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Native Americans and Storytelling in Contemporary American Society

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Poster Presentation P51

**NATIVE AMERICANS AND STORYTELLING IN CONTEMPORARY
AMERICAN SOCIETY**

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For thousands of years Native American people have been using storytelling as a part of their strong oral history traditions. The stories they tell are not only a form of entertainment, but are powerful teachers and healers that help Native people cope with adversity and change. Story forms, themes, and modes of telling hold important information and insight into the cultures from which they hail. This poster presentation will explore the world of contemporary Native storytellers in the Midwestern United States and their perceptions of story's place in the Modern world. The collaborative nature of this ethnographic research brings to light the importance of Native traditions in the modern world through the unique perspective of Storytellers, who are, by the nature of their craft, extremely knowledgeable members of their communities. Many Americans are unaware of the strong Native American subculture that exists and thrives in this land today. Through interactions with pop-culture such as movies, sports teams, and other media, many Americans still generate and perpetuate stereotypes of how Native Americans should look and behave. Often Native culture is treated as an artifact of the past, and is not recognized as the lively and dynamic lifestyle of the over 4 million Native Americans that live in the U.S. today. The aim of this research is not only to reveal the significance of Native American storytelling to the modern world, but also to educate the public on the broader issues facing Native Americans in contemporary American society. Hopefully, people will be inspired to learn more about their own heritage and recognize and take responsibility for the power of their own stories to shape the world around them.