A theme is a common thread or repeated idea that is incorporated throughout a literary work. The short story "Indian Education" by Sherman Alexie, a Native American writer and filmmaker, is told in the first person, recounting the experiences of the protagonist, Victor, and his schooling from the first through the twelfth grades both on and off the reservation. Several threads are woven into the story, including starvation, brotherhood, resilience and discrimination, revealing the overarching theme of how difficult life was for Victor growing up on a reservation. Describe how each one of these themes is presented into the story.

1. **Starvation**

In the section entitled "Eighth Grade," the author observes, “There is more than one way to starve.” Starvation is manifested in more than one way throughout this story. There is the self-imposed starvation of the "white girls" Victor hears throwing up in the school bathroom. Other forms of starvation are not explicitly tied to food, as those on the reservation are starving for a real education, for dignity and for a better quality of life.

1. **Brotherhood**

In "Ninth Grade," Alexie writes, “Sharing dark skin doesn’t necessarily make two men brothers.” Brotherhood does not necessarily mean that those who look like you or share your ethnic or national identity will be your support system. Alternatively, those who are different from you can, in fact, become your support system. For example, when Victor faints in the school gym, the Chicano teacher does not help him. Instead, Victor's white friends exhibit brotherhood toward him by taking him to the hospital.

1. **Resilience**

Resilience involves the ability to recover and get back up from difficult or traumatic circumstances. Victor, a high school basketball star and the valedictorian of his class, is an example of resilience in this story. Others on the reservation, like Wally Jim, who takes his own life, fall victim to the surrounding negative circumstances.

1. **Discrimination**

Throughout Victor's schooling, he experiences discrimination because he is Native American. This discrimination is especially manifested through the attitudes of his teachers, both on and off the reservation. For example, his second grade teacher, Betty Towle, punishes Victor rather than rewarding him after he aces his spelling test. In the ninth grade, a teacher assumes Victor is an alcoholic because he's Native American. The establishment of the boarding schools that Victor attends is itself an act of institutional discrimination, as through these mandatory schools, the government tried to rid Native American children of their native languages and identities.