

The Dynamics of Tribal College-State University Collaboration

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Collaboration between tribal colleges and state universities is a common, oftentimes necessary approach for the effective development and delivery of higher education programs for American Indians. Still, little research pertains directly to this topic. This qualitative study, featuring interviews with state university and tribal college collaborators in the upper midwest, contributes to a new model for understanding factors that influence this process. Model components include contextual, individual, and organizational factors; collaboration and empowerment; and outcomes.

Overview of the Literature

Although there is not a body of literature existing on the research topic, a wealth of information is available that relates to American Indians in higher education, collaboration (including university-school partnerships) and empowerment. Synthesized, this work helps form a foundational understanding of many of the issues that influence tribal college-state university collaboration.

American Indians in Higher Education

Pavel et al. (1998) provided a comprehensive summary report on the status of American Indians and Alaska Natives in postsecondary education. Among the relevant points of this work are population growth among American Indians, the continued gap in educational attainment between Indians and non-Indians, and enrollment gains in access to higher education, particularly for American Indian women, and particularly at tribal colleges.

Despite these gains, a number of factors continue to act as barriers to American Indians' access to higher education. These include isolation (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 1999; Wax, Wax, & Dumont, 1964), poverty (Carter, 1999), poor academic preparation, unsupportive educational environments, institutional racism (Feagin, 1996), and cultural discontinuity between Native communities and mainstream higher education institutions (Huffman, 1999; St. Germaine, 1995; Wright & Tierney, 1991). As a result,

American Indians lag behind other U.S. ethnic minority groups in many measures of educational attainment (Harvey, 2001; Pavel et al., 1998).

As a manifestation of the drive for self-determination among Native people, the tribal college movement began in the late 1960s. Subsequent years has shown an improvement in the status of American Indians in higher education (Boyer, 1997; Oppelt, 1990; Stein, 1992; Szasz, 1999). The number of U.S. tribal colleges and universities has expanded since the founding of Navajo Community College in 1968; today, there are 34 institutions that are members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. Enrollment at tribal colleges has grown from approximately 2,100 undergraduates in 1982 to 24,363 undergraduates and 250 graduate students in 1996. In states with tribal colleges, the proportion of American Indian students being educated rose 62% between 1990 and 1996. Enrollment growth has been accompanied by expanded academic offerings, so that several tribal colleges now offer baccalaureate and graduate degrees, in addition to associate degrees and certificate programs (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 1999; Stein, 1992).

Though initially modeled after and similar in many ways to mainstream community colleges, tribal colleges are unique (Oppelt, 1990; Stein, 1992). These institutions have an explicit mission to explore and rebuild or reinforce tribal cultures using curricula and institutional settings that are conducive to the success of American Indians (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 1999). Rousey and Longie (2002) described the tribal colleges' family-like support system that has contributed to institutional growth and success in meeting the particular needs of tribal communities. Belgarde (1993) suggested that tribal colleges can be a bridge between their Indian clientele and the larger academic society. Szasz (1999) described how tribal colleges have become "cultural intermediaries" for Native college students, reaffirming Native identity and training for survival in a contemporary world.

During the past decade, there has been growing recognition of and support for the role tribal colleges and universities play in educating American Indians. In 1994, tribal colleges were granted land grant status. This designation helped secure additional funding, broaden offerings in the food and agricultural sciences, and expand institutional missions of teaching to include research and extension activities (Baird, 1996). President Clinton's 1996 executive order on tribal colleges and universities directed all government agencies to establish specific linkages with these institutions (Szasz, 1999); a renewed Executive Order was signed by President Bush in 2002. Funding opportunities for tribal colleges have also expanded, with support from organizations such as the United States Department of Agriculture (Tribal Colleges Endowment Fund, Tribal College Education Equity Grants, Tribal College Research Grants Program) and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (Native American Higher Education initiative).

At the same time, demographic shifts, accreditation requirements, and a fuller appreciation of what it means to be an "engaged institution" (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 1999) have led many mainstream universities to emphasize diversity

and outreach to the ethnic minority communities in their states (Tierney, 1993, 1998). Among others, Baird (1996), Boyer (1997), McDonald (2000), and Nichols, Baird and Kayongo-Male (2001) have called on state universities to work collaboratively with tribal institutions to more effectively serve their American Indian constituents. This research presents a theoretical model that can enhance understanding and guide and encourage further development of collaborative projects that are underway nationally (e.g., Mortensen, 2001; Nichols & Nichols, 1998).

Collaboration and Empowerment

Researchers from disciplines including education, business, counseling, health care, and sociology have explored the concepts of collaboration and empowerment. Although several have suggested definitions for collaboration, Gray's definition (1985) is perhaps the most succinct: "The pooling of . . . resources by two or more stakeholders to solve a set of problems which neither can solve unilaterally" (p. 912).

Empowerment as characterized by Freire (1970) is another central concept of this research. In this study, empowerment is seen not only as an outcome of collaboration, but also as a part of the collaborative process. Successful programs built around empowerment philosophies are characterized by active listening, dialogue about issues, and action for positive change (Freire, 1970). Empowerment is based on equality in relationships, mutual respect, and understanding. Its aim is the emancipation of the oppressed and movement toward a greater just society (Freire, 1970). Several researchers (e.g., Bond & Keys, 1993) have linked empowerment and collaboration. These ideas are central to the theoretical model for this study.

Theoretical Framework

This research draws on numerous theoretical perspectives to develop a conceptual understanding of state university-tribal college collaboration. Critical theory provides a philosophical foundation for the research, utilizing tenets of organizational and exchange theories.

A new, integrative model for understanding state university-tribal college collaboration was developed and refined through this research (Figure 1). The model—informed by a review of literature and the researcher's professional experience—has at its center the dialectical relationship between collaboration and empowerment. Influencing this dynamic are both individual and organizational factors set against a contextual backdrop that includes historical, cultural, political, and economic factors, resulting in a variety of potential outcomes. Model components, and the theoretical underpinnings of each, are described below.

Contextual Factors

As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) stated:

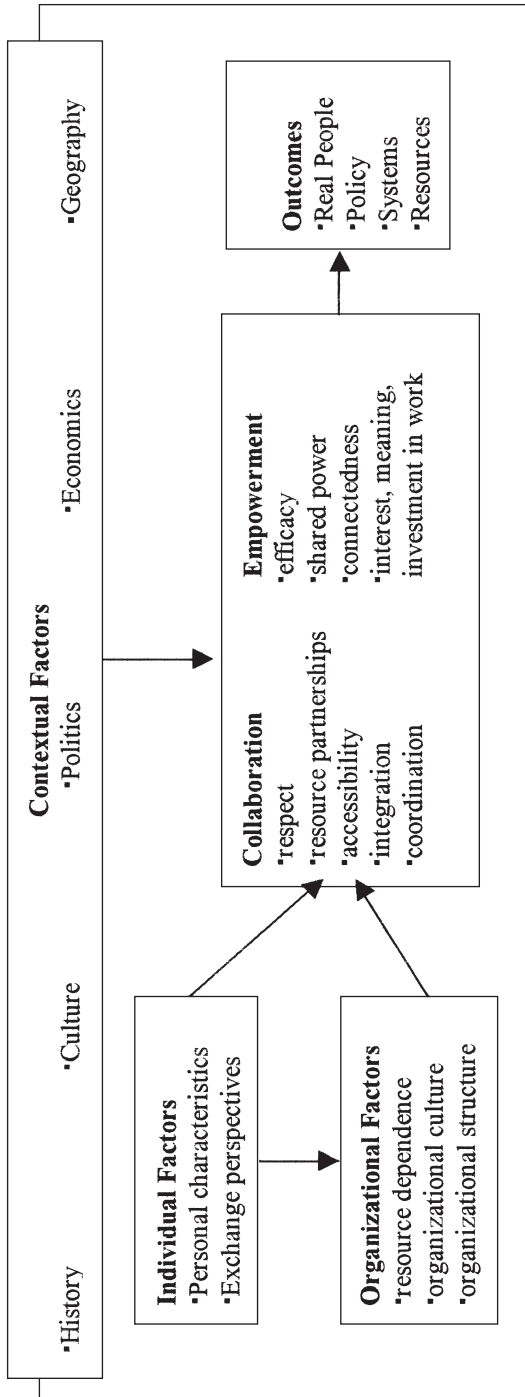


Figure 1. Model for understanding State University-Tribal college collaboration

To understand the behavior of an organization, you must understand the context of that behavior . . . organizations are inescapably bound up with the conditions of their environment. (p. 1)

State university-tribal college collaboration does not occur in isolation from its environment, but rather is influenced by the unique contexts in which it occurs. This is in keeping with the critical perspective that is concerned with the interrelationship of various segments of social reality. Critical theorists argue that the broader societal context must always be considered, and one aspect of social life cannot properly be examined in isolation from the rest. Contextual factors were also seen as important by Javan (1999) who argued that collaboration needs to be designed to fit community-specific economic and political realities. In their synthesis of research on the topic, Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) described environmental (contextual) factors as the key to the development of successful collaborative efforts.

The National Network for Collaboration (1996) identified the following contextual factors as influencing collaboration: connectedness, history of working together, political climate, policies/laws/regulations, resources, and catalysts. Considering the unique context of this study, historical, cultural, economic, and political factors were hypothesized as influencing the collaborative process between state universities and tribal colleges.

Historical factors impacting collaboration may include issues that have contributed to long-term tension between Native and European Americans. Such tension is often based on the legacy of broken treaties, displacement of American Indians from their Native homelands, injustices of the boarding school era, and other governmental policies that promoted acculturation of American Indians into the mainstream, and made Native language and spirituality illegal (Szasz, 1999). This draws from Hampton's (1988) suggestion that collaborative efforts with American Indian communities need to show an appreciation for the facts of Indian history, including the loss of land and continuing racial and political oppression.

More recent historical issues, such as previous attempts at collaboration between tribal colleges and universities, may also impact collaboration. Crazy Bull (1997) supported this historical dimension, citing many incidents in which university researchers have exploited Native people and communities for their own personal or organizational gain—taking from them their time, insight, and culture, while offering nothing in return.

Cultural factors were also hypothesized as influencing state university-tribal college collaboration. The disparate worldviews of Native and European Americans undoubtedly affect how individuals and institutions are able to work together (Badwound & Tierney, 1988). This relates to the previously discussed theme of cultural discontinuity (St. Germaine, 1995), and follows Bond and Keys (1993) who suggested that the collaborative process is complicated by—and potentially made more difficult—when working in cross-cultural situations.

Economic factors are also viewed as part of the contextual backdrop for state university-tribal college collaboration. The fact that reservations in South

Dakota are among the most poverty stricken areas in the country may influence how tribal colleges and state universities interact. The availability of funding for collaboration (or lack thereof) is also likely to impact how interorganizational relations develop between these institutions. Belgarde (1993), who conducted case study research at Turtle Mountain Community College and Little Big Horn College, suggested that the economic environment of the tribal colleges can provide only a few of the financial resources needed to ensure their survival. Thus, economic factors can serve as impetus for tribal colleges to establish linkages with outside organizations.

Political factors also add an important dimension to the context for collaboration. These may include power and policy issues at the state and federal levels, along with the unique politics of both tribal nations and higher educational institutions. Political theory, as described by Gray and Wood (1991), has been used to explain organizational relationships by focusing, like critical theorists, on who has access to power and resources, and who benefits from the distribution of these resources within a network of stakeholders. Sometimes political issues are expected to impede the collaborative process, while at other times the political environment can serve as a catalyst for collaboration.

Collaborative Process

Individual Factors

The model seeks to enhance understanding of why and how state universities and tribal colleges engage in collaborative efforts. Exchange theory can help provide a conceptual foundation for this improved understanding.

Exchange theory assumes that individuals are rational and are motivated by the potential for rewards or profit (Collins, 1994). Simmel (1978) suggested that exchange perspectives help explain how and why people enter into relationships. From this view, actors make decisions based on a calculation of perceived costs and benefits of any given course of action. Pure exchange theorists might suggest that individuals involved in state university–tribal college collaboration would be motivated by potential for personal material gain. Their decision on whether or not to be involved might be calculated in terms of perceived personal costs and benefits of the interaction.

Peter Blau (1964) described exchange as a voluntary action motivated by expected returns. He argued that the primary functions of exchange are to establish friendship, power, and subordination. Exchanges, according to Blau, can create trust and enhance social cohesion. Intensive group discussion and interaction can create shared values, and social structures emerge from exchange interactions.

Ekeh's (1974) discussion of collective theories of exchange is also relevant to this study. Drawing on Levi-Strauss' anthropological work, he suggested that people enter into exchange relationships not only for individual returns, but rather, in response to societal norms, and for the betterment of one's group. DiMaggio (1991) suggested that individuals act on the basis of both personal and corporate motives.

Although an exchange perspective does help to understand interaction among state university–tribal college collaborators, most likely participants are not motivated solely by a desire for personal material gain. A sense of personal satisfaction and feelings of advancing one’s group—college, tribe, community or institution—are also likely motivators. This perspective is supported by Sharfman and Gray’s (1991) theoretical work relating to the context for collaboration. These researchers described how institutional forces (e.g., social norms, organizational policies, and competitive forces) could also be found to attract individuals and organizations to collaborative work.

Organizational Factors

Organizational factors such as structure and culture may influence the success of collaborative efforts. Flood and Rom’s (2000) recent work with “total systems intervention” suggested that four key dimensions can help organizations understand and work through cross-cultural interactions and issues of diversity: organizational processes, organizational design, organizational culture (rules, practices, and decision making), and organizational politics (knowledge and power). Interventions not inclusive of or attentive to each of these dimensions are often found to be problematic.

Badwound and Tierney’s (1988) research elucidates some of the organizational differences between state universities and tribal colleges. Their thesis is that the western model of rational bureaucracy, while an accurate description of most state universities, fails to describe contemporary tribal college values. There is potential for such organizational differences to impact the collaborative process between state universities and tribal colleges. For example, collaborators coming together from these different contexts are likely to experience a clash of values while working through the collaborative process. Slater (1996) discovered similar issues in her study of a university-school district partnership in Florida.

The resource dependence model (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) is based on the assumption that no organization is able to generate all the resources it needs, and it must actively manipulate its environment to its own advantage. When applied to this study, resource dependence theory suggests that state universities and tribal colleges enter into collaboration to reduce environmental uncertainty and to acquire additional resources. A related explanation is transaction cost theory (Williamson, 1981), which suggests individuals and organizations focus on the anticipated costs and/or benefits of engaging in a collaborative effort. Belgarde (1993) found that tribal colleges were often resource-dependent on outside entities for funding and legitimacy. This may lead the organizations to engage in both buffering and bridging activities to reduce these dependencies. Forming linkages with state universities can be viewed as one such bridging or adaptive strategy used by tribal colleges to reduce dependencies, or, as Belgarde suggested, enhance funding potential and academic legitimacy.

Collaboration

Indicators of successful collaboration were derived from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's (1999) President's Commission report on the engaged institution that called for land grant institutions to reach out more authentically to underserved communities. These indicators include respect for partners, resource partnerships, responsiveness, accessibility, integration, academic neutrality, and coordination.

Empowerment

Freire's (1970) work on empowerment is also central to the model. Research indicates that empowerment and collaboration are connected; collaboration can lead to empowerment, and an empowerment philosophy can lead people to become involved in collaborative efforts. This dialectical relationship is reflected in the model and was further explored in the research.

Hazen (1994) employed Freire's notion of dialogue in characterizing genuine collaborative empowerment to consist of mutuality, reciprocity, and co-inquiry. Mutuality refers to a relationship in which both sides are viewed as growing and developing, not simply as objects to be used or manipulated. Reciprocity involves partners meeting on an equal basis. Co-inquiry is rooted in a shared understanding among participants so they can learn from each other's perspectives. Central to each of these dimensions/processes is dialogue, described by Hazen, as a radical humanist method of inquiry and transformation that must involve mutual respect and equality of exchange. Hazen argued that genuine dialogue removes what Habermas (1971) referred to as "distorted communication" among participants and clears the way for authentic collaboration for empowerment.

Empowerment is conceptualized as the opposite of the Marxian notion of "alienation." Among the dimensions of alienation elucidated by Seeman (1961) were normlessness, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. With the exception of normlessness, the parallel indicators of empowerment are opposite to those measuring alienation, that is, a sense of power, meaningfulness, connectedness, and efficacy.

Outcomes

The model suggests that there are many possible outcomes from empowering collaborative relationships between individuals and organizations—among them student success, enhanced individual and organizational capacities and relationships, and further collaborative activities. The typology presenting outcomes in terms of real people impacts, policy, and systems and resource development of the National Network of Collaboration (1996) is most valuable. Both positive and negative impacts/outcomes were investigated. Based on the previously cited research, it is hypothesized that favorable contextual factors, individual and organizational characteristics, and an empowerment philosophy may all influence the dynamics and outcomes of state university-tribal college collaboration.

Methods

Background

Qualitative research methods are most appropriate when there may be multiple realities under investigation, when relevant variables are not clear, and when seeking understanding of complex (including cross-cultural) situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Marshall and Rossman (1989) argued that qualitative methods are most appropriate in exploratory, descriptive studies that stress the importance of context, setting, and subjects' frames of reference. Qualitative methods are also linked with critical theoretical perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Crazy Bull (1997) argued that qualitative methods are most compatible with the "traditional Indian way of knowing" (p. 18), in that this approach seeks to describe and understand, rather than test hypotheses. Thus, qualitative methods are suitable for this research on collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges.

Research Questions

The project investigated the following research questions to develop a clearer understanding of collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges:

1. What motivates individuals and institutions to become involved in collaborative efforts?
2. What is the nature of the process of state university-tribal college collaboration?
3. What factors influence state university-tribal college collaboration?
 - a. Individual/personal factors
 - b. Organizational/institutional factors
 - c. Contextual (i.e., historical, cultural, economic, political) factors?
4. What are the results of state university-tribal college collaboration?

The circular dynamic between collaboration and empowerment was also explored to improve understanding and to gain insights into best practices of collaboration.

Site and Sample

Faculty and administrators at state universities and tribal colleges comprised the multiple voices contributing this study. Specifically, subjects included 18 state university faculty and administrators who have been involved in tribal college collaboration and 18 tribal college faculty and administrators who have been involved in collaboration with state universities.

Tribal college faculty and administrators participating included representatives from Candeska Cikana Community College (Spirit Lake Reservation, Fort Totten, North Dakota), Lower Brule Community College

(Lower Brule Reservation, Lower Brule, South Dakota), Oglala Lakota College (Pine Ridge Reservation, Kyle, South Dakota), Si Tanka College (Cheyenne River Reservation, Eagle Butte, South Dakota), Sinte Gleska University (Rosebud Reservation, Mission, South Dakota), Sisseton Wahpeton Community College (Lake Traverse Reservation, Agency Village, South Dakota), Sitting Bull College (Standing Rock Reservation, McLaughlin, South Dakota and Fort Yates, North Dakota), Turtle Mountain Community College (Turtle Mountain Reservation, Belcourt, North Dakota) and United Tribes Technical College (Bismarck, North Dakota). State university faculty and administrators were interviewed from South Dakota State University, North Dakota State University, the University of Minnesota, and Iowa State University.

The sites for the research were chosen for a number of reasons. The states represented in the study are home to a majority of the nation's tribal colleges. Some of the country's leading state university-tribal college collaborations have been developed in this region—collaborations that have provided a wealth of information and experience from which others can learn.

Subjects were selected based on their prior involvement in state university-tribal college collaborative efforts, and on their accessibility and responsiveness to the researcher's request for participation. Gender, ethnicity, and duration of involvement in collaborative efforts were also considered. Some of these participants referred the researcher to other potential subjects who had had experiences with the collaborative processes. In this manner, snowball sampling was used to generate additional respondents. No subjects approached to participate in the study declined to be interviewed.

Efforts were made to obtain input from as diverse a group as possible, including multiple types of institutions (representative of the range of sizes and types of state universities and tribal colleges in the region), academic disciplines, tribal affiliations, and experiences with collaboration.

Participants were approached via letters, phone calls, and personal visits from the researcher to request their participation in the study. Individuals and their home institutions were assured confidentiality; as such, they are not directly referred to in the presentation and analysis of data collected.

Methods

True to its base in critical theory, the study utilized qualitative methods, primarily interviews. Semi-standardized interviews (Berg, 1998) were conducted, with emphasis on obtaining narratives from participants in their own terms (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Efforts were made to ensure that a true emic (Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990) or insider's perspective was obtained. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face on site in the offices of the subjects. Due to scheduling challenges, weather, and budget and travel restrictions, five of the interviews were conducted via phone.

The interview guide consisted of 42 open-ended questions, divided into sections relating to segments of the proposed model. These included contextual

factors, motivational factors, individual and organizational factors, the collaboration-empowerment process, and outcomes of collaborative efforts. Each interview took between one and two hours, with most lasting approximately 90 minutes. Because of time limitations of the subjects, not all questions were asked of each interviewee; however, all subjects were asked at least one question from each of the topic areas. Follow-up and probe questions were also asked when and if they were needed to clarify responses or obtain additional information.

Handwritten field notes, typed within 24 hours of each interview, were condensed accounts of the interviews (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Spradley, 1979). A verbatim transcript was made of each interview session. A subsample of five interview transcripts were shared with interviewees to ensure accuracy, and to make sure their comments and perspectives were authentically portrayed. Each of these transcripts was accepted as an accurate record of the interview.

The expanded account included observer comments that were handwritten in black ink in the left margin of the interview transcripts. Observer comments fit with what Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) described as

brief, reflective bits of analytic writing that succinctly clarify, explain, interpret, or raise questions about some specific happening or process described in a fieldnote. (p. 101)

The researcher also wrote regular in-process memos. These were longer attempts at reflection, analysis, and interpretation. As Spradley (1979) explained, "Here is the place to record generalizations, analyses of cultural meanings, interpretations and insights" (p. 72). Together, the observer comments and in-process memos documented the researcher's reactions during the collection of the data. This set the stage for the ensuing data analysis.

Analysis

Data were analyzed and interpreted within the theoretical framework described herein, but true to a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) the research was inductive in nature. Though a new model was developed as a conceptual framework for the study, theory was not imposed and tested in a traditional quantitative manner. Rather, theory was allowed to emerge from the data collected. With this approach, the researcher moved back and forth between data gathering and interpretation. Ongoing literature review, theory development, and data collection/analysis continued throughout the research process.

Analysis began with a review of the transcribed field notes according to a content analysis of key themes related to the model. The three-fold process outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984) of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification was employed.

A multi-stage coding scheme was developed and applied to aid the researcher in condensing the data around key emergent themes. For the first stage, the transcripts were read, reviewed, and highlighted in color-codes correlating to portions of the model. In the second stage of the coding process, the same

colors were used with tabs marking the highlighted sections of the transcripts. The colored tabs were also coded with letters that further sorted responses in relation to the model. These flags guided the researcher when writing the study's findings.

In the next stage of the coding process, transcripts were reread a third time and further analytical notes were made in red ink within the margins. At times during this stage, new themes would emerge. New themes were flagged in still different colors.

To help ensure the project's reliability, a subsample (10 transcripts) of the data was double-coded, first by the researcher himself, and later, by a colleague with a Ph.D. in the social sciences, until a code/re-code reliability of 90% was achieved.

In a final attempt to ensure the validity of the data, draft findings and conclusions were reviewed by an American Indian colleague who works in administration at a tribal college. He was asked to check for the validity of the researcher's conclusions, and to suggest alternate possible interpretations of the data. This collaborator's insights uniformly affirmed the author's interpretation of the data and conclusions.

Findings and Discussion

Major findings served to affirm the components of the model. These are briefly summarized in Table 1, and discussed in more detail below.

Contextual Factors

Contextual factors were found to strongly influence the process of collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges. Each of the contextual factors proposed in the model—historical, cultural, political, and economic factors—were cited by respondents as impacting the development of collaborative relationships. An additional contextual factor, geography, emerged from the data. The factors were not seen as operating independently, but rather, there was much overlap among the different dimensions of the context for collaboration.

These findings affirm the study's base in critical theory, which argues that context is important. Previous work from researchers such as Belgarde (1993), Javan (1999), Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), Sharfman and Gray (1991), Slater (1996) and Tierney (1992), was also affirmed, as was Bond and Key's (1993) assertion that efforts at collaboration were made more difficult when they involved working across cultural and socioeconomic lines.

Three themes emerged from the data in relation to context. First, "baggage," the idea that contextual factors bring certain burdens or issues to efforts at collaboration; and secondly, "complication," meaning that contextual issues make collaboration less straightforward and oftentimes more difficult. One collaborator put it this way:

There are just so many issues: the poverty, the politics, the distance, the cultural stuff . . . it all makes it hard.

Table 1
Summary of Major Findings

Summary of Major Findings		
<u>State University-Tribal College Collaboration</u>		
Model Component	What Works	What Does Not
Contextual Factors	Collaborators aware of and sensitive to unique contextual factors: history, culture, politics, economics, and . geography	Lack of attention to or awareness of contextual factors can complicate the dynamics of collaboration, create “baggage,” and slow or prohibit the development of trust.
Motivation	Individuals and organizations that collaborate with a genuine desire for mutual benefit.	Collaboration based only on self-interest and without shared commitment to mutual goals.
Individual Factors	Individuals are key to collaborative success. Individual characteristics such as cross-cultural competence, open-mindedness, flexibility, shared commitment, persistence, and honesty.	Lack of key individual collaborative activist(s). Individuals who lack cross-cultural competence, who are rigid, close-minded, dishonest, impatient, and/or are not committed to the project.
Organizational Factors	Flexible organizations that allow autonomy, provide financial and moral support, and recognition of collaborative work; stable, streamlined organizational structures.	Highly bureaucratic or unstable organizations; lack of incentives, support, or recognition for collaboration.
Collaboration	Providing access, being responsive, showing respect, sharing resources; integrating and coordinating efforts.	Lack of respect, responsiveness, hoarding resources; lack of coordination and integration of efforts.
Empowerment	Philosophy aimed at developing a sense of self-efficacy, shared power, connectedness and meaning, interest, and investment among participants.	Monopolization of power and decision-making; lack of empowerment philosophy or attention to participants’ fulfillment.
Outcomes	Effective collaboration can lead to positive, sustainable impacts on individuals, organizations, and communities; positive impacts can be cumulative.	Efforts lacking model components may lead to negative outcomes or lack of outcomes from collaboration; negative impacts can be cumulative.

The third theme, “trust” between collaborating partners, was the development and result of the influence of contextual factors. Previous research (Newell & Swan, 2000) underscored the importance of trust to the collaborative process. One state university faculty member described the lack of trust as being the most significant obstacle to her collaborative success:

I think the historical lack of trust is the biggest barrier or hindrance to making it work. There is very little trust.

In the context of state university-tribal college collaboration, these themes—baggage, complication, and trust—are bound up in the notion of historical, cultural, political, economical, and geographical factors. The prominence of contextual factors is highlighted in the model that illustrates contextual factors as a backdrop surrounding and influencing collaborative process.

Motivation, Individual, and Organizational Factors

Respondents were motivated to collaborate by a number of factors. These included survival, access to resources, a sense of inner responsibility, expanded opportunities for funding, their institution’s mission, opportunities for personal and professional growth, and empathy with the underserved. For the most part, motivational factors described by respondents represented a fit with some aspect of exchange theory. Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978) resource dependence theory was also largely supported in that many respondents indicated they were drawn to collaboration to expand their access to a variety of resources, ranging from financial to facilities, and from academic expertise to cultural insights. This also fits with Belgarde’s (1993) discussion of resource dependence as a motivator for tribal colleges to form inter-organizational linkages. Consider these responses from tribal college administrators:

There’s opportunity [through collaboration] to bring in resources and experiences from other areas we don’t have. It’ll build whatever we do have here and make it better.

I was motivated by the lack of expertise we had. I’d look around and see a need and try to find others who could help fill it.

Other respondents indicated altruistic motives for collaboration, such as collaborating for the betterment of one’s group, to serve American Indian communities, or improve understanding between the races. A state university faculty member put it this way:

I have a social conscience, and believe that it’s a part of everyone’s obligation to help make things better.

In these instances, Ekeh’s (1974) work around collective exchange theories, Webb’s (1991) rational altruistic model, and DiMaggio’s (1991) research on personal and corporate motives were also supported.

The first relevant finding in relation to individuals in collaboration was the support of previous research (Gray, 1985; Rothwel, 1994; Selsky, 1991;

Sharfman & Gray, 1991; Slater, 1996) suggesting that individuals play a critical role in the development of collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges. Time and time again, when interviewees were asked what made collaboration work, they chose to talk about key individuals who had been instrumental in moving the effort forward. Experienced tribal college collaborators offered these insights:

Someone has to facilitate the relationship. You have to have someone to keep it going. It's not that much, but without the ongoing facilitation, it's not going to happen. People are going to get back and get busy and the collaboration falls through the cracks.

It takes someone who cares to nurture it to make something of it. There are lots of huge ideas, but very few who are passionate enough to make things happen.

Individual factors or characteristics cited as enhancing collaboration included cross-cultural competence, open-mindedness, willingness to listen, flexibility, shared commitment, patience, persistence, and honesty. Individuals who developed these capacities and approaches, it seemed, were much more likely to be successful collaborators.

Organizational factors were also found to influence state university-tribal college collaboration. This concurs with Slater (1996) and Badwound and Tierney (1988) who highlighted the role of organizational factors in the development of collaborative projects. In particular, respondents discussed how organizational culture and structure influenced their efforts to collaborate. Organizational culture dimensions found to enhance collaborative efforts included a flexibility that permitted participants getting involved in collaboration, financial and moral support, and a reward system that encouraged participation. Responses to these factors covered a wide spectrum. Some participants described organizational cultures that supported collaborative efforts and others actively discouraged them:

I don't think I could get tenure doing this.

They give us a lot of freedom . . . they don't monitor us. When we wanted to collaborate, there was absolutely nothing to stop us or say we couldn't. They've provided some modest financial support too, which has helped.

The discussion around organizational structure indicated that an intermediate level of structure was needed for collaborative efforts to thrive. The complex bureaucracy attributed to the state university and the unstable politically volatile structure described at some of the tribal colleges were both seen as impeding collaboration. One tribal college faculty member expressed frustration at the state university system:

Sometimes, the structure is a real barrier . . . there are so many layers at [state university] . . . you all have so many hoops to jump through.

A state university faculty member had experienced challenges in navigating the tribal college's organizational structure:

At the tribal college, there can be a lack of continuity. People come and go. It's so hard to get something started and then see the person disappear.

Individual and organizational factors were also seen to be closely related to one another. For example, an organizational culture that promotes collaboration might reward faculty involved in collaboration with tangible benefits; this would appeal to individuals motivated by the desire for material gains (exchange perspective). From a somewhat different view, a rigid, bureaucratic organizational structure might stifle the flexibility individuals need to be successful in collaborative relationships. The correct combination of individual and organizational factors can contribute to what Rappaport (1986) described as the proper circumstances for collaboration and empowerment. Although respondents agreed that a correct balance was needed of individual and organizational factors, no universal formula emerged from the data. The precise composition of those factors varied from site to site, project to project, and individual to individual.

Collaboration and Empowerment

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation's (1999) indicators provided a useful framework for the examination of collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges. These indicators included responsiveness, respect for partners, resource partnerships, academic neutrality, coordination, and integration. Factors were found to be closely related to each other and to the contextual, individual, and organizational factors previously discussed. Both the nature of the collaborative relationship (as characterized by the indicators of respect, responsiveness, and resource partnerships) and the day-to-day process of managing collaborative work (as characterized by the indicators of integration and coordination) were viewed as essential to the process. The final indicator of collaboration, academic neutrality, was viewed in the context of this study as shared input into setting the agenda for collaborative work. Here, the work of critical theorists, educators, and authors such as Tierney (1988, 1992, 1993, 1998) and Freire (1970) were key to conceptualizing a process that does not remain neutral, but rather positions itself explicitly on the side of the oppressed.

One tribal college administrator told this story of the ups and downs of working through the collaborative process:

I'll tell you a story. I was working with [state university] on a . . . grant. They wanted to meet and talk about it. So we got together and they had the whole thing written. And do you know how much out of \$200,000 (tribal college) was getting? \$10,000 a year. I said, "Why did you ask us here?" "Why did you waste our time?" I asked them if any of them would be willing to work for \$10,000 a year. Dead silence. And about then, they brought in lunch and I'm thinking, "Oh no, here I am eating their food and I've just laid down the law." But after lunch they said, "Would you like to rewrite the grant?" I said, "*Absolutely*—for 1/3 of the funding." So you sort of learn. You learn what works. You learn how to work together.

A state university collaborator summed it up this way:

Well, I think it's real collaboration when both parties benefit, not just one. You've got to treat people with respect. Look for the win-win.

The ideas of Tierney (1988, 1992, 1993, 1998) and Freire (1970) were relevant to findings related to empowerment. In the model, empowerment is viewed as being a part of collaboration, both influencing and being influenced by the process.

Measures for empowerment used in this study were conceptualized as the opposite of those discussed by Seaman (1961) in his exploration of Marx's concept of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. Flipped as indicators of empowerment, these included sense of efficacy, power sharing, interest, connectedness, and meaning and investment in work. This section of the model was affirmed after analysis of the data. Respondents gave examples of how being involved in collaboration had enhanced their sense of efficacy, connectedness, and power sharing, which increased interest, meaning, and investment in their work.

One tribal college faculty member offered this personal observation:

This collaboration thing has changed me. I mean I never would have thought I would stand up in a national meeting in Washington, DC, and told some big official what I thought of his ideas.

A state university faculty member had clearly been empowered through her involvement:

Collaborating with the tribal colleges is the most interesting, challenging, rewarding part of my job. I think we are really beginning to make a difference.

The key to the success of this process seemed to lie in the combination of the model's factors and in the dialectical relationship between collaboration and empowerment.

Outcomes of State University-Tribal College Collaboration

Finally, outcomes of collaboration were divided into the framework suggested by the National Network for Collaboration (1996), to include real people impacts, policy development, systems development, and resource development. As indicated in the revised model, this outcome framework reflects how the results of collaboration can be realized at the individual, organizational, and domain levels. Ultimately, collaboration can have an impact on contextual factors—by improving understanding between cultures, adding more positive new entries to historical relationships, and improving the economic situation on reservations by attracting new financial resources or launching joint development efforts. New joint degree programs, faculty development, and numerous student success stories were discussed by respondents. One tribal college administrator put it this way:

I've seen students graduate . . . that's how I know it's [the collaboration] working . . .

Examples were given for each type of impact. Real people impacts were most common among respondents and were viewed as setting the foundation for long-term, sustainable efforts at policy, systems, and resource development.

We went to work and got \$15,000-\$20,000 from six [state university] departments, all of which was matched by the [state university] President's office. So now we have annual funding, an office, a director, and an assistant at the university. And we're starting to talk structure. We're beginning to work on our constitution and by-laws.

Indeed, several respondents discussed how collaboration had allowed them to attract new funding and implement new joint programs that neither institution would have been able to do independently. The potential for cumulative effects or outcomes of collaboration was also apparent. Success at collaboration was seen as leading to many other promising possibilities. Several respondents cited "spin-off" projects that had grown out of strong relationships between collaborative partners. Consider these responses:

Collaboration can lead to more collaboration . . . to bigger and better things.

I think one of our outcomes is the relationships we've built, those have led to so many more things . . . for both us and them. There are so many spin-offs now from our original program . . . it's kind of amazing.

What makes the difference in terms of outcomes? Once again, the model seems to provide the best explanation: a combination of contextual, individual, and organizational factors that influence the many facets of the dialogical process of collaboration and empowerment.

What Does Not Work and Why

The negative side of this story, or what does not work in state university-tribal college collaboration also surfaced in the interviews. Instances where each of the factors under examination could function to impede collaborative efforts were explored. In these cases, the theoretical model remains valuable for understanding the process. Contextual, individual, and organizational factors can all influence the process of collaboration and empowerment in a negative manner. Negative outcomes, or, more commonly, a lack of outcomes are also understood to be much more likely when favorable conditions are not in place (in other words, when one of the variables is missing).

A final matter on the topic of what does not work in state university-tribal college collaboration concerns the potential for cumulative impacts of negative experiences. In other words, a negative experience in collaboration may do more than affect the outcomes of a particular collaborative endeavor. Such negative experiences may affirm a participant's already reluctant or skeptical attitude toward partnering with state universities or tribal colleges in the future.

I've just had bad experiences. It's not worth the time and effort. I'm just not interested in getting involved again.

You know, I hear about these programs, these collaborations, and I'm pretty skeptical. . . . I was around when we tried this kind of outreach a few years ago and it went nowhere. Now I feel like I'm too busy.

These comments recall Webb's (1991) discussion of trust, and the potential for cumulative negative effects of failed collaborative endeavors.

The perceived failure of interactions . . . tend only to confirm and deepen mistrust. What is needed is sufficient trust to initiate cooperation and a sufficiently successful outcome to reinforce trusting attitudes and underpin more substantial, and risky, collaborative behavior. . . . Destructive spirals of failure need to be avoided; virtuous spirals of trust and effective collaboration need to be established. (p. 237)

Future Directions for State University-Tribal College Collaboration

Respondents were asked what direction future efforts at collaboration should take. Representative answers are organized and presented around several emergent themes in Table 2.

Almost without exception, respondents felt the current level of collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges needed to be expanded. They wanted to *both broaden and deepen current collaborative efforts*. Some shared the hopes of getting more students, faculty, and stakeholders to participate. Others wanted to see collaboration expand to include the entire mission of the land grant university—including teaching, research, and extension.

Many respondents discussed how they hoped collaboration would continue in the areas of *capacity building* and *program development*. Echoing earlier comments on empowerment, some tribal college respondents seemed to indicate a desire to move toward less dependence on the state universities. Respondents on both sides discussed possibilities for developing collaborative degree programs. Many state university faculty hoped to develop their personal and institutional capacities to work cross-culturally. For both sides, the preferred collaborative relationship is one based on mutual benefits rather than necessity or mandate.

Developing a shared vision and a long-term strategic plan for collaboration was another recurring theme expressed by respondents. This relates closely to the discussion under the collaboration indicators of integration and coordination. Several respondents, some of whom were involved in a variety of smaller collaborative efforts, expressed the desire for an inclusive, long-term strategic plan for how state universities and tribal colleges in a given region could work together.

Finally, respondents indicated a desire for increased *tangible results and program sustainability*. This recalls the discussion on outcomes with a focus on shifting from real people impacts toward longer lasting institutional, policy, systems, and resource impacts. However, while moving toward project sustainability, the importance of the tangible results and short-term, incremental progress markers should not be forgotten.

Table 2
Future for State University-Tribal College Collaboration

Theme	Sample Responses
Broaden and deepen involvement in collaborative efforts	I'd like the whole university to get involved . . . more programs go down to the reservation . . . doctors, engineers, chemists, hydrologists. . . . We need people in all of those areas. In almost every area, we need collaborators.
Continued capacity building and program development	<p>We should move toward the development of more joint programs. . . . It would be great to be able to offer a collaborative forestry degree with [tribal college].</p> <p>More faculty exchange, longer-visits . . . to really understand where the other's coming from.</p>
Developing a shared vision . . . a long-term strategic plan for collaboration	<p>I just think we really need a plan, we really need to set some goals on where we're going.</p> <p>We've got to develop a shared vision for what we're doing with the tribal colleges. We have lots of projects going on, but how do they all hang together? Where are they taking us, collectively? We need a better framework for how all of these pieces fit.</p> <p>I'd like to see us be more proactive in our approach, rather than always reacting to the latest grant program or chance for funding.</p>
Producing tangible results and making collaboration sustainable	<p>We need to get beyond all the talk of collaboration and more to the real work of it. . . . We're just on the tip of the iceberg in terms of what can and needs to be accomplished.</p> <p>When I see real students studying this [collaborative] curriculum and getting real jobs on the reservation. . . . That's when I'll say we've been successful.</p> <p>We need to get past depending too much on one or two individuals . . . really make it an institutional relationship . . . something that's going to last after the individuals are gone.</p>

These themes highlight and draw out salient points from the model already discussed with a particular focus on the future. While keeping these themes in mind, collaborators should also concentrate on the model's various components as they work toward more authentic collaborative relationships. A practical check list that asked questions such as, "Have I adequately considered the context?" "Am I being responsive to my partner?" "How are we sharing power in the collaboration?" "How will the project impact real people?" "How can we make our efforts sustainable?" could be developed and prove helpful to collaborators attempting to design and evaluate their own efforts in the future.

Conclusions and Future Directions for Research

This study provides a new conceptual model for understanding factors that influence how collaboration between tribal colleges and state universities works, or does not work, and further, how individuals and organizations can work together across cultures. It further applies some of the tenets of interorganizational theory to a new domain of state university-tribal college collaboration. The research elucidates some of the factors that function to catalyze and/or impede the process of collaboration, for example, contextual, individual, and organizational factors.

While based in the work of collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges, lessons learned herein may provide insights to individuals and organizations seeking to maximize benefits of collaborative work aimed at education and empowerment for American Indians. Insights gained from this research may also have implications for others seeking to work together across cultures.

Needed future research in this area could include in-depth case studies of specific collaborative endeavors, and more quantitative work tracking levels of participation, types, and outcomes of collaboration between state universities and tribal colleges.

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