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this research. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review category. **If federal funding will be sought for this project, an amendment must be submitted so that the project can be reviewed under relevant federal regulations.**

All reportable events must be promptly reported to the UNM IRB, including: UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to participants or others, SERIOUS or UNEXPECTED adverse events, NONCOMPLIANCE issues, and participant COMPLAINTS.

If an expiration date is noted above, a continuing review or closure submission is due no later than 30 days before the expiration date. **It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to apply for continuing review or closure and receive approval for the duration of this project.** If the IRB approval for this project expires, all research related activities must stop and further action will be required by the IRB.

## APPENDIX 5 (CONTINUE) - UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD (UNMIRB) LETTER



Please use the appropriate reporting forms and procedures to request amendments, continuing review, closure, and reporting of events for this project. Refer to the OIRB website for forms and guidance on submissions.

**Please note that all IRB records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the closure of this project.**

The Office of the IRB can be contacted through: mail at MSC02 1665, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001; phone at 505.277.2644; email at irbmaincampus@unm.edu; or in-person at 1805 Sigma Chi Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. You can also visit the OIRB website at irb.unm.edu.

# APPENDIX 6 - COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI) REPORT – PART 1 OF 2

## COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
### COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Deborah Belone (ID: 5982157)
- **Institution Affiliation:** University of New Mexico, Main Campus (ID: 2796)
- **Institution Email:** beloned@unm.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educatonal Leadership
- **Phone:** 928-225-6394

- **Curriculum Group:** RCR Basic Course
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 47113192
- **Completion Date:** 05-May-2022
- **Expiration Date:** 04-May-2025
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 98

| REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY | DATE COMPLETED | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Research, Ethics, and Society (ID: 15198) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598) | 05-May-2022 | 4/5 (80%) |
| Conflicts of Interest (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Mentoring (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16602) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |

**For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.**

**Verify at**: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k9089ed60-1290-46fe-bd94-3458632a94b7-47113192

# APPENDIX 7 - COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI) REPORT – PART 2 OF 2

## COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
### COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Deborah Belone (ID: 5982157)
- **Institution Affiliation:** University of New Mexico, Main Campus (ID: 2796)
- **Institution Email:** beloned@unm.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Educatonal Leadership
- **Phone:** 928-225-6394

- **Curriculum Group:** RCR Basic Course
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 47113192
- **Report Date:** 05-May-2022
- **Current Score**:** 98

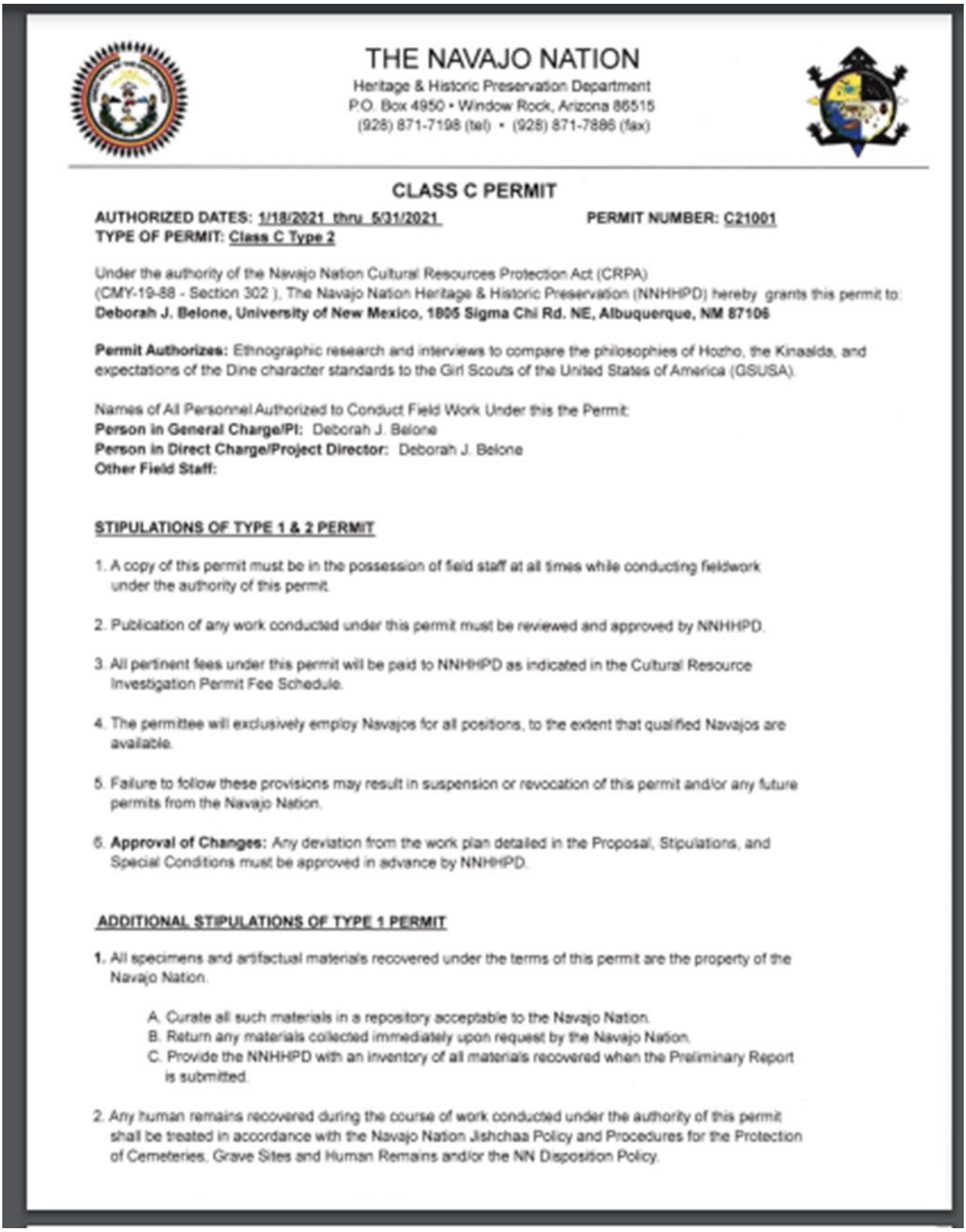
| REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES | MOST RECENT | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic) (ID: 13566) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Plagiarism (RCR-Basic) (ID: 15156) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Research, Ethics, and Society (ID: 15198) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Authorship (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16597) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Collaborative Research (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16598) | 05-May-2022 | 4/5 (80%) |
| Conflicts of Interest (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16599) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Mentoring (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16602) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Peer Review (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16603) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Research Misconduct (RCR-Basic) (ID: 16604) | 05-May-2022 | 5/5 (100%) |

**For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.**

**Verify at**: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k9089ed60-1290-46fe-bd94-3458632a94b7-47113192

**Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)**
Email: support@citiprogram.org

## APPENDIX 8 - NAVAJO NATION PRESERVATION AND HISTORICAL OFFICE LETTER



THE NAVAJO NATION

Heritage & Historic Preservation Department
P.O. Box 4950 • Window Rock, Arizona 86515
(928) 871-7198 (tel) • (928) 871-7886 (fax)

**CLASS C PERMIT**

**AUTHORIZED DATES:** 1/18/2021 thru 5/31/2021 **PERMIT NUMBER:** C21001
**TYPE OF PERMIT:** Class C Type 2

Under the authority of the Navajo Nation Cultural Resources Protection Act (CRPA) (CMY-19-88 - Section 302 ), The Navajo Nation Heritage & Historic Preservation (NNHHPD) hereby grants this permit to:
**Deborah J. Belone, University of New Mexico, 1805 Sigma Chi Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106**

**Permit Authorizes:** Ethnographic research and interviews to compare the philosophies of Hozho, the Kinaalda, and expectations of the Dine character standards to the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA).

Names of All Personnel Authorized to Conduct Field Work Under this the Permit:
**Person in General Charge/PI:** Deborah J. Belone
**Person in Direct Charge/Project Director:** Deborah J. Belone
**Other Field Staff:**

**STIPULATIONS OF TYPE 1 & 2 PERMIT**

1. A copy of this permit must be in the possession of field staff at all times while conducting fieldwork under the authority of this permit.
2. Publication of any work conducted under this permit must be reviewed and approved by NNHHPD.
3. All pertinent fees under this permit will be paid to NNHHPD as indicated in the Cultural Resource Investigation Permit Fee Schedule.
4. The permittee will exclusively employ Navajos for all positions, to the extent that qualified Navajos are available.
5. Failure to follow these provisions may result in suspension or revocation of this permit and/or any future permits from the Navajo Nation.
6. **Approval of Changes:** Any deviation from the work plan detailed in the Proposal, Stipulations, and Special Conditions must be approved in advance by NNHHPD.

**ADDITIONAL STIPULATIONS OF TYPE 1 PERMIT**

1. All specimens and artifactual materials recovered under the terms of this permit are the property of the Navajo Nation.
   A. Curate all such materials in a repository acceptable to the Navajo Nation.
   B. Return any materials collected immediately upon request by the Navajo Nation.
   C. Provide the NNHHPD with an inventory of all materials recovered when the Preliminary Report is submitted.
2. Any human remains recovered during the course of work conducted under the authority of this permit shall be treated in accordance with the Navajo Nation Jishchaa Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Cemeteries, Grave Sites and Human Remains and/or the NN Disposition Policy.