

Learning NAGPRA: Nationwide Survey Results from Educators and Students



Teresa Nichols, April Sievert, K. Anne Pyburn, Jayne-Leigh Thomas

Department of Anthropology; Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology, Indiana University

Introduction

Although the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed as federal legislation in 1990, it seems that many students do not receive comprehensive coverage of the law and its connections to the broader disciplinary histories of anthropology and museum studies and to professional research ethics (Kakaliouras 2008). While some research has been conducted with repatriation professionals (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2012), NAGPRA also can contribute to larger pedagogical goals in teaching ethical research practice and respect for human rights in a broad student population. Indiana University was awarded a grant in 2014 by the National Science Foundation's program in Cultivating Cultures of Ethical STEM to conduct a nationwide study to understand how students learn and educators teach about NAGPRA. This poster will present some preliminary analyses of data collected from two online questionnaires directed towards educators and students in anthropology- and museum studies-related college or university programs. The larger goal of the project is to then use these responses to create free educational materials in collaboration with experts from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds.

Survey Methodology

We developed online surveys in Qualtrics and distributed invites using the Qualtrics mailer with anonymous, multiple complete links. We recruited educators and students (both undergraduate and graduate) in museum studies- and anthropology-related programs, as approved by Indiana University's IRB study #1407607927.

Department chairs, directors of graduate studies, directors of undergraduate studies, and academic support staff at relevant departments were contacted and asked to forward the survey onto their students. Over 500 points of contact were emailed in over 240 academic programs.

Around 1500 educators from anthropology- and museum studies-related programs were sent the educator survey directly. This list of educators was compiled by online searches of university instructors who taught topics that are related to NAGPRA, such as North American archaeology, human osteology, indigenous rights, etc.

We distributed surveys twice in 2015, once in April and once in September, to reach potential subjects in both Spring and Fall semesters.

A total of

1175 current students
349 educators

participated in the surveys.

Results

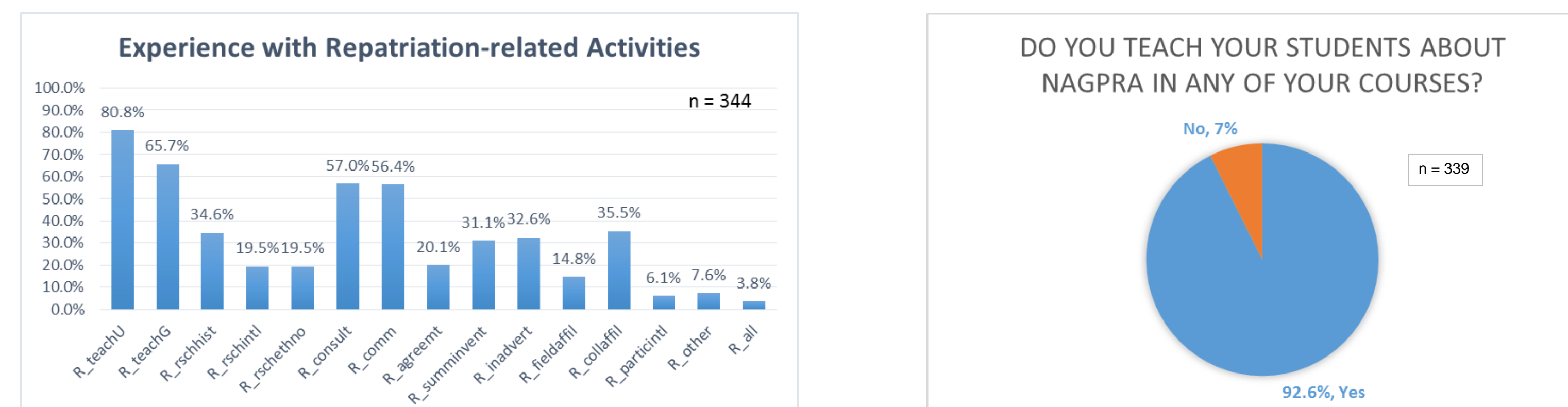
Students

We asked students about their coursework experiences with ethics, subfields of anthropology, and museum studies, their knowledge of NAGPRA, and their interests and experiences in internships, fieldwork or labwork, and jobs relating to NAGPRA or working with Native American communities.



Respondents also provided open-ended responses to several questions, such as detailing their knowledge of working with human subjects and their opinions about the benefits and harms of NAGPRA. Students were least likely to recognize that NAGPRA applied to inadvertent discoveries during fieldwork on federal or tribal land (87% recognized the law applied in those situations), although Cultural Resource Management is a major area of employment for anthropology majors. Taken into consideration with the number of students who self-reported no or very little familiarity with human subjects research protocols, this suggests that education on professional research practices needs improvement.

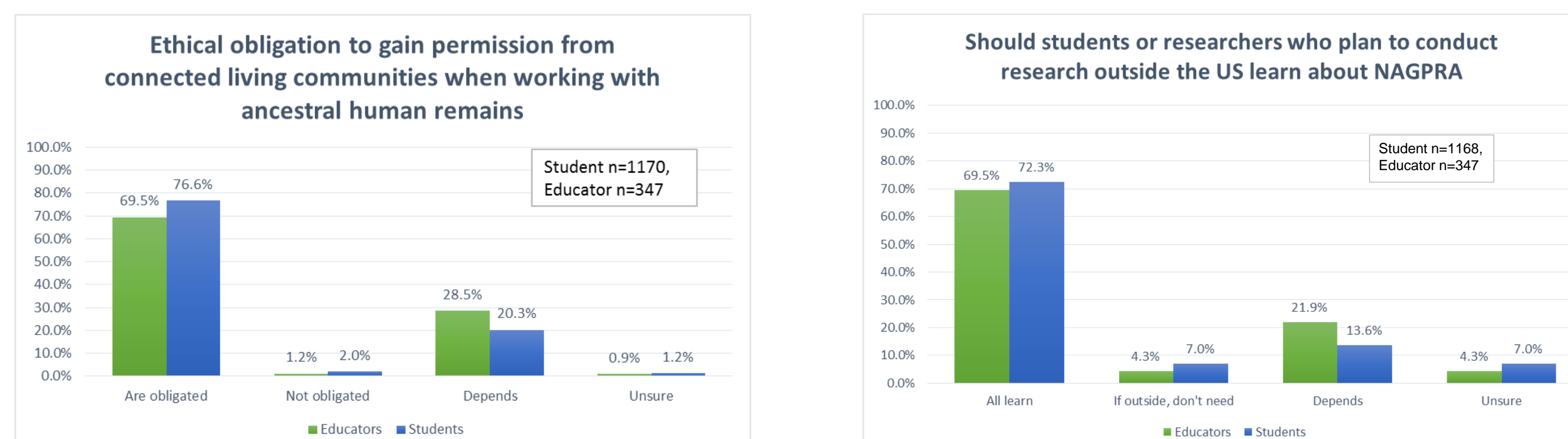
Educators



We asked educators about their professional repatriation experience, coursework experiences with ethics, subfields of anthropology, and museum studies, their teaching experiences, and their thoughts about the future of NAGPRA-related jobs. Additionally, they responded to open-ended questions about the benefits and harms of NAGPRA and the different sorts of NAGPRA-related knowledge undergraduate level students need compared to graduate level students.

Comparative

We also gave both educators and students a few of the same questions to assess differences of opinions between generations and work/research experiences.



Distribution of Responses

Region	Educator	Student
NorthEast	25.1%	18.5%
SouthEast	19.7%	17.6%
MidWest	27.5%	29.8%
West	15.9%	18.3%
SouthWest	11.8%	15.9%

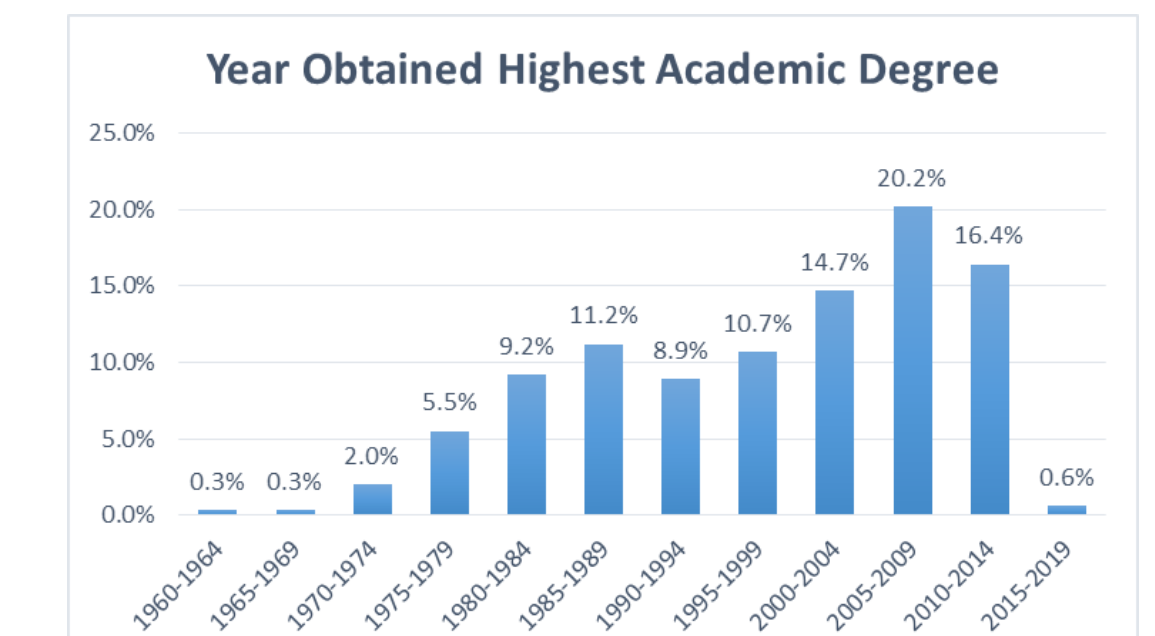


Students:

Undergraduate responses **516 (44%)**

Graduate responses **658 (56%)**

Educators:



Conclusions

Using this survey data, we can assess the contexts where students are learning and educators are teaching about NAGPRA. Using SPSS to see statistically significant correlations and NVivo to sift through the open-ended textual responses will provide important insights on the current state of NAGPRA education. These analyses will be published and will be used by Learning NAGPRA working groups to inform the development of improved educational materials for a variety of audiences.

Citations

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Chip. 2012. The Work of Repatriation in Indian Country. *Human Organization* 71(3):278–291.

Kakaliouras, Ann. M. 2008. Toward a “new and different” osteology: a reflexive critique of physical anthropology in the United States since the passage of NAGPRA. *In* *Opening archaeology: repatriation's impact on contemporary research and practice*. Thomas W. Killion, Ed. Pp. 109–129.

Acknowledgments

The “Learning NAGPRA” project is funded through the National Science Foundation grants #1449465 and #1540447. Many thanks to Indiana University's NAGPRA Advisory Board and Center for Survey Research for their assistance on the design of these surveys.

Find out more on our website:

<http://learningnagpra.indiana.edu>

Or email us: lrnagpra@indiana.edu