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CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN OKLAHOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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Abstract

This phenomenological study investigated an emergent theory that the unique cultures of Native Americans have a direct relationship to many Indian students' abilities to achieve in America's public schools. Throughout the history of Indian education, national reports have repeatedly stated that school curricula need to consider the cultural and language differences of Indian students.

Indian students have the lowest level of academic achievement, and the highest dropout rates in the nation according to the United States Department of Education. Additionally, Indian students are disproportionately placed in special education and remediation programs in public schools. This research project investigates the possible reasons creating this massive social problem for American Indian tribes.

Guiding this research are the following questions: How do tribal cultures affect Indian student achievement? Why is there a continuing history of low educational performance among Indian students? Why do studies continue to support the general findings that Native American students

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continue to qualify for Title I compensatory programs; and disproportionately placed in special education classes compared to dominate Euro American students? Does a lack of understanding of tribal cultures by public schools adversely affect American Indian student achievement?

The purpose of this study is to determine if a common cluster of cultural characteristics between tribes, and the public schools lack of knowledge and understanding about Native cultures, contributes significantly to the poor performance of Native American students in all areas of educational indicators. Data were gathered through the qualitative method of in-depth personal interviews.

Information was recorded, transcribed and analyzed for emerging and recurring themes and patterns relating to the purpose of this study. Findings revealed an overwhelming wealth of information from the case studies directly related to Native culture and achievement in public schools.

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DEFINITIONS

American Indian

Commonly used by Native people and the public to refer to Native Americans.

Chi Ka' Sha

Original spelling and pronunciation of Chickasaw.

Indian

Name commonly used by American Indians to refer to themselves or other Indians.

Indian Way

Refers to a cluster of cultural characteristics common among Indian tribes.

Native American

Considered a politically correct title for Indians. Indians do not usually refer to themselves this way.

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Chapter I

Cultural Characteristics and Native American Student Achievement in Oklahoma Public Schools

Introduction

During this past decade, three national reports have been published which critically focus on the current status of American Indian education in the United States. The first study was commissioned by the United States Department of Education entitled Indian Nations at Risk: Listening to the People, January, 1992. The report is a compilation of papers commissioned by the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force of the United States Department of Education. The second study is a final report of The White House Conference on Indian Education, Executive Summary, published in May, 1992. Contributors to both reports include Native American educators, tribal officials and scholars, and parents of American Indian students. The third report is a result of a panel discussion of Indian education experts, hosted by the National Education Association and the National Indian Education Association in November of 2001 in Washington D.C.

Findings of these three reports, as well as many other research articles, confirm a belief that the unique cultures of Native Americans have a direct relationship to many Indian students' abilities to achieve in America's public schools. The NEA/NIEA panelists stated that the poverty and

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unique status of Indian students create many special needs. For example, the extremely high Native American drop-out rates, in proportion to their total population can be attributed to non-Native ignorance of Native culture (Szasz, 1999, Plank, 1994). In contrast, other research indicates that schools which respect and support a child's culture demonstrate significantly better outcomes in educating those students (Estrada & Vasquez, 1981; U. S. Department of Education, 1991).

Throughout the history of Indian education, national reports have repeatedly stated that school curricula need to consider the cultural and language differences of Indian students. Panelists of this latest report again described the paramount need to build school curricula around Indian students' culture and language, not vice versa, particularly because American schooling has a long history of misuse as a vehicle to destroy American Indian culture and language.

In 1992, Native Americans comprised less than 1% of the total U. S. population; Indian children and youth made up about one half of this population (Hillabrant, Romano, Stang, & Charleston, 1992; Reyner, 1992). Eighty-seven per cent of the Indian children and youth attended public schools (Van Hamme, 1996). As of 2001, ninety per cent of American Indian children attend public schools, but still represent less than 1 per cent of the K-12 public school population. The other 10 per cent attend 171 schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), most of which are

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managed by tribal councils or tribal school boards (Panel report, 2001).

According to Education Week, 1992, 12 per cent of these students qualify for special education programs. The same article also compares Native American special education placement to other minority populations, including African-American and Hispanic; special education placement of Indian students was the highest. Other writers, such as Cummins (1992) also confirm a continued disproportionately high placement of American Indian children in special education programs.

In addition to a high rate of special education placement in proportion to total population, many American Indian students qualify for Title I remediation programs because of poor scores on standardized tests. In fact, achievement test scores and high school graduation rates of Indian students are among the lowest in the nation (Plank, 1994). Additionally, our nation's 500,000 Native American students have the highest school drop-out rates, and the lowest college completion rates of any American group (NEA/NIEA report, 2001).

An earlier study of 5000 first and second grade students indicated that standardized tests are biased in terms of race or ethnicity (Supovitz, 1997). This study's findings again confirms earlier research, such as Nichols (1992) which succinctly summarizes the growing body of

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literature supporting the following belief of bias in standardized tests for American Indian students.

> "The public education system's reliance on standardized achievement tests has hurt Native students, for many factors can bias these tests against them. Students whose language background is non or substandard English may read and interpret tests incorrectly. Native culture values that discourage competitive behaviors also can put students at a disadvantage." (p. 32)

Indian students have the lowest level of academic achievement and the highest dropout rates in the nation (U. S. Department of Education, 1991, Panel Report, 2001). Why? Studies are needed that add clarity and specificity to the general findings that minority cultures can affect how minority students achieve in public schools. More studies are also needed to begin determining empirically how and why minority cultures seem to adversely affect student achievement in public schools.

Statement of the Problem

Indian students have the lowest level of academic achievement and the highest dropout rates in the nation (U. S. Department of Education, 1991, Panel Report, 2001). This low level of educational performance has been perpetuated

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over the last century (Szaz, 1999). In addition, Indian students are disproportionately placed in special education and remediation programs in our public schools. What are the reasons creating this massive social problem for American Indian tribes?

The overall guiding questions are: How do tribal cultures affect Indian student achievement? Why is there a continuing history of low educational performance among Indian students? Why do studies continue to support the general findings that Native American students, as well as other minorities qualify for Title I compensatory programs, and are disproportionately placed in Special Education classes compared to dominant society Euro American students? Does a lack of understanding of tribal cultures by public schools adversely affect American Indian student achievement?

Background Information

A review of literature supports the fact that cultural characteristics unique to different minorities can affect their ability to successfully achieve in U. S. public schools. In fact, many articles, essays and research projects center on multiculturalism and pluralistic schools because of today's diverse society (Ogbu, 1992). However, only Native Americans have a sovereign government to government relationship with the United States of America. "Only Native peoples have a history of Indian-American

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relations described as violent subjugation and conflict to reconciliation in the form of a domestic dependent nation." (Young, Lujan & Shaver, 1996). Cummins (1992) described the relationship as a long history of subjugation and overt racism, while Garcia and Ahler (1992) described it as a near annihilation due to the melting pot theory and assimilationist focus of public education.

American Indians have gone through a dual process of acculturation into the mainstream American sociocultural system and of deculturation of their own traditional heritages. (Kim, Lujan, & Shaver, 1996). For example, the purpose of the Civilization Fund of 1819 was to civilize and Christianize Native peoples so they could be made over as farmers. Some tribes were civilized nearly to extinction, and the congressional "termination acts" of the 1950's and '60's relieved the United States of responsibility. (Brescia, 1992). Mid century policy had become assimilationist, aimed at mainstreaming Native people as quickly as possible (Nichols, 1992). Schools were used as instruments for the forced assimilation of Native Americans into the dominant culture (Little Soldier, 1997). During this period of time, there was no regard for the uniqueness of tribal cultures, or any cultural sensitivity in public schools.

With the realization that America's public schools were failing to properly educate Indian students, the government created the Johnson-O'Malley Indian Education Act of 1934.

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The purpose of this legislation was to encourage public schools to enroll Indian students, and provided funding to assist schools with their assimilation of Indian students.

With the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, a vehicle was provided to tribes to bring about cultural awareness of American Indian students, and its affects upon Indian students attending public schools. The Indian Self-Determination Act Amendments of 1988 allowed tribal governments to directly administer these federal programs. The Native American Language Act of 1990 allowed public schools to teach Native American languages in public schools as a foreign language credit.

Although these federal programs provide the funding and the impetus for educating public schools and teachers about the unique cultures of Indian students, America's schools have not responded with real cultural reform. The Indian Nations At Risk report summarizes by stating:

> "Recently schools either ignore Native culture and history or provide information that is inaccurate and demeaning. Teachers and educators need to learn about Native cultures so they can provide culturally sensitive learning to Native youth. By helping children maintain their Native culture, schools nurture self identity and build

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> a strong foundation for a secure adulthood." (p. 41)

Although each of the many tribes located in the United States and Canada have cultural differences between each other, there is a cluster of cultural characteristics common to most Indian cultures (Van Hamme, 1996; Plank, 1994). This cluster includes a core of Native American values that includes sharing, cooperation, and individual freedom and dignity (Little Soldier, 1997). Tribal Governments have been working to preserve and revitalize their cultural heritages and establish their distinctness from the dominant American cultural orientation (Lake, 1991; Morris & Wander, 1990). Much of the effort has been focused on the spiritual, ritual and linguistic aspects of Indian cultures (Boyer, 1994; Risling, 1994; Whirlwind Soldier, 1994).

The cluster of cultural characteristics common between Native peoples includes: 1) Spiritual beliefs and values; 2) Reverence for and harmony with nature; 3) Extended family and community; 4) Cooperation; 5) Tolerance for silence and respect for reticence; 6) Present time orientation and lack of time consciousness; 7) interconnection and interdependence of life maintenance tasks with social, family and religious aspects of life; and 8) generosity, giving/sharing (Little Soldier, 1997; Van Hamme, 1996). These cultural, linguistic, and historical factors that affect Native American students are different from those faced by other minority students (Little Soldier, 1997).

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if a common cluster of cultural characteristics between tribes, and the public schools' lack of knowledge and understanding about Native cultures, contributes significantly to the poor performance of Native American students in all areas of educational indicators. The study will focus on Chickasaw culture and its relationship to educational performance. Specifically, the study asks the following questions:

1. Do the unique cultural characteristics of Chickasaws contribute to a perceived inability to achieve compared to non-Indian, dominant society students in Oklahoma public schools, located in the Chickasaw Nation?
2. How does Chickasaw culture affect student achievement in public schools?
3. Does a lack of understanding of Native American cultures by public schools negatively impact Native student achievement?

Significance of the Study

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Many studies have focused on low educational performance among minorities, especially African-Americans and Hispanics. They all discuss culture as being one of the factors contributing to low educational performance for minority students in public schools. Very few of these studies included Native Americans. In fact, Ogbu (1992) refers to Native Americans as being an under studied minority. Most educational studies focusing on Native Americans are limited to tribes located on reservations. Very few have conducted research among those tribes removed to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears in the 1800's. This project will focus on Oklahoma Tribes, specifically Chickasaw culture, and how it relates to educational achievement of Indian students.

Due to the phenomenological perspective seeking framework of the research project, the thoughts and beliefs of Indian parents regarding these critical problems can be examined. Through an examination of actual "real-life" experiences of the participants, new insights may be discovered which can lead to answers to these problems. Additionally, the project will not only review ancestral culture, but actually explore the evolution of Chickasaw culture as it is affecting Chickasaw families today.

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Chapter II

Review of Literature

The focus of this study is on Native American culture and academic achievement. As a framework for understanding these two constructs, the review of literature will examine three major components: 1) Minority cultures in general, Native American culture and learning styles, and Chickasaw culture past and present; 2) Historic overview of Indian education by the United States Government as a trust responsibility and its clash with Native culture; 3) Minority student achievement in general, and Native American student achievement.

A review of minority culture will help us understand the nature of Native American culture and its oppressive relationship with the white dominant society of the United States. A review of Native American learning styles and academic performance will help us to understand the context of education provided by the United States to Indian Tribes as a trust responsibility during the past century. A historical review of Indian education will provide us with an understanding of the failure of the United States to successfully educate American Indians, failure to assimilate tribes into mainstream society, and finally, help us to understand why attempts at termination of tribes have created the societal problems facing Indian tribes today.

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Minority Culture

Ogbu (1992) did a comparative study of minority culture in America. According to Ogbu, cultures such as African Americans and Native Americans, because of their history of oppression by the dominant white culture, experience persistent learning difficulties in school. Ogbu also believes that different types of minorities are characterized by different types of cultural differences as well as social or collective identities (p. 8).

Initially, they possess primary cultural differences, but after coming in contact with the dominant society, they develop secondary cultural characteristics as a result of living and interacting in the larger society, specifically as a result of being an oppressed culture. Ogbu (p. 8) states that secondary culture develops in several ways: from a reinterpretation of previous primary cultural differences or through the emergence of new types of cultural norms and behaviors.

Ogbu also believes that there are some features of secondary cultural differences which affect education. First, learning and communication styles are emphasized rather that the content of learning. Second, is the feature of cultural inversion.

> "Cultural inversion is the tendency for minorities to regard certain forms of behavior, events, symbols, and meanings as inappropriate for them because these

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> are characteristic of white Americans. At the same time the minorities value other forms of behavior, events, symbols and meanings, often the opposite, as more appropriate for themselves. Thus, what is appropriate or even legitimate behavior for in-group members may be defined in opposition to white out-group members and preferences" (Ogbu, p. 8).

As a result, these minorities are living within the frameworks of two opposing cultures, as if living in two separate worlds. Additionally, the cultural differences, and their relationship to mainstream society, seem to increase difficulties in learning and performance in school. The statement of NEA/NIEA panel expert, Steve Anderson, chair of NEAP's American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus is a perfect example. He is Seminole but learned little of his background as he grew up, creating a rebellious, troubled youngster. He stated, "It's about disconnect and loss of identity, of affiliation."

Ogbu stresses that these academic problems are widespread and persistent. He believes that one reason for continued low performance in school is that it is harder for minorities to cross cultural and language boundaries (p. 10). This difficulty is a result of the nature of the relationship between the white dominant society culture and

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the subjugated minority culture. School learning is equated with learning the culture and style of white Americans, the "White Man's world" as viewed by Native Americans. Hence, the development of secondary cultural characteristics is partly to maintain boundaries between the opposing cultures, and to retain the uniqueness of the minority cultural identity, both individually and collectively.

Important to this study is Ogbu's belief that as these secondary cultural characteristics develop, they often do so unconsciously, as a means to protect social identity, security and self-worth. This affects school performance in a couple of ways. These minority cultures equate the public school with the oppressing culture, and develop behaviors that conflict with traditional school learning. Also, there is a fear for minority students that fitting in and learning the White man's way will take away their identity within their own community. In fact, they may even be rejected by their own community for learning to succeed in the White Man's world (Szasz, 1999).

Ogbu's study reminds us that the meaning and value that students from different cultural groups associate with the process of formal education vary, and are socially transmitted by their ethnic communities. The meaning and value associated with school learning and achievement play a significant role in determining their efforts toward learning and performance (p. 7).

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Another study, Suzuki & Valencia (1997), also supports the belief that different cultures place different meanings and values to the process of education. They focus on ethnic-race intelligence differences and educational performance of minorities in school. Their work is reviewed later in this chapter.

Native American Culture

Culture can be interpreted as a map that provides standards for deciding what is, what can be, how to feel, what to do, and how to go about doing (Goodenough as cited by McCarter, 1995). Culture consists of traditional ways of making sense of and conducting oneself in the world (Gollnick and Chin as cited by McCarter, 1995). Culture shapes unspoken values, as well as social institutions including education. Culture applies to any group with coherent norms and traditions that help members engage the world around them. It governs how people share information and knowledge as well as how they construct meaning (McCarter, p. 13). Cultural identity is broadly defined to represent other similar terms such as "ethnic identity," "racial identity," "ethno linguistic identity," and "national identity" (Kim, Lujan, and Shaver, 1996).

The work of Kim, LuJan, and Shaver (1996) examines cultural identity in the daily lives of American Indians living in Oklahoma. Their purpose is to "examine how Oklahoma Indians see themselves in relation to other Indians

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and to the primarily Anglo milieu" (p. 2). Following is a review of their study "I Can Walk Both Ways": Identity Integration of American Indians in Oklahoma (1996).

The background of their study includes a critique of common views of cultural identity. "Freud described cultural identity as an unconscious emotional experience in 'the safe privacy of an inner mental construction' and as 'a deep commonality known only to those who share in it, and only expressible in works more mythical than conceptual" (p. 2). Cultural identity has been similarly defined as the person's "basic identity" formed during the earliest periods of socialization and the "driving force of individual and collective ethnic self-affirmation" (p. 3).

Cultural identity has also been described as an inherent moral force that if denied or compromised, leads to debasement of the person. Without a positive sense of group identity, one cannot achieve a positive sense of self identity. Also, minority adolescents who know and are comfortable with their ethnic identity will develop a healthy psychosocial identity. However, "the subordinate status of a minority group and its failure to achieve a satisfying ethnic identity entail a variety of undesirable social and psychological consequences" (p. 3).

Other studies have also linked negative cultural identity experiences with poor self concepts of minority individuals. "Individuals who are relatively unsuccessful in developing a healthy group identity have been reported to

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be more susceptible to "self-esteem manipulation," more apt to accept "fake personality sketches" of themselves, more prone to think of themselves as misperceived by others, more likely to view chance as a major determinant of events, less self-accepting, more influenced by peer conformity pressure, and more likely to fall into substance abuse and other self-destructive behaviors" (p. 3-4).

Most studies dealing with ethnic minorities have focused on the importance of positive cultural self identity to a healthy psychological and social well-being; none have really focused on cultural adaptation and identity adaptation of cultures that have been immersed in extensive and prolonged interaction with Anglos and other cultures. The importance of this study (Kim, Lujan and Shaver, 1996) is the "belief that serious efforts need to be made to understand cultural identity as a dynamic, evolving entity." Second, they believe that "individuals associated with a given ethnic group do differ in the degree to which their daily activities are bound up with the group identity" (p. 4).

Oklahoma Indians share a collective history of identity struggles. "They share with Indians everywhere the history of Indian-American relations—from the violent subjugation and conflict to reconciliation in the form of a 'domestic dependent nation" (p. 5). Oklahoma Indians, as all American Indians, have gone through a dual process of acculturation

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into the mainstream American sociocultural system and of deculturation of their own traditional heritages (p. 5).

In spite of the historical conflict of acculturation and deculturation, Oklahoma Indian Tribes have become more independent, and begun the revitalization of their cultures. "Tribal languages are being taught in some schools. Many young people are showing a new interest in their heritage, while Indian writers and painters have immersed themselves in the traditions of their people, articulating them in new ways" (p. 6).

According to Kim, Lujan and Shaver (1996), the status of Oklahoma Indians is such that the always conflicting forces of acculturation, assimilation and deculturation, and the cultural revitalization currently in progress with tribes seem to be working together simultaneously. Through active contacts with Whites since the Louisiana Purchase, and then removal to Indian Territory, Oklahoma Indians and their cultures have changed, which has resulted in a large degree of physical, social and structural integration (p. 6).

Kim's (1995b) Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Identity Development "describes and explains the process in which identities of ethnic minorities adapt over time" (p. 10). "Kim conceives a person as a complex, self-organizing, and evolving system that is never static but in a dynamic equilibrium seeking stability. The "engine" that drives individual adaptation is identified as communication

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activities in and through which the individual exchanges information with the surrounding milieu" (p. 10).

"Kim argues that prolonged and extensive intercultural communication activities bring about a systemic change in the individual's ascribed childhood identity" (p. 10). She also believes that the changes are largely unconscious and unintentional. She describes this phenomenon in her "stress-adaptation-growth" process which is a continuous, cyclic, 'draw-back-to-leap' psychic movement in which a new identity emerges, no matter how gradually and imperceptibly (Kim, Lujan & Shaver, 1996). Within this model, there is tension between stress, adaptation, and growth. Stress causes frustration, anxiety, and suffering; but it also creates the impetus for new learning and growth to take place (p. 11).

Through this process of stress, adaptation, and growth, the developing identity is characterized as an intercultural identity. "Kim defines this identity development in terms of the increase in the individual's capacity to integrate conflicting cultural demands into a cohesive and creative new whole. Such identity transformation necessarily involves both acculturation and deculturation" (p. 11).

"Kim's theory also identifies the structure of the cross-cultural adaptation process by delineating key factors of communication, predisposition, environment, and intercultural transformation as reciprocally influencing one another. It emphasizes that all of the identified factors

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work together in reality, so as to facilitate or impede each individual's adaptation process" (p. 12).

Kim, Lujan, and Shaver's findings (1996) were a result of 182 interviews with Oklahoma Indians. For sample selection, the Indians were first divided into two regional subgroups, the Western or Plains Indians, and the Eastern Indians whose ancestors were removed to Oklahoma in the 1800's. To provide a proper balance between Eastern and Western regions, and between urban and rural areas, Tulsa (urban) and Ada (rural) were selected to represent the Eastern tribes. Ada is the headquarters for the Chickasaw Nation and home of this researcher. The Oklahoma City and Norman area (urban) and Anadarko (rural) were selected to represent Western tribes. For further balance, Tahlequah and Stroud were added to increase representation for the Eastern semi-rural and rural Indians.

Again, their research focuses on the identity experiences of Oklahoma Indians and their participation in personal relationships with Indians and non-Indians. Following are some direct quotes from a few of the participants in their study. These quotes are included here because they support the theoretical constructs of this researcher's study.

"When you grow up being a half-breed like me you learn how to play both sides and you can be accepted by both sides. And you can be hated by both sides." (#01085) (p. 24).

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"But they (whites) also discriminate against us (Indians)...and they stereotype Indians...Indians are very blessed because they can live in two worlds...they can pick up non-Indian characteristics and use them in both worlds" (#01931) (p. 24).

"When you walk into a White man's world you forget who you are, so there is nothing to interfere in the relationship. You forget you are Indian...Living in two worlds is very different for those who do not have confidence in themselves and for those who lack education...You have to fit in both worlds...must fit into both categories" (#01081) (p. 25).

The findings and discussion of this study (Kim, Lujan and Shaver, 1996) "present another set of evidence for the already well-documented linkage between the identity integration of ethnic minorities and their psychological and social wellbeing. The findings also reflect the pragmatic sensibility with which Oklahoma Indians find ways to reconcile and piece together their seemingly conflicting identities at a higher level of integration" (p.30).

Chickasaw Culture Past

There are several origin stories, all very similar in description. Schoolcraft's (1851-1857) version of the origin of the Chickasaws was chosen because he "obtained it

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through the medium of the United States Indian agent located among them after their removal west of the Mississippi. It is said to have been obtained from the most authentic sources, meaning, of course, the native informants supposed to be best versed in tribal lore" (Swanson, 1925, p. 175). These early Chickasaw keepers of oral history described the following story to Schoolcraft.

> "By tradition, they (Chickasaws) say they came from the West; a part of their tribe remained in the West. When about to start eastward, they were provided with a large dog as a guard, and a pole as a guide; the dog would give them notice whenever an enemy was near at hand, and thus enable them to make their arrangements to receive them. The pole they would plant in the ground every night, and the next morning they would look at it, and go in the direction it leaned.
>
> They continued their journey in this way until they crossed the great Mississippi River; and, on the waters of the Alabama River, arrived in the country about where Huntsville, Alabama, now is. There the pole was unsettled for several days, but finally it settled, and pointed in a southwest direction. They then started on that course, planting the pole every night until they got to what is called the Chickasaw Old Fields, where the pole stood perfectly erect. All then

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> came to the conclusion that that was the 'Promised Land,' and there they accordingly remained until they emigrated west of the State of Arkansas, in the years 1837 and 1838.
>
> While the pole was in an unsettled situation, a part of their tribe moved on East, and got with the Creek Indians, but as soon as the majority of the tribe settled at the Old Fields, they sent for the party that had gone on East, who answered that they were very tired, and would rest where they were a while. This clan was called Cush-eh-tah. They have never joined the parent tribe (Swanson, 1925, as told by Schoolcraft, 1851-1857, p. 175).

Schoolcraft's information on Chickasaw origin also stated, "When they left the West toward the East to find their 'promised land', they were informed that they might look for whites; that they would come from the East; and they were to be on their guard, and to avoid the whites, lest they should bring all manner of vice among them" (Swanson, 1925, p. 175-176). A large portion of the nation ended their journey at the Chickasaw Old Fields on the north bank of the Tennessee River in Madison County, Alabama (p. 176). Throughout the journey, they depended upon the Creator for their guidance (p. 178).

Social Organization

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Through information collected from several old Chickasaw chiefs shortly after the period of their emigration from Mississippi, a list of Chickasaw moiety and clan divisions was collected and prepared for Schoolcraft by a United States Indian agent. Schoolcraft's informants said that "The government of the Chickasaws, until they moved to the west of the Mississippi, had a king, whom they called Minko, and there is a clan of family by that name, that the king is taken from. The king is hereditary through the female side. The Minko was king of the entire Chickasaw Nation.

"Then they had chiefs out of different families or clans" (Swanson, 1925, p. 191). Each clan or totemic iksa had a chief and they differed in rank in accordance with a difference in the ranking of the clans (p. 213). Speck (1907) recorded, "Each clan was under the leadership of a chief (minko), chosen by the council of clan elders for life in the old days, but at present only for a term of years. A clan could take the warpath under the leadership of the minko" (Swanson, 1925, p. 214). Some of the clans, and their stories were written down for Swanson by a native Chickasaw. Those clans were Raccoon, Panther, Wildcat, Bird and Red Fox (p. 198).

The Chickasaw constitution put in force in 1840 was more democratic than the older unwritten laws of the tribe, not so much in taking away power from the Miko as in taking it from the whole body of chiefs and in making them all

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elective. When the Chickasaws first moved west they agreed to come under the Choctaw laws in accordance with which a chief was elected every four years and captains every two years, the judges being elected by the general council.

In 1856, the Chickasaws were separated from the Choctaws and established an independent government on the same model (p.215). "The general interest in their governmental affairs on the part of the mass of Chickasaw people is vouched for by Adair (1775) who says: "When any national affair is in debate, you may hear every father of a family speaking in his house on the subject, with rapid, bold language, and the utmost freedom that a people can use. Their voices, to a man, have due weight in every public affair, as it concerns their welfare alike" (Swanson, 1925, p. 216).

Cushman (1899) provides a detailed description of Chickasaw family life regarding the raising and education of their children. According to Swanton (1925) Cushman writes the following about important cultural characteristics of Chickasaw life.

> "The greatest care was bestowed upon their children by the Chickasaw mothers, whom they never allowed to be placed upon their feet before the strength of their limbs would safely permit; and the child had free access to the maternal breast as long as it was desired, unless the mother's health forbade its continence. Children

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were never whipped by their parents, but, if guilty of any misdemeanor, were sent to their uncles for punishment, who only inflicted a severe rebuke or imposed upon them some little penance, or, what was more frequent, made appeals to their feelings of honor or shame."

Sometimes correction went beyond mere reproof as noted by Adair; "It ought to be remarked that they are careful of their youth and fail not to punish them when they transgress. I saw an old head man correct several young persons, some for supposed faults and others by way of prevention. He bastinadoed the young sinner severely with a thick whip about a foot and a half long composed of plaited silk grass and the fibers of the button snake-root stalks, tapering to the point, which was secured with a knot. He reasoned with him as he corrected him; he told him that he was *Chehakse Kaneha-He*, literally, "you are as one who is wicked, and almost lost."….The grey-hair'd corrector said. He entreated him in that manner according to ancient custom, through an effect of love, to induce him to shun vice, and to imitate virtues of his illustrious forefathers, which he endeavored to enumerate largely; when the young

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sinner had received his supposed due he went off seemingly well pleased."

According to Schoolcraft, the correction lessons graduated in severity according to the age of the pupils. While the elder was disciplining the little ones, he said *Che Haksinna*, "Do not become vicious." When they wept, he said *Che-Abela Awa*, I shall not kill you."

Schoolcraft also described a daily process with the young Chickasaw boys to make them strong. "The boys were given herbs and afterwards made to plunge into water, no matter what time of year it happened to be. This bath was taken before day each morning and was continued through life. They were more careful to take it in winter than in summer, and especially on cold frosty mornings, and they believed it would help them withstand cold weather, give them health, and enable them to live to a good old age. The women were less rigid in the performance of this duty, only purifying themselves as their discretion directed them." (Swanson, p. 224-225).

When the boys arrived at the age of 12-15 years, they were instructed daily by the old and wise men of the village. These elders, at various intervals, instructed them in all the necessary knowledge and desired qualifications to help them become successful hunters and accomplished warriors. Lessons began in the arts of swimming, running, jumping, wrestling, using the bows and arrows. These young warriors also were taught precepts of

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morality which should guide their conduct when they arrived at manhood.

Schoolcraft also recorded, "The most profound respect was paid everywhere to the oldest person in every family, whether male or female, whose decision on all disputed points were supreme and final, and were received with cheerful and implicit obedience. No matter how distant their blood relations might be, all the members of the family addressed its head as father, or mother, as the case might be; and whenever they meant to speak of him, they said, "My real father," in contradistinction to that of father applied to the chief or the head of the family" (p. 223).

Chickasaw Games

The men's ball game was a favorite of the Chickasaws and there neighboring tribes. Today, this game is commonly referred to as Stickball. Following is Adair's (1766) description of the game played in his time.

> "The Indians are much addicted to gaming and will often stake everything they possess. Ball playing is their chief and most favorite game and is such severe exercise as to show it was originally calculated for a hardy and expert race of people like themselves and the ancient Spartans.

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The ball is made of a piece of scraped deerskin, moistened and stuffed hard with deer's hair and strongly sewed with deer's sinews. The ball sticks are about two feet long, the lower end somewhat resembling the palm of the hand, and which are worked with deerskin thongs. Between these they catch the ball and throw it a great distance when not prevented by some of the opposing party, who fly to intercept them.

The goal is about 500 yards in length; at each end of it they fix two long, bending poles into the ground three yards apart below, but slanting a considerable way outward. The party that happens to throw the ball over these counts one; but if it be thrown underneath, it is cast back and played for as usual. The gamesters are equal in number on each side, and at the beginning of every course of the ball they throw it up high in the center of the ground and in a direct line between the two goals.

When the crowd of players prevents the one who caught the ball from throwing it off with a long direction, he commonly sends it the right course by an artful sharp twirl. They are so exceedingly expert in this manly exercise that between the goals the ball is mostly flying the different ways, by the force of the playing

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sticks, without falling to the ground, for they are not allowed to catch it with their hands. It is surprising to see how swiftly they fly when closely chased by a nimble-footed pursuer; when they are intercepted by one of the opposite party, his fear of being cut by the ball sticks commonly gives them an opportunity of throwing it perhaps 100 yards; but the antagonist sometimes runs up behind and by a sudden stroke dashes down the ball.

It is a very unusual thing to see them act spitefully in any sort of game, not even in this severe and tempting exercise. By education, precept, and custom, as well as strong example, they have learned to show an external acquiescence in every thing that befalls them, either as to life or death. By this means, they reckon it a scandal to the character of a steady warrior to let his temper be ruffled by any accidents—their virtue, they say, should prevent it.

To move the deity to enable them to conquer the party they are to play against, they mortify themselves in a surprising manner; and, except a small intermission, their female relations dance out of doors all the preceding night, chanting religious notes with their shrill voices, to move Yo He Wah to be favorable to their kindred party

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on the morrow. The men fast and wake from sunset, till the ball play is over the next day, which is about 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

During the whole night, they are to forbear sleeping under the penalty of reproaches and shame; which would sit very sharp upon them, if their party chanced to lose the game, as it would be ascribed to that unmanly and vicious conduct. They turn out to the ball ground in a long row, painted white, whooping, as if Pluto's prisoners were all broke loose; when that enthusiastic emotion is over, the leader of the company begins a religious invocation by saying *Yah*, short; then *Yo*, long, which the rest of the train repeat with a short accent and on a low key like the leader; and thus they proceed with such acclamations and invocations until the game begins. Each party is desirous to gain the twentieth ball, which they esteem a favorite divine gift.

As it is in the time of laying by the corn, in the very heat of summer, they use this severe exercise, a stranger would wonder to see them hold it so long at full speed, and under the scorching sun, hungry also, and faint with the excessive use of such sharp physic as the button snakeroot, the want of natural rest, and of every kind of nourishment. But their constancy, which they gain

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> by custom, and their love of virtue, as the sure means of success, enable them to perform all their exercises without failing in the least, be they ever so severe in the pursuit" (Swanton, p. 242-243).

Chickasaw Religious Beliefs

These early transcripts of Chickasaw life record that they have never had a tradition in time when they were without belief in one Supreme Being. Adair wrote that they called him Ababinili, "Sitting-above," or "Dwelling-above," a being who "guided them and told them what to do." Swanton wrote during his time, "He is now spoken of at times as Aba inki, "Father-above," evidently under Christian influence" (p. 247).

Chickasaw Dances

The dancing was usually at night, and they began with the "drunken man's dance" and ended with the "old dance," which was sometimes gone through after sunup. In the first the men and women would form two opposing lines. The women would then dance forward until close to the men and dance back, the men following, and they would alternately move forward and back as long as the dance lasted. The men and women sang together in this dance and the women also sang in the chicken, tick, and bean dances, but not in all the others, which number about twenty-five. The women wore

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terrapin-shell rattles on their calves, but no other rattles are said to have been used at their dances, though there was always a drum.

In the corn dance, men and women were in two opposing lines; when the lines approached the women were privileged to snatch handkerchiefs or other objects from the men or to pull their hair, and no resistance could be offered. When they danced in a circle, they usually went sinistrally. In the snake dance they went round first in sinistral circuit and then in dextral circuit. The bean dance was one of those in which they passed entirely round the fire and the house. These three dances and the bison dance were among the ones used in the Pishofa ceremony. The Pishofa dances alone were kept up in later years, the others having been abandoned about 1882 (Swanton, p. 258).

Chickasaw Culture Today

The renewal of Chickasaw culture began one day in March, 1989, when Bill Anoatubby, Governor of The Chickasaw Nation, received an invitation from the Burrett Museum in Huntsville, Alabama. The curator of the museum was inviting the Governor, and a group of Chickasaws to represent the Tribe at a reunion of original Indian tribes who were living in the area before their removal to Oklahoma in the mid 1800's. Each tribe was asked to travel to Huntsville, Alabama for a Day of Indian Reunion on the grounds of the Burrett Museum. The tribal representatives were also asked

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to demonstrate tribal culture throughout the day. A very special event, the Alabama Indian Reunion, scheduled for April 22nd, 1989, had been publicized throughout the state. Governor Annoatubby asked the Director of Education, Cindy Huston, and her department to handle this project.

The first step was to put a Cultural Demonstration Troupe together. Utilizing Chickasaw students from the Higher Education and Johnson O'Malley Indian education programs, which are operated by the Chickasaw Nation, the first cultural renewal group was formed. This charter group included two Chickasaws from the Education Department, the director and one male education specialist; two college Chickasaw women; three high school Chickasaw men, and one high school Chickasaw woman.

The second step was to gather research about Chickasaw culture in the early 1800's. Each of the students was selected because they had been raised in traditional or bicultural homes and communities. Their life-long knowledge and experience were the team's primary resource. As the students began to think and gather information from their families and communities over the next few weeks, the Education Specialist and Director began to research that era of time for The Chickasaw Nation, at their first stopping grounds in Huntsville, Alabama, before finally settling at the Chickasaw Old Fields in Tennessee.

Because the museum curator asked the Troupe to travel in traditional Chickasaw dress to the Reunion, each member

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began working on clothing of the era immediately. The Troupe would be arriving for a Friday evening reception, and a full Saturday of cultural demonstrations and education about The Chickasaw Nation.

When finally ready for the Alabama Indian Reunion, the first Chickasaw Cultural Demonstration Troupe would be sharing Chickasaw ways in the areas of traditional dress, language, dances, songs, food, stickball; turtle shell shakers, basket weaving, finger weaving, bead work, story telling, blow gun demonstrations, and Chickasaw history. Little did the troupe know the positive impact they would have on the many visitors to the Burrett Museum that day, by returning to their original homeland for The Alabama Indian Reunion.

Upon arriving in Huntsville, the Chickasaws were greeted by banners and signs throughout the airport welcoming them home. This feeling of honor and respect by the people greeting the troupe was overwhelming for them, as it continued through the evening and throughout the next day. Many of these Alabamians were hungry for knowledge about their own Chickasaw heritage. They seemed to feel lost because their ancestors stayed behind when the tribe began moving west again. They were very proud of their Indian heritage although they could not document it. Their enthusiasm about being Indian was exciting for the troupe to see, and helped them share Chickasaw culture and Indian ways throughout their visit.

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The morning began by getting a fire ready for cooking Pashofa and Fry Bread, a traditional Chickasaw meal. White corn and pork would cook slowly all morning in a big iron pot full of water over the fire. Two Chickasaw women tended the meal, stirring regularly with a long flat paddle. If wood ash fell into the pot, it added to the flavor and process of cooking. The traditional meal of pashofa and fry bread would be ready for sampling by mid day.

Meanwhile, the rest of the group members began setting up their demonstration areas; a blocked out area for dancing and stickball, an area for teaching basket weaving, finger weaving, making turtle shaker shells, Chickasaw language, Chickasaw history and storytelling. Visitors enjoyed learning the Snake Dance, Round Dance, the friendship dance and other Chickasaw Stomp Dances, while moving to the song and rhythm of the leader's hand drum. Young people were enthralled with learning stickball, and played continually during the day; except when they were dancing. This first cultural re-enactment of Chickasaw culture was a wonderful success for the Burrett Museum, and the birth of cultural renewal for the Chickasaw Nation. (See appendix for Troupe member names and pictures).

Over the next three years, Chickasaw language classes were developed; the Cultural Renewal Troupe expanded to include more and more Chickasaw youth and their families from the various education programs; cultural demonstrations were included in public school JOM programs, summer school

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cultural programs and community programs. The always expanding Cultural Renewal Troupe also set up camp yearly at the Chickasaw Festival and Annual Meeting of the Chickasaw Nation, at its original capitol in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. Held the first weekend in October, the Chickasaw Festival draws hundreds of visitors each year, and many Chickasaws attend the annual meeting to here the State of the Nation address by the Chickasaw Governor. As a result, many people learn about the ways of the Chickasaw.

By accessing youth and their families through the various tribal education programs, Indians and non-Indians were learning such things as the skillful game of stickball, and how to make their equipment for the game; how to prepare traditional Chickasaw food like pashofa and fry bread; learning about Indian dances and the difference between inter-tribal dances and Chickasaw stomp dances; hearing and learning the different Chickasaw Songs, and the rhythm of the drum for the different dances. They were also learning basic Chickasaw language, and learning the stories of their ancestors. Through all of these different cultural renewal projects, the members always instilled in its audience the pride of Native American heritage, honor and integrity expected of an Indian warrior, reverence for nature and the Creator, and understanding the Indian Way as a balance and harmony with the Creator and Mother Earth.

With the importance of cultural renewal and its benefits recognized by the Tribe, and continued requests for

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cultural programs growing, the Chickasaw Nation Department of Cultural Resources was established. An original dance troupe member, Johnna Walker, continued with the tribe's cultural renewal activities as the tribes' new Department of Cultural Resources began to grow and develop. She is employed by the Chickasaw Nation as their director of the Education Foundation, and continues to participate in all of the tribe's cultural events.

Mrs. Walker was asked to reflect on her experience at the Burrett Museum Indian Reunion; and to talk about the development and purpose of the Cultural Resources Department. She was a college student at the time of the first cultural event, and has been a part of cultural renewal for the tribe since that time. Following are some of those reflections.

"First, I remember being pleased to be asked to be a part of that. I was in awe that there were actually other people who wanted to learn about Chickasaws, and being asked to come back to our original homeland. I remember in particular, a comment while we were standing around in our off time, when we weren't demonstrating how to cook. We were eating a regular meal and a small child coming up to their parent and saying 'I didn't know Indians ate potato chips. I thought that was fascinating, but on the other hand, probably their only exposure to Indian people was what they had been exposed to on television or in the movies. I

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actually had that happen on another trip. They just could not believe that Indian people ate the same things they did.

Another memory is cooking the food. Some of our food, you may need a palette for; a lot of people didn't really know what to think about Pashofa. There were some people that really did like it. I was struck by the amazement that meals could be cooked like that, even today. You didn't need a stove to do it. It was also interesting how they looked at our traditional clothing. They were making remarks about how our clothing was similar to ladies from the pioneer days."

Requests for cultural demonstrations continued to grow, creating the need for a Chickasaw Nation Cultural Resources Department. What continued to surprise troupe members as they traveled to different places, was how highly regarded they were by the people attending the events. Mrs. Walker said, "They felt like they needed to treat us special while we were there. This was really new for me because I really did not feel like people here considered the tribe as a resource of information. They did not hold the same regard for the tribe as the places we have traveled to. It seems like after our first trip, we started getting lots of requests from local schools, and more out-of-state requests. People really wanted to know about our culture.

When the Chi-ka-sha Renewal was started in 1998, it was a way to bring everything to one place. This was a way that people could come learn and participate, and cut down on the

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extensive travel for the demonstration troupe. To Mrs. Walker, a full blood Chickasaw, Chickasaw renewal means rebirth, and awakening to showcase our culture and who we are. She stated, "Many of the things we do at this event, and the Cultural Evening we have now added, are not something many of us are not doing every day."

The Cultural Evening began in 2002. It is very similar to the Chickasaw Renewal, but it is held during the Chickasaw Festival in Tishomingo, Oklahoma each year the last week in September through the first weekend in October. It is held at Kullihoma Reservation, the same location of the Chickasaw Renewal. The purpose of the Cultural Evening was to give the people in the Ada area of Oklahoma, location of the Chickasaw Nation headquarters, an opportunity to participate in the Chickasaw Festival without having to travel to Tishomingo, about 40 miles further south; also the location of the original Chickasaw Nation capitol.

Attendance at the first cultural evening exceeded all expectations. The first year over 400 people attended; the second year over 800 attended. This year they are planning for about 1500 people. Mrs. Walker continues to be amazed at the number of people living around the tribal headquarters that still do not know about Chickasaw culture. Those that do want to be a part of it, even people who are not Indian. "They just so wish they were Chickasaw or they were Indian; and want to learn everything that they can learn. They want to participate in everything we have.

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They are like sponges just wanting to soak up all the information out there; you can just see the excitement on their faces."

Mrs. Walker described Kullihoma Reservation, the location for these two big events, as a time long ago. It is very peaceful, away from town, away from the city and no traffic. Some of the various cultural demonstration activities that they teach the young people and visitors include: traditional dress making and style; stickball making and playing, which helps young warriors develop mentally and physically; blow gun and darts; beaded collars; finger weaving belts; food demonstrations; the tradition of everyone eating together; sleeping outdoors again; history and legends; language and storytelling; and some more craft activities for children.

She said, "Seeing how quickly children can learn our crafts is amazing. Having older teaching younger brings me back to a time where my aunt and my grandma were always teaching me how to do things. There wasn't anything I didn't do after being taught. I learned by watching and doing. It may not be that particular child's elder teaching them how to do it, but it is still an elder guiding them. An elder in the community is showing them and teaching them.

Another wonderful thing about the Chickasaw Renewal is just the sense of being around your whole family out there; knowing and feeling that you are at home, not that you are

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at a camp ground, but that it is spiritual through the creator and his creation."

Third Annual Chickasaw Renewal, July 3-5, 2000.

This researcher settled into camp Thursday afternoon to prepare for the following three days of Renewal of the Chi-ka-sha at Kullihoma Reservation located near Allen, Oklahoma. The reservation was the sight of an original Chickasaw Stomp Ground established when the tribe was first moved to Oklahoma in the mid 1800's; and sacred to the Chickasaw. Surrounding it were many acres of land inhabited by many Chickasaw families. Today, the small rural communities surrounding Kullihoma Reservation still house these families and the traditional ways of the Chickasaw.

The reservation had been restored, and the tribal land filled with trees and wildlife, beautifully groomed and prepared for the annual coming together of the Chickasaw people, and their friends, to experience the historic social ways and culture of their tribe. The grounds provided many camping areas under trees, with water pumps; shower and restroom facilities, a kitchen; and a large covered pavilion for meeting and eating. Brush arbors were built throughout a large area for cultural demonstrations and activities; a field had been carefully constructed according to ancient

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tradition for the Chickasaw game, Stickball; and the Stomp ground had been recreated and blessed as close to its historic original site as possible.

Two or three other campsites had been set up, but remained vacant during the afternoon. The Chickasaw Renewal would not officially begin until the following morning, shortly after sunrise. By late afternoon, several more campers began arriving to claim choice campsites, while they were available. By evening on the eve of the Chickasaw Renewal, hustle and bustle had begun around the camp grounds.

Tribal cultural leaders and their families arrived to fill the tents of the once empty campsites earlier in the afternoon. The sounds of families arriving, cars being unloaded, and tents going up could be heard in the evening breeze. The moon was full, the stars were bright, and night sounds filled the air. Renewal of the spirit had begun. Throughout the next day, a steady stream of cars, trucks, campers, and trailers entered the gates of Kullihoma. By day's end, the camp grounds were full.

Campers awoke to a beautiful sunrise, and the quiet peace of an early morning in the woods of the reservation. By 8:00, Kullihoma had come to life. Chickasaw Nation personnel were arriving to set up chairs, tables, a sound

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system and podium for the 9:00 Opening Ceremony in the pavilion. Other personnel from the Cultural Resources Department began to set up some of the demonstration areas under the brush arbors, while others began preparations for a wood fire needed to cook traditional Pashofa. Campers began migrating toward the centrally located pavilion for Opening Ceremonies.

The ceremonies began with a procession of the Chickasaw Nation Veterans' Honor Guard, marching in tempo to the steady beat of the drum as they entered the back of the pavilion and proceeded forward to present the Nations' flags, and lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. In grand order, these veteran Chickasaw elders then discharged their rifles, on command three times, before retreating to the steady beat of the drum.

A Chickasaw elder said a prayer in the Chickasaw language before Bill Anoatubby, Governor of the Chickasaw Nation welcomed the audience. He began by describing how the Renewal came to be. He said, "I remember when The Council of Councils, which is the leadership of the Chickasaw Community Councils, coming here and deciding to renew a cultural event like this. It is very important that we continue our spiritual, to know more about our cultural heritage. This is an opportunity for that to

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occur, and at the same time have a good time. The people that come out each year seem to have a wonderful time. It is my privilege today to wish you the very best and hope that while you are here that you enjoy your stay, and enjoy all the activities that are occurring here. On behalf of the great unconquered and unconquerable Chickasaw Nation, a Nation known for its bravery and more especially its intrepid warriors, never known to have lost a battle, welcome to the Chickasaw Renewal."

Next, Larry Seawright, one of the cultural leaders for the weekend, talked to the audience about the purpose and history of the Chickasaw Renewal. He said, "Today is the first day of a long weekend. You are all welcome to stay here for the duration, fellowship with us, and have a good time. The Stomp Dance was a time for the Chickasaw people to come together to fellowship, eat, dance, sing, and have a good time. A renewal celebration, which we are having this weekend.

It first started out as an Earth Festival. Recognition, like some tribes recognize their corn harvest as their Green Corn Celebration. We now call this our Renewal Celebration. It is a time for the Chickasaw people to have a family reunion, so to speak, for the Chickasaw people to come back together, for a new beginning. We look

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at it as a start of a new year, like New Year's Eve. This is the time for Chickasaw people to come together for a new beginning, like starting over. We can set aside any transgressions, or anything one may have against somebody, that happened the past year. It was even a time for them to pardon criminals of the crimes they had committed the past year, except for murder, which could not be pardoned. The Chickasaw Renewal was a time for Chickasaws to start over, and have a new beginning."

Then, Bill Kirkley, another cultural leader for the weekend, spoke to the audience. When Mr. Seawright introduced him he stated, "At this time I would like to have Bill Kirkley come up here, he was a founding father for getting this ground started again. Long ago we had a Stomp ground here, and then along with other stomp grounds, it kind of died out and was closed down for many years along with the culture, and the Dance Troupe, which was started back in 1992. The originals that started were prepared to carry on the Chickasaw culture in the song and the dance. Along with this stomp ground and along with Bill's help, and other council members, and the Governor's we've reclaimed Kullihoma Stomp Ground. They wanted some place for the Chickasaw people to come, some place they could call home. Some place they can gather and

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fellowship, and have a good time. And this is that place, we welcome you here today."

Mr. Kirkley then provided more history about Kullihoma for the continually growing audience. He began, "We started this at a meeting of the Council of Community Councils, which I am honored to be a part of. When we all got together the first time, it was kind of a round table discussion, the thing that came up was that everybody really wanted to know about culture and feel like they were a part of it, a part of the Nation. Unfortunately today that is hard to do.

The way today's culture is, makes it very hard to come out and dedicate two or three days to this. Most of us have to work full time. But it is real important to maintain our culture. I have talked to different members of different tribes, Kiowa, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole, and it's a challenge all the tribes have. Our culture is so unique, so special; we have to do what we can to preserve it, maintain it, and make new traditions like this one, which is the whole idea.

The whole idea is for everybody to come together and have a good time, learn as much as we can about our ancient cultures and traditions. I welcome you all, this is our place, and I really appreciate the Governor's support for

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doing this. It is something we have needed for a long time."

History of Indian Education

The work of Margaret Szasz (1999) provides a detailed look at Indian Education during the years of federal government control. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), housed within the United States Department of Interior, became involved with the education of Native Americans in the late 19th century when the United States Government first accepted responsibilities for educating them. According to Szasz, the BIA had direct control of Indian Education beginning in 1928, and continued this control for almost 50 years.

By 1970, Indian Education had not improved measurably during the past four decades. Anti-Bureau criticism crystallized in 1969 with the release of a report compiled by the Senate Special Sub-committee on Indian Education. The report was entitled Indian Education: A National Tragedy - A National Challenge. This report was more commonly known as the Kennedy Report. The report concentrated on educational issues through an analysis of contemporary problems. By doing so, recommendations from the report suffered from a one dimensional perspective. "Instead of treating the historical causes for the failures of Indian Education, it concentrated on the results" (Szasz, p. 1).

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Findings of this report focused first on the harsh conditions of Indian boarding schools in 1928. Key findings included:

1) School curriculum and course work was unrelated to culture and environment.
2) Vocational education programs were not advanced enough for students to get jobs in urban areas.
3) Conditions of over-crowding, insufficient dormitory food, and improper treatment of sick children led to frequent epidemics.
4) Congressional appropriations were meager so boarding school pupils, including a significant percentage of pre-adolescents, were forced to provide almost all essentials by working long hours in the shops, the gardens, and the kitchens.
5) Students were subjected to harsh discipline according to the arbitrary will of the school superintendents. (p. 2).

The Kennedy Report encouraged a movement of reform for the Bureau of Indian Affairs which climaxed with a review of the Meriam Report of 1928. The report was entitled: The Problem of Indian Administration; forgotten about until the 1960's. Unfortunately, forty years later, its contents about problems with Indian education still existed, and were

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still just as applicable as they had been in the 1930's (p. 3).

The Meriam Report suggested that Indian education be the primary function of the BIA, gear education for all age levels, and tie it closely to the local communities. The report encouraged construction of day schools to serve as community centers, proposed extensive reform of boarding schools, including introduction of Indian culture and revision of curriculum so it would be adaptable to local conditions. It attacked the horrid boarding school conditions, school personnel, and the practice of enrolling pre-adolescent children. Finally, it recommended that teacher salaries and standards be raised, and a professional educator be appointed Director of Indian Education. The Kennedy report of 1969 concluded that many of the recommendations of the Meriam Report were "yet to be accomplished" (p. 4).

Between 1928 and 1973, Indian education policies changed direction as federal policies changed, due to federal Indian policies and those relationships with the United States Government. Prior to the Meriam report, "Even during the late 19th century, Indian education was a prominent feature of the policy of assimilation - to absorb the Indian into mainstream culture" (p. 4). After the Meriam report, during the 1920's and 1930's, Indian education was affected by a reform movement, which encouraged a return to Indian culture.

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During the late 1940's, policy again shifted toward a newer version of assimilation, the policy of termination. By the 1960's, U.S. policy was responding to the movement for Indian self-determination by recognizing that Indians should have a voice in their own educational programs. The influence of Federal Indian policy on the BIA Education Division largely determined the shape of Indian education.

In 1965, the Senate Sub-Committee began researching Indian policy and appropriations. The federal funding program for Indian students in public schools was severely attacked by the Kennedy report, but recommendations for improvement again stressed results rather than causes. These failures can be traced back to the mid 1930's when the BIA signed its first contracts with individual states for educating Indian students in public schools.

The Federal/State contracts were legalized by the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934. However, most of these funds were going into schools' general funds, with no interest in developing special programs for Indian students. The monies often affected non-Indian children more than Indian students (p. 5). This practice continued through the 1950's and late 1960's until the states' gross mishandling of Indian education funds were called to public attention through the Indian Self Determination movement.

The Indian Self Determination movement actually began around WWII with the formation of the National Congress of American Indians in 1944. But, it wasn't until after 1965

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that the movement began significantly affecting Indian Education. By this time the states' mishandling of Indian education funds was becoming as notorious as the boarding school scandals of the 1920's. The Indian Self-Determination movement began publicizing these funding illegalities, and mobilizing Indian parents and leaders to demand a voice in controlling these federal funds. The Kennedy Report helped to achieve some of this change. But it wasn't until after 1965 that the movement began significantly affecting Indian education.

In the 50 years prior to the Meriam report, the Federal Government's policy was one of total assimilation of the American Indian into the mainstream. This period officially began in 1819 with the congressional establishment of the "civilization fund" (p. 6). This fund provided for a small annual sum for instruction of Indian students. Missionary groups administered most of the schools. Several South Eastern Tribes developed their own highly successful educational systems.

In 1882, Congress appropriated a large amount of money for off reservation industrial boarding schools. Some of those still in existence are Haskell Indian College and the Institute of American Indian Arts. Richard Henry Pratt, a United States Army captain was instrumental in the establishing of these schools by founding Carlisle Indian School in 1879. The appropriation for these schools was the first in federal funding and provision of a formal structure

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for Indian Education. The students of these schools were the first victims of the "either/or" policy of assimilation (p. 10). Their education forced them to choose the culture of the White man or the culture of the Indian. There was no compromise.

Reyhner and Eder (1998) describe this period of time for Indian people as very dismal. The boarding schools would allow no Indian languages to be spoken; their cultural traditions were labeled "works of the devil" and "enemies of progress" (p. 33). Education was seen as a way of assimilation. Attendance was forced. They describe the BIA during this time period as and agency of "corruption and notorious" (p. 34).

Just before the turn of the century, other alternatives such as reservation boarding schools and reservation day schools were becoming available. After the turn of the century, day schools increased. With the availability of these alternative choices, a second form of school structure for Indian education was again provided by the Federal Government. The first tribes to be subjected to public schooling were those whose reservations were allotted, thus providing a third federal education institution for teaching Indian students. Mission schools still remained because they had become established institutions.

During this time before the turn of the century, The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma built a system of district and seminary schools. Within ten years, the majority of

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teachers had changed from eastern educated missionaries to locally trained teachers. Their schools were closed by the federal government in the late 1890's (Reyhner and Eder, 1992).

"At the beginning of the twentieth century the status of the Indian was not only bleak, it was hovering on the edge of disaster. The dual inheritance of the assimilation policies of education and land allotment had already given some indication of their potential ability to damage if not destroy a majority of the Indian people" (Szasz, p. 11). During the next three decades (1900 - 1930) the unchecked pursuit of these policies led the Indian to a point of no return.

"By the end of WWI he was suffering increasingly from disease and a short life expectancy, malnutrition and starvation, a diminishing land base, and a stagnant, unrealistic school system. In the early 1920's federal Indian policy was a notorious example of bureaucratic inefficiency and ineffectiveness, and the possibility of change from within appeared to be hopeless" (p. 12).

The decade of the twenties was a decade of reform. It also was an era of development of dynamic leadership among the reformers. A result of this era of reform was the compilation of the Meriam Report. Senate hearings were conducted between 1928 and 1933; their purpose was to conduct a "Survey of Conditions of Indians." These senate

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investigations uncovered much disturbing information regarding Indian education.

First, the hearings revealed that the school directors determined the type and severity of punishment for Indian students. Second, boarding school curricula was a single uniform course of study with a single regimented curriculum provided at the same time each day, to all Indian children. Third, Indian students were exposed only to White culture (p. 23). The disturbing information uncovered through the Senate Hearings resulted in the Meriam Report.

The Meriam Report recommended that routinazation be eliminated, and that tribal differences were recognized through classroom material. This was the first attack from Congress on the current status of Indian Education. The second attack was on the age level of boarding school children. The Report recommended that only older children attend boarding schools, and eliminate the attendance of pre-adolescent children in boarding schools.

Also under attack was the vocational training program for Indian students. The training focus was still primarily industrialized, and not geared to meet the current job markets. The existing programs also discouraged students from returning to their reservations. "The Meriam Report suggested that the duty of the Indian Service was to provide both the youth and his parents with the tools to adapt to two worlds - the White and the Indian" (p.24).

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The years 1929 through 1933 were also considered a transition period for Indian education. Congress increased boarding school budgets; the first time Indian children were guaranteed adequate food and clothing. Also in 1929, Indian Commissioner Burke, officially forbid the use of flogging as a form of school discipline. Before flogging was forbidden, each time an Indian child would talk "Indian", he would receive a stroke from a leather strap with holes in it (Reyhner & Eder, 1992). Standards were also raised for the education positions of Indian Service personnel.

In 1931, the BIA began a major administrative reorganization. "For the first time, Indian education was considered of sufficient importance to be placed under the direction of a professional educator, which implied, in effect, that its standards might be raised to meet national educational levels" (Szaz, p. 29). On August 19th, 1930, a new division of Education was created within the BIA, and a Director of Education was appointed. This person was Carson Ryan, professor of education at Swarthmore.

Ryan immediately began implementing a progressive plan for Indian education. First, he proposed the development of a community school system oriented to the needs of existing population centers on the reservations. Second, he developed federal-state education contracts, which would accelerate the number of Indian children attending public schools. Third, he planned the gradual phasing out of boarding schools. In the interim, he sought to make the

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boarding schools more responsive to the needs of the students.

The process was long, effectively delayed by Congressmen having schools in there districts. During this time, he attacked the Uniform Course of Study, slowly replacing curriculum with subjects more relevant, with emphasis on teaching children about their heritage. Teachers relied on Indians to come in and assist. Ryan also encouraged decentralization of bureau schools from one central office, and pushed for the schools to meet standards required by their states and local areas.

"Roosevelt's election in 1932 was the most significant event for Indian people since the Dawes Act. The net effect of Roosevelt's election, at least until the impact of WWII, was a reversal of the policy of assimilation. This era was referred to as the "Indian New Deal". It's fundamental problem, as with earlier administrations, it maintained a paternalistic control over the lives of the Indian people" (p. 38).

On April 21st, 1933, John Collier was named the new Commissioner for Indian Affairs. He provided the forceful leadership needed for change. The foundation for change was laid by Ryan under Commissioner Rhoads. Collier created the climate for reform to happen. His goals were: 1) economic rehabilitation of the Indians, principally on the land; 2) organization of Indian Tribes for managing their own affairs; 3) civil and cultural freedoms for the Indians.

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The Wheeler-Howard bill, introduced in February, 1934, incorporated the goals of Collier. The amended version called IRA (Indian Reorganization Act), less effected education. It primarily dealt with improving economic conditions of the Indians and facilitating political effectiveness at the tribal level. Key components of the IRA are: 1) prohibition of further allotment of Indian land; 2) establishment of a revolving credit fund; 3) development of methods for conservation of Indian resources; 4) waiving of restrictions for Indians who sought civil service jobs; 5) establishment of provisions for tribal organization and incorporation.

The IRA was the first major piece of legislation to counter the policies established in the late 19th century. Its primary aim was to reverse the pattern of Indian economic destruction begun with the Dawes Act in 1887. However, education was the second major thrust of this assimilation policy in 1887, and couldn't be determined by legislation. Indian education was subject to the mercies of the BIA educational directors, and congressional funding (p. 41).

Commissioner John Collier believed in the Indian culture and way of life. The depression had shaken the shallow materialistic individualism of western civilization. "Collier urged the nation to turn for advice to the ancient culture of the American Indian. Unless it adopted some of the primary values of Indian culture - living in harmony

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with nature, and stressing spiritual rather than material values, the White race might not survive" (p. 45).

In the 1930's, the boarding schools began shifting away from the military atmosphere and began to relax other restrictions. Emphasis was on more job training that would be available on the reservations such as agriculture, ranching, and other related areas. Attempts were also made to include culture in the curriculum. Collier sent directives to allow children to participate in their tribal religions. However, this attitude change was slow in coming. Unfortunately, when schools began asking for help in cultural curriculum, it was found that the Indian Office had very little, actually no material of any value available.

"All instruction in boarding schools was in English, and the children were forbidden to speak their own language, even outside the classroom. This unnatural restriction only served to widen the chasm between boarding school pupils and their own people when they sought to return home. Prior to the Meriam Report, Commissioner J. D. Atkins suggested that 'teaching an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect is a positive detriment to him'" (p. 68).

Beatty developed one of the earliest bilingual training programs in the country. It was aimed more at training teachers how to work with Indian students. Students were not grasping the reading skills, because they had never been exposed to the language; so they were being passed on

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through grades, but below grade level in reading. "For this reason, Ann Clark advised Indian Service teachers in the primary grades to take a half year, a year, a year and a half before you begin formal reading instruction, but make that preparation time rich in activities, experience, participation, and associations….spoken English must be a living part of every child before written English can be made alive" (p. 75).

The cultural conflict of Indian and White values was shocking to the Indian child. "The boarding school child of the 1930's had to grapple with the bits and pieces of Indian culture that might be included in his curriculum, interspersed with the primary course work. The curriculum had improved, but often it lacked the cohesiveness that might have given the child the security that comes from simply knowing who one is" (p. 80). This attempt at cross-cultural education in the 30's was very noteworthy, but overall a failure. "The task was far greater than the time, energy, and money that were allotted to it in the brief span of years from the early 30's to the early 40's" (p. 80). Then WWII came.

Public Schools and Indian Children

Between the 1930's and 1970, a large increase in the enrollment of Indian children in public schools took place. In 1930, federal schools enrolled 39% of Indian students, and public schools enrolled 53%. By 1970, public schools

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enrolled 65% of Indian students while Bureau schools enrolled 26%. The BIA Education division played a prominent role in this transition. From 1930 to 1953, it was solely responsible for funds allocated to Indian students in public schools. Ryan encouraged and implemented federal-state contracts for Indian education. Prior to these contracts, it was federal-local contracts, thousands of them.

The Johnson O'Malley Act established legality of the state contracts in 1934. It was not easy. BIA administrators were used to autonomy and thought they knew best how to educate Indian students. States were developing their own governments and autonomy, and did not like the attitudes of the Bureau and its education directors.

A number of BIA education administrators had concerns about the weaknesses of the public school systems. They were convinced that most public school administrators had very little background for developing special programs for Indian students. They were afraid the students would be seriously affected by this lack of understanding. One aspect of their concern was the attitude of teachers and administrators, especially in rural schools. Many BIA educators were convinced that most public schools were unsympathetic toward Indian children.

Overall, the Education division was unsuccessful in influencing public schools about the education of Indian students. This failure was due primarily to the following: 1) the poor quality of teachers and administrators;

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2) hostile attitudes of communities; 3) public schools had greater interest in the federal funding, than the students themselves; 4) diversity of conditions among and between states; 5) difficult relationships between state and federal administrators (p. 101).

WWII and Post War Era in Indian Education

The post war shift of BIA education once again returned to assimilation. This time, the focus was to train Indian youth for jobs in metropolitan areas. It was also a policy shift within the Bureau. The years immediately after the war saw the beginning of the termination policy, reaching its height with Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration.

Termination policy was once again encouraging the Indian to assimilate into mainstream America. However, this period was an important prelude for Indian leaders, and to the rise of self-determination in education. It was during this time that Indian leaders developed a political awareness that would serve them later. They learned to combat the political power structure, although not yet in the area of Indian education. Budgets and conditions in education were once again becoming pre-Meriam Report due to the war and shortage of employees serving in the war. In 1945 Collier resigned, which marked the end of an era in Indian education.

The next decade and a half was once again an attitude by Congress of assimilation, as during the allotment years.

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A number of features however, were radically different. First, the BIA did not support all of the radical schemes proposed by termination proponents. Also different, a new force appeared as organized Indian leadership. Many tribes emerged after the war recognizing their needs in education, and prioritizing other needs. They also emerged recognizing how the federal government could assist in filling those needs.

Also after the war years, enrollment in boarding schools once again began to increase. Factors contributing to this increased enrollment included the absence of jobs once available during the war, and uprooting of families due to the war industry, creating more mobility, and more instability. All of these factors led to family stress and broken homes. Many times, boarding schools were the only solutions. During these two decades, problem children rose to alarming rates (p. 118).

Other aspects of boarding schools changed also. During Beatty's time, the curriculum was redesigned to meet the new problems of Indian young people during the post war years. He observed, "The war brought tremendous changes and unexpected changes in the lives of the American Indians. They had new perspectives, and thus new needs." He also wrote, "BIA schools should be a vehicle for cultural change. Without sacrificing racial pride or identification with their Indian past, Indian parents and pupils are determined to gain from education a mastery of the English language and

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of the manual and intellectual skills of their white brethren" (p. 119). He believed that the Indians had begun to recognize that their "richest future" lay in the mastery of the material culture of the dominant race.

Hildegard Thompson took over as Education Branch Director in 1952. One of her goals was to increase Indian student enrollment in schools. In 1953, at least 15% of Indian children were not enrolled in school. The drop-out rate was also a big problem, as was a lack of physical space at existing schools. In the late 50's, the Indian children were falling behind their normal class levels from third grade on (p. 129). By sixth grade, it was common to be two or more grades behind white students. Of those who started high school, 60% did not finish. Thus, the BIA initiated summer programs in 1960. The programs were very successful, and offered a wide variety of choices, academics being only one. The decade of the 60's also saw a jump in post high school enrollment in colleges and vocational-technical schools. All of these initiatives were part of the policy pushed by Hildegard Thompson. She served through 1965.

In 1955, a pilot program in Adult Indian education began. Assimilation through termination was pushed in two ways. First, through relocation of Indians to urban areas, and secondly, through termination of federal services for a tribe. Often, families who were relocated were not prepared for the major life changes of rural living to urban living, but had no funds to return home (p. 137).

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In April, 1966, Lyndon B. Johnson appointed the first Indian to serve as Commissioner of Indian Affairs since 1869. Robert Lafollette Bennett was Oneida and had worked for the BIA for thirty-two years. This marked a milestone in federal Indian policy. All of those following have been Indian (p. 141).

The Bureau was in turmoil in the 60's and 70's. During this time, two men served as Assistant Commissioner; three men had served as Director of Education programs. So, in one decade, five men filled the roles of Beatty and Thompson, who successfully administrated Bureau education for almost thirty years.

Nixon appointed James Hawkins during his tenure. During this time of turmoil, Indian activism led to two major upsets in the Bureau. First, Indian activists took over the BIA's central office in 1972. Second, activists lay siege to Wounded Knee in 1973. Also in 1972, the Indian Education Act became law.

In 1975, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act became law. This Act changed the process of JOM contracting. Some of the reformers of this era pushed for more response to cross-cultural education, contracts for establishing the first Indian controlled schools, addition of Kindergartens to federal schools, and Indian groups became more involved in decision-making and local control. Indian leadership also began to grow stronger during this time.

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In addition to the Indian activists' takeovers, the Bureau was also affected in a third area; leadership of other federal agencies. "Indian policy had become a shared responsibility" (p. 145). During this era, focus was on minorities, poverty, and civil rights. The nation was beginning to realize that the melting pot theme of America was "meeting its moment of truth" (p. 146). Historically, no other group had more claim to refuting this concept than the American Indian.

Indian scholars and writers focused on the same themes about the failure of Indian Education: 1) disregard for Indian cultural heritage, and 2) lack of encouragement for Indian participation in Indian education. Events from 1966 to 1970 included the development of Indian Education organizations; establishment of individual schools under tribal or community control; increasingly vocal concern with the nature of Bureau schooling; a growing Indian participation in public school direction, and in federal aid programs; and a renewed interest in the study of Indian culture.

One major Indian Education professional organization which emerged was the National Indian Education Association (NIEA). NIEA held its first national conference in Minnesota in November of 1969. Changes in BIA education did not appear until the decade was nearing and end.

Leading up to these united voices of concern in the late 60's were some policy changes back in 1953 regarding

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funding for Indian education. Beginning in 1953, more federal assistance programs emerged, taking much of the load from JOM, then nineteen years old. "Federally impacted area" legislation provided federal funds to compensate for financial burdens on schools due to federal activities. This legislation was enacted with P.L. 874 - general operating expenses in lieu of local taxes. This law is now known as Impact Aid. Also enacted was P.L. 815 - funds for school construction in federally impacted areas.

Originally, these funding programs did not apply to Indians, but military installations. These laws were amended in 1953 to include Indians. However, schools could not receive both JOM and Impact Aid. They would have to transfer funding. In 1958, a second amendment required all states to transfer to P.L. 874 funding. The amendment did not terminate the JOM Act. P.L. 874 was intended to provide basic support, while JOM became "special needs" funding.

In April, 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed. This Act was written to meet the special educational needs of children in low income families. This was the first legislation to officially recognize the existence of the children for which it was written. Title I of this legislation would affect most Indian children. Many Indian children were low income, and most had characteristics of educationally deprived. They were well below average in achievement and well above average in the

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drop-out rate. A significant number of Indian students were convinced they could not achieve. (p. 84).

By the middle of the 1960's, the federal government was providing three sources of funding to public schools for their Indian student enrollments. As happened with the JOM Act, there was a wide gap between theory and intent of the laws, and how these funds were actually used in the public schools. Once again, a major portion of the funding was used for basic operating expenses. As mentioned earlier, the Kennedy Report confirmed this blatant disregard of public schools to the intent of the legislation. Once again, the Indian child was being denied the benefits which were intended for him.

Public Schools' most serious weakness was the failure to encourage Indian parent participation. Had Indian parents been encouraged to participate, they could have helped to correct other weaknesses. Weaknesses such as; 1) a lack of proper accounting of Indian education funds, 2) continued discrimination against Indian students, 3) low quality of teaching. As a result of this decade, BIA education emerged as an archaic system of paternalism, both basically and historically, while public education appeared as a force of persistent discrimination (p. 186).

With the passage of the Indian Education Act on June 23rd, 1974 came a major victory for the Indians. This Act set a precedent for Indian control. Part A. of this Act mandated schools to seek parental voice about Impact Aid

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programs. Part B. authorized a series of grant programs to stress culturally relevant and bilingual curriculum materials. Part C. provided grants for adult education projects. Part D. established the

On January 5th, 1975, President Ford signed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638). Three days earlier on January 2nd, the Office of Indian Education was created within the United States Office of Education, to administer these provisions. Part E. provided funds for training teachers for Indian Bureau schools, with preference given to Indians. January 2nd, the American Indian Policy Review Commission was established by law. These three legislative Acts were major milestones for Indian people.

In the 1990's, Indian leaders continued to instruct Congress about the basic precepts guiding the position of Tribes within the United States. Three federal entities were recognized during this decade; the U.S. Federal Government, states, and tribal governments. They reiterated the legal precedents for federal and tribal relations introduced in the United States Constitution and reinforced by the United States Supreme Court. These include; treaties as the supreme law of the land, federal trust responsibilities to Indian Nations, and tribal sovereignty. Members of Congress who were unaware of these precepts, or who challenged their legality caused severe damage to

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American Indian Nations (p. 208). In the mid 1990's, the extensive turnover in Congress compounded these conditions.

Before the 1970's, few Indians held responsible positions within the BIA education programs at the nation's capital. Since the U. S. Office of Education had not been created by Congress, no Indians directed national programs for Indian children in public schools. During the 1970's, several milestones were gained for Indian Nations and Indian people. Unfortunately, much of these gains were lost during the Reagan years. His policies closed most of the federally run Indian schools in the U.S., or contracted them to states or tribes. Both the BIA Director of Indian Education and the U.S. Office of Indian Education Director positions were robbed of authority, and filled with Acting Directors. Budgets were tight and restricted. Indian leaders believed his term was again striving for termination of Indians.

During the Bush years, Indian education budgets were eased, and both education directors' positions were permanently filled. Also, two important contributions to Indian education came in 1991-1992, when two major events dominated Indian education. First was the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force. Secretary of Education Lauro Cavasos commissioned the task force to evaluate American Indian/Alaska Native education. It's title - Indian Nations at Risk. Regional hearings were conducted, and they joined forces with NACIE (Native American Council for Indian

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programs, facilities and finances across Native communities and public schools in general" (p. 219).

Closely following the release of the Indian Nations at Risk report, the White House Conference on Indian Education convened January 22nd - 24th, 1992. Because those planning the conference were part of the INAR hearings, many of the report's recommendations also appeared in the White House Conference report. The White House Conference had two purposes. First, to explore the possibility of an Independent Board of Indian Education that would assume responsibility for all existing federal programs relating to the education of Indians; secondly, to develop recommendations for the improvement of educational programs so that these programs were more relevant to the needs of Indians.

The delegates to the White House Conference on Indian Education, of which this researcher was an Oklahoma delegate, were opposed to the idea of a Board controlling Indian programs. Reasons for this opposition included; the belief that Tribes know what is best for their people, education programs need local control, a National Board would only create another level of bureaucracy, and tribes were too diversified to be under the authority of one Board.

The idea of a National Board of Indian Education was defeated for a second time. The first time was in the early 1970's when it was recommended by the Kennedy Report. That recommendation resulted in the creation of NACIE and the

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Indian Education Act. Overall, the White House Conference emphasized the belief that local control was in the best interests of the tribes.

The administration of President Clinton began in 1992. In April of 1994, he convened a historic gathering of 547 federally recognized tribes on the White House lawn. With concluding remarks, he signed two Executive Orders. The first Order directed all executive departments and agencies to ensure they would operate "within a government to government relationship with federally recognized tribes." The second Executive Order "guaranteed full consultation with tribal governments before taking actions that would affect those governments" (p. 225). This measure formally reversed one dimension of the unilateral policy that had prevailed for most of our Nation's history.

President Clinton's term began with a call for federal respect of tribal sovereignty. However, for Indian educators, Indian education issues were not discussed with much emphasis at all, when a week after the signing of the Executive Orders, the National Indian Listening Conference convened. None of the issues raised by the INAR report or the White House Conference were addressed.

Responding to this gross oversight of Indian education issues, an Education Summit was planned for March 20th-22nd, 1995 in Washington, D.C., which would focus on Indian education issues only. The participants of this Summit were handed a 47 page packet that contained detailed summaries of

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the INAR report and White House Conference report, along with information about NAICE and other important documents. This reminded participants of the ongoing struggles in Indian education (p. 230).

One of the results of the 1995 Indian Education Summit was a draft of the Comprehensive Federal Indian Education Policy Statement. After copies of the draft traveled through tribes and Indian communities across the country for input and fine tuning, it reached the membership of NIEA in March of 1997. A year and a half later, on August 6th, 1998, at a two day conference on building economic self determination in Indian communities, Clinton signed "Executive Order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. Under the guidance of the NIEA, NACIE, NCAI and NARF, Native people in tribes and communities across America had helped create the document which served as the catalyst for the Executive Order" (p. 231).

The Order called for a "comprehensive and coordinated approach to improve Indian education based on a policy statement defined by Indian Country" (p. 232). It also called for cohesiveness, through policy, of the disparate roles of federal agencies dealing with Indian schooling. It also stated that this policy would be based on Indian initiated goals. The effect of this Executive Order changed dialogue between tribes and the federal government from dependency to a true government to government relationship. Remember, this type of government to government relationship

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had been recognized and recommended in the Meriam Report seven decades earlier.

One very important component of this historic Executive Order is Section 2: Strategy for Research. This research strategy includes:

1. Establishment of baseline data on academic achievement and retention of American Indian and Alaska Native students in order to monitor improvements.

2. Evaluate promising practices used with those students.

3. Evaluate the role of Native language and culture in development of educational strategies.

This researcher had planned her project prior to admittance to her doctoral program. After reading the objectives of Section 2 of this Order, she believes her research is right on target with these objectives.

For seven decades of federal control over Indian education, Indian people have seen cycles of assimilation policy, enlightenment and reform policy, Indian termination

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policy, Self Determination policy, finally leading to true government to government relationships between Tribes and the Federal government. Sadly, throughout the 20th century, there have been four National Reports, beginning with the Meriam Report in the 1930's, which reiterated the same findings about Indian education with each report.

It is now 2004 of the 21st century, and the first national report on the status of Indian Education has already been released. This report was a culmination of panel discussions between the NEA (National Education Association) and the NIEA (National Indian Education Association), which convened in November, 2001. Once again, reiterating and restating the same stark findings, and the same dismal statistics for Indian education.

The good news is that tribes and Indian communities are working from within to change the status of Indian Education. The federal government is aware of its failure to its trust responsibility for providing educational services to Indians.

True government to government relationships have been established. Mechanisms are in place for Indian leaders, scholars, tribes and communities to continue a positive change for Indian education.

Minority Education Achievement

In America's public schools, educational performance is more often equated with performance on standardized tests.

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Many states have created state standards or core curriculum for their public schools. President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2002 mandates all states to test yearly progress and educational growth of their students. Standardized tests are the most prevalent methods used to measure student performance in the core curriculum.

Standardized tests are also used to measure student intelligence. Intelligence scores are the primary basis for determining whether a student needs special education or remediation services in public schools. Several studies have supported findings that standardized tests, instruments for measuring intelligence and educational performance, are biased for many minority students. One study, Suzuki and Valencia (1997), discusses these findings and their educational implications.

According to Suzuki and Valencia, intelligence testing, and the study of racial-ethnic differences in intelligence became very popular in the 1920's. The theories driving this movement were belief in heredity (innate ability) verses environment as the primary factors responsible for one's intellectual abilities. One theory believes that genetics influence intelligence, the other believes that one's intelligence is shaped by his environment. The early studies, which consistently found minorities scoring lower than whites intellectually, substantiated the theory that intelligence was genetically based, and that minorities were of less intelligence than whites due to genetics.

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As a result, the major educational implication for minority students arising from the intelligence testing movement was the practice of curriculum differentiation (p. 1105). Curriculum differentiation is still a common practice which uses intelligence testing to identify and separate students into different instructional groups or "tracks" based upon individual abilities or levels of intelligence. Through curriculum differentiation, minority students are consistently tracked into lower performing programs, and provided limited educational and occupational opportunities.

These earlier studies, although misguided in their assumptions, did find that there are race-ethnic differences in intelligence. These differences seem to be attributed to the cultural differences of minorities (Suzuki & Valencia, 1997). Since schools are the largest consumers of intelligence tests, racial-ethnic differences in intelligence present a host of educational challenges for educators and assessment personnel (p. 1108).

Suzuki & Valencia cite two major concerns regarding ethnic intelligence differences and school performance. One concern is the belief of cultural bias in intelligence tests. Test bias is defined as systematic error in the estimation of some "true" value for a group of individuals (p. 1109). Their concern is that test bias research is waning because of consistent findings that prominent intelligence tests are not biased. They contend that these

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findings have omitted some cultures such as Puerto Rican and Asian American, while some cultures such as Native Americans have been vastly understudied in test bias research investigations (p. 1109).

Additional problems with current test bias studies include the under examination of other intelligence tests, and the issue of "mixed findings" in some studies. The test bias studies which did involve minority students were limited to normal students. None had been referred for special education testing.

The second major concern cited by Suzuki and Valencia is the percentage of racial-ethnic minority students in special education services. Intelligence tests are the cornerstone of the educational evaluation system for special education in the public schools. Intelligence test scores are equated with indicators of potential (p. 1109). Minority students continue to have relatively high placements in special education and relatively low placement in gifted and talented programs. A related concern is the referral rate of minority children for psychoeducational evaluations at higher rates than their overall enrollments would indicate (p. 1109). Once referred, minority students have a high probability rate for placement.

Because of consistent racial-ethnic differences in measured intelligence, current trends in assessment are focusing on alternative forms of intelligence testing. Although some alternative tests have been designed, results

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have not yet been empirically tested. Meanwhile, current research is exploring possible modifications of intelligence theories.

The studies of both Ogbu and Suzuki & Valencia support the belief that minority culture and intelligence testing effect the educational performance of minority students, including Native Americans. Both studies also identify Native Americans as being an understudied minority culture.

Native American Achievement and Learning Styles

One characteristic important for educators of Indian students to understand is the use of silence. Use of silence is meaningful for traditional American Indian culture. If the silence is ignored, teachers will not recognize much of the communication (Plank, 1994, p. 4). Plank believes that the concept of silence is emerging as a form of communication. It is not merely a lack of speaking. It is simply non-verbal communication. Often silence is misinterpreted by non-Indian people who are unaware of cultural uses of silence, or unfamiliar with behavior patterns of American Indians.

Plank supports his research with a description of many other works spanning the past twenty years. His review of this literature supports the existence of tribal cultural traits inclusive of use of silence, team effort, and the importance of not standing out or apart from other tribal members. The body of research described by Plank also

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supports the belief that tribal cultures value the process of learning through watching and observing the whole process, listening to the teacher rather than engaging in questioning and answering queries.

Plank's research was conducted on the Navaho reservation. As part of his research, he interviewed teachers working in the reservation schools. When asked about the silence of their students, teacher responses included; "trying to figure out how to pull out the information", "wonder if they are getting it and then you find out they have." Navaho teachers describe the use of silence as "time to process questions, to think of proper responses, to interpret a different speech pattern or language (p. 11). Language processing requires more time when a second language is involved. Ample time lapse for Indian students is at least fifteen to twenty seconds (p. 17).

As with silence, uses of other learning styles such as visual learning and cooperative group activities have proven educationally successful for Indian students. For the Navaho students, learning activities which allowed them to look, see, observe and watch engaged them in the learning process. They were learning by observing rather than by asking questions and receiving information (p. 12). Also, cooperative learning strategies created a much more positive learning environment for the students, according to their teachers. Smaller groups encouraged more talking among each

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other. Many other research articles strongly state the need to approach American Indian education cooperatively rather than competitively (p. 16).

American Indian students tend to be primarily visual learners, but also learn from multiple sensory presentations (p. 17). Plank believes that educators should consider the following when teaching these students: 1) Allow the student to remain anonymous (no singling out); 2) maintain the student's need to be submissive in class; 3) recognize the lack of desire to get ahead of peers; 4) value harmony and consensus with others; and 5) stress present needs over future needs.

A compilation of articles and papers edited by Jon Reyhmer in 1992 continue to support the common cultural characteristics and inherent learning styles of Indian students. His book, Teaching American Indian Students, focuses on the works of other authors who have targeted their research on the unique cultural needs and learning styles of Indian students, and how they affect Indian students in the public school system. Following is an overview of their findings.

Cumins' article, "The Empowerment of Indian Students" again confirms longstanding data that has continued to cause both state and federal governments to fail in the education of Indian students. First, American Indians have a long history of subjugation and overt racism by the dominant society. Second, Indian students continue to have

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disproportionate school failure compared to other minorities and whites. He states, "The roots of failure lie in the ways well meaning educators inadvertently reinforce children's conflicting feelings about their own culture and the majority culture. This 'bicultural ambivalence' is the result of generations of overt racism" (p.3-4).

According to Cumins, today's teachers are usually not intending to discriminate against minority students, but their interaction with minority students, often in the name of equality are "controlled by unquestioned assumptions that reflect the values and priorities of the majority culture. It is these interactions that minority students are "educationally disabled" (p. 4)

He believes that minority students are empowered or disabled based on four institutional characteristics of schools. These characteristics reflect the extent to which: 1) minority student language and culture are incorporated into the school program; 2) minority community participation is encouraged as an integral component of children's education; 3) Instruction (pedagogy) is used to motivate students to use language actively in order to generate their own knowledge; 4) professionals who are involved in student testing (assessment), become advocates for minority students by focusing primarily on the ways in which students' academic difficulties are a function of interactions with and within the school context, instead of locating the problem within the students (p. 5).

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The belief is the assimilationist climate of the institution results in school failure, while an intercultural climate encourages students to develop the ability, confidence and motivation which lead to academic success. Instructional approaches which enable learning are based in interactive experiential activities where students have more control over the process of learning. Learning is an active process enhanced by interaction.

Traditional western schools use primarily the transmission model, total control by the teacher, transmitting information to students who are placed in a primarily passive role of learning. A result of this model of learning is an over representation of minority students in learning disabled classes (p. 8).

Ricardo Garcia and Janet Goldstein Ahler again reinforce the fundamental precept of historical subjugation, and near annihilation of American Indians due to the melting pot theory and assimilationist focus of public education (p. 19). Their work, Indian Education: Assumptions, Ideologies, Strategies, reports there are many multicultural models, but propose two basic assumptions: 1) meet the educational needs of culturally diverse students by recognizing that their cultural knowledge is worthwhile, and reinforce and expand that knowledge in the classroom; 2) promote sensitivity and awareness among all students (p. 20). If these two basic assumptions are embraced by public

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schools, it will lead students to an appreciation and respect for one's own culture.

How do we implement strategies in public schools to ensure the success of these two basic assumptions? Karen Swisher and Donna Deyhle address these issues in their work "Adapting Instruction to Culture" (1992). Their work supports the belief that Indian children are taught to observe and learn before doing. By observation of the whole process, they gain mental competence, master the process privately first before making that knowledge public (p. 84). Swisher and Deyhle state, "Indian children seem to prefer to learn privately and to gain competence before publicly performing."

They support their findings with a variety of citations from other articles and research projects. Specifically, that Indian children are visual learners. In the home, they are exposed to learning methods including observation, manipulation and experimentation. In the public school system, their learning is limited to verbal instruction, reading and writing.

"The body of research, although small, on learning styles of American Indian students presents some converging evidence that suggests common patterns or methods in the way these students come to know or understand the world. They approach tasks visually, seem to prefer to learn by careful observation preceding performance, and seem to learn in their natural settings experientially" (p. 86).

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"American Indian students come to learn about the world in ways that differ from those of non-Indian students" (p. 87). For Indian children, an incongruity may exist for acquiring and demonstrating knowledge at home verses school. In the classroom, it is usually by a "single act" of answering questions or reciting when called on by the teacher (p. 88). However, in several studies, when Indian students were able to initiate interaction with the teacher, or worked on student-led group projects, they were more talkative and participated more.

According to Swisher and Dehle, the research indicates that some Indian children are more apt to participate actively and verbally in group projects and in situations where they volunteer participation. Conversely, these Indian children are less apt to perform when they are individually "put on the spot" by teachers who expect them to answer questions in front of other students (p. 89). Indian children would rather work cooperatively together than be in individual competition. Rather than stand out or shine, they will be lower achievers to ensure that they do not stand out. Also, many Indian students seem to avoid competition when they view it as unfair.

Unfortunately, teachers often mistake behaviors of Indian students because they are unaware of cultural differences. For example, teachers often mistake the "cooperative spirit" in Indian societies, and a reluctance of Indian children to compete with peers as a lack of desire

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and motivation. Cultural differences are often misinterpreted.

The work of Dick Little Bear also supports the theories on learning styles of Indian students. Little Bear's article "Getting Teachers and Parents to Work Together" (1992) also supports the belief in a common cluster of cultural characteristics among Indian tribes which revolve around home, family and community. One of those characteristics he focuses on is the importance of extended family and community. He describes it very succinctly by stating, "It is only a slight exaggeration to say that everyone in an Indian community is related either by blood or marriage" (p. 108).

His work also supports the belief that Indian students have different communication patterns than other students. "Indian students take more time to answer questions, not because they are less intelligent, but because they want to digest the question and then formulate a correct response. The response must be correct because Indian cultures require precise communication, not just haphazard utterances" (p. 109).

In summary, Native Americans may be categorized as a caste like or involuntary minority which has developed secondary cultural characteristics as a result of unwanted contact, interaction and immersion with the dominant Anglo society. As a result, cultural characteristics may include behaviors which are oppositional to traditional school

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learning. Native culture may also discourage individual success in the White world, or risk losing cultural community for doing so. These factors contribute to the low educational achievement of many Native American students.

In addition to the cultural impact on school learning, race-ethnic differences in intelligence are also major factors affecting Indian student achievement. An era of intelligence testing in the 1920's perpetuated the belief that minorities were inferior intellectually; this belief continues today. Due to standardized intelligence test biases; our nation's public schools' dependence on intelligence tests for special education placement; and the overall determination of student ability based on standardized test performance, Native American students continue to be an understudied minority with exceptionally high special education and remediation placements in proportion to total population.

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Chapter III

Methodology

Design

Qualitative research with a phenomenological design is the method of inquiry for this project. Qualitative research takes place in a natural environment or setting. It seeks to understand the participant's feelings and emotions about the construct being studied. A main characteristic of qualitative research is its focus on the intensive study of specific instances, or cases of a phenomenon (Gall, Borg, and Gall; 1996). Qualitative research does not look for verification of a predetermined idea, but the discovery of new insights (Sherman & Webb as cited by McCarter, 1995).

Personal interviews with each participant will be the primary method for phenomenological discovery. Each interview will be analyzed individually, before the coding of all participant interviews. This procedure will enrich the findings before the analysis of common patterns and themes among all of the interviews. (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Additionally, for authentication and triangulation of Chickasaw culture, the researcher will immerse herself in the culture by attending and observing three Chi Ka Sha Renewals, which are described in the section on Chickasaw culture today. Chi Ka Sha Renewal in 2000 is cited in the

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section on Chickasaw culture today because direct quotes of cultural leaders were cited during this event. The dates of these four day events are July, 2000; June, 2003; and June, 2004. Through observation, personal interviews with Chickasaw elders, and cultural leaders, further data can be collected to support the phenomena, and constructs described in this study.

Phenomenological research is the study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon (Gall, Borg, and Gall; 1996). The method of personal interview allows the qualitative researcher to study multiple participants in order to test the probability of generalizing themes and patterns. This approach is appropriate because the purpose of the project is to identify common themes and patterns across each personal interview which relate to the theoretical framework about American Indian culture and its relationship to academic achievement.

The study is guided by a phenomenological perspective. Phenomenology seeks the individual's perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or an experience (Tesh, 1984; as cited by McCarter, 1995). The phenomenological perspective also provides the researcher an opportunity to become intimately connected with the phenomena being studied, and come to know herself within her experiencing these phenomena (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

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This researcher is an American Indian, and member of The Chickasaw Nation. Through years of both personal and educational experience in public school education and tribal education, she developed her own theories about the continued evidence of low educational performance among Indian students. The phenomenological perspective will allow the researcher to focus on emergent themes and patterns of the individual interviews, and allow her to analyze and interpret data as it relates to her own previously grounded theories about tribal culture and Indian student achievement. This theoretical framework focuses on the following assumptions:

1. A historical assumption that public schools have taught/pushed for cultural assimilation into the dominant society.

2. Research in Indian education is framed around cultural assimilation verses cultural preservation.

Grounded theory is an approach to theory development which derives theories from the immediate data and information collected rather than from prior research and theory (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). The review of literature supports the beliefs that minority students, including Native Americans, do have a history of low educational

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performance (Ogbu, 1992). And it also supports the belief that the differences of minority cultures to mainstream society contribute to low educational performance for many minority students (Suzuki & Valencia, 1997).

However, the literature does not tell us specifically how and why culture relates to academic achievement, or why low educational performance among minority students continues to be perpetuated in today's public schools. Through a phenomenological approach, constructs may be discovered or defined which add the specificity and clarity needed to provide answers to the guiding questions of this study.

Participants

Through purposive sampling, five Chickasaw mothers were selected for in-depth personal interviews. The sample is small but typical in qualitative research. The number of subjects is not as important as the depth of the interview (Plank, 1994). The Chickasaw tribe is considered a matriarchal society so mothers have been selected for this study. An interview guide has been developed which explores the following areas: 1) Rapport building and gathering of general information; 2) Family History; 3) Native American culture; and 4) Perspective about public schools.

Specific sub-questions are listed under each category. However, because of the phenomenological and emergent nature of the study, discussion can lead to other questions or

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topics not specifically identified in the interview guide (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Questions are open-ended, simple and thought provoking. The purpose is to give the participant as much latitude as possible in responding (Plank, 1994). Each tape recorded interview lasts approximately two hours.

The participants were selected by purposive sampling. In purposeful sampling, the goal is to select participants that are likely to be "information rich" with respect to the purposes of the study (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 218). Each participant is one-quarter degree or more Chickasaw, and a voting member of the Chickasaw Nation. Specifically, information is being sought to provide insight into the following research questions:

1. Do the unique cultural characteristics of Chickasaws contribute to a perceived inability to achieve compared to non-Indian, dominant society students in Oklahoma public schools, located within the Chickasaw Nation?

2. How does Chickasaw culture affect student achievement in public schools?

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3. Does a lack of understanding of Native American cultures by public schools negatively impact Native student achievement?

Data Collection

Data is collected primarily through the taped interview process. Each interview is estimated to last approximately two hours. Field notes are also utilized to help support the interpretation of data. Interviews are transcribed so responses can be grouped by themes and categories (Plank, 1994).

In addition, each participant will be provided a copy of the taped transcripts and analysis of her interviews for feedback. The purpose is to ensure that the researcher is conveying the participants' thoughts and beliefs through the conceptual framework of each participant (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Also, by getting feedback from the participants prior to the completion of findings, the results of the study are strengthened through the process of triangulation. Additional triangulation will occur as common themes and patterns emerge (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Data Analysis

The data analysis of each participant interview includes four components: 1) a review of responses to the Interview Guide relative to the research questions; 2)

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examination of these responses in relation to the cluster of cultural characteristics sited in the review of literature; 3) general findings of the data collected; and 4) conclusion of the project. The purpose of the data analysis is to identify common cultural themes and patterns between the participants, and to seek new insights about educational achievement of Native American students in public schools. The finding of common patterns and themes will further enhance the process of triangulation.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the nature of the research project, a very small sample will be purposively selected. Also, the geographic area is very specific, two school districts located within the Chickasaw Nation. The participants are also limited to Chickasaw mothers who are members of the Chickasaw tribe.

Another limitation to the study is the personal bias of the researcher. As mentioned earlier, the researcher is Chickasaw, and has worked as Director of Tribal Education and Training programs for the Chickasaw Nation. During this time, she began formulating her own theories about why many Indian students attending public schools within the Chickasaw Nation boundaries were not doing well academically. This bias could affect interpretation and discussion of her findings.

Benefits of the Study

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This research can be replicated very easily. The interview guide is simple, and easily administered (See appendix). As the sample size increases, each cultural construct may be quantified as a variable. Then researchers can study the statistical significance of Native American culture, and the value of both inherited and learned Indian ways.

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Chapter IV

Findings

Participants for the first two interviews are one quarter Chickasaw or Chickasaw/Choctaw. The third participant is one half Chickasaw/Choctaw; the two participants interviewed last are at least three quarters to full blood Chickasaw or Chickasaw/Choctaw. It is important to note there are some oral stories believing that the Chickasaws and Choctaws were one tribe early in history. When the Chickasaws were removed to Oklahoma in the 1800's, they shared land with the Choctaws before establishing their on Nation in South Central Oklahoma. The languages are extremely similar and understandable between the two tribes, as are many of their customs.

Interview #1

Family History

This participant is a professor at a local university. She has a doctorate in Nursing and teaches nursing classes at the university. She is one quarter degree Chickasaw, and a registered nurse. She is married to a full blood Comanche; they have two children ages 14 and 10. Her

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oldest, a girl, is "very identifiable Indian." Although her younger brother has darker hair, she has darker skin. In fact, the participant states, "We have this skin color argument between us. My daughter says she is more like her Dad and my son is more like me." The participant is light skinned.

Her children are listed on the Chickasaw rolls as three sixteenths. "We were signed up with less blood than we are. It goes back to the Trail of Tears, that individual who signed up. We trace back to the Trail of Tears. We know that." Her grandfather, a full-blood, was shuffled into the boarding school system, and then married a non-Indian. When asked if he ever shared some of his experiences, the participant responded, "I tried to get him to talk about Indian ways; I don't know if that (boarding school) had anything to do with it. There were things he would not talk about, ever, because of the way they were treated as Indians. He would hardly talk about being Indian. I mean we knew that we were." She continues, "I had an uncle, my Dad's oldest brother, who was so proud of it, but my Dad didn't talk about it that much, it was my uncle really. I guess I can remember always, he would see you and practically say 'You're an Indian, you're an Indian'. You meet so many people you know without a degree of blood that didn't even pay that much attention to being Indian until it became popular. I get really angry with someone when they say you probably didn't even take advantage of it until you

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found out you could get something for it. I thought, boy he (her uncle) took me to everything he could take us to and he would say, 'you are an Indian, you are an Indian'."

Her uncle continued to emphasize the fact that she was an Indian as she grew older. Her uncle was proud of being Indian. As a child, her uncle and his wife would always say "you are not that dark skinned, you should wear a lot of turquoise." It helped them identify with their culture, to wear a lot of turquoise. The participant stated, "It's in our heads because I have jewelry that's twenty or thirty years old. They always bought it for me. It was really my uncle that was responsible for it although my dad would never try to hide it. We knew we were Indian and we talked about it."

The participant considers herself a Comanche as well, her husband's tribe. Her husband's family considers themselves full-blood, although the Comanches did things a little differently than the Chickasaws. When they take someone in, they become family. She believes there may be a little Caucasian and Hispanic in the family from earlier in history. They would take white and Hispanic captives and they would become part of the tribe. She now sings Comanche songs where she did not before marriage.

Section Analysis

From these descriptions of family history, possible relationships seem to already be beginning to emerge.

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First, the information offers support to the belief that boarding school experiences of many Indian children caused them to stop cultural practices, and to understand they must learn to live in the white man's world for the sake of their families. In doing so, they did not share or pass on Indian ways to their children or their children's children.

This researcher believes that the lack of cultural identity of many of today's Indian students contributes to the detrimental educational factors of high drop-out rates and low achievement in school. Even without out a conscious cultural identity, some cultural characteristics may be passed down through generations unintentionally or unconsciously (Ogbu, 1992).

Second, we begin to see characteristics of the Indian Way emerge, such as silence and respect for reticence. Several times the participant refers to her Dad as not talking much. Her uncle also indicates that he didn't talk much as a child either. But they always knew they were Indian.

Native American Culture

When asked about Native language she stated that her husband is not bilingual but knows a lot of words. She believed his parents chose not to teach their children the language. "They decided not to mainly because of what happened to them in grade school. That is where they learned English, in first grade. We speak a lot of

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particular words. A lot of heirs in the family are named after Indian names." Her oldest child, a daughter, has an Indian name.

She and her husband speak native words with their children. "When we want to go to the bathroom, we use the Comanche word so no one knows what we are saying. There's one I like, a Comanche phrase. It means quit saying that or don't do that. So if we are in public, if he (her husband) says that, everyone knows stop whatever you're doing, stop it." Her husband's parents are bilingual because they learned the native language at home and the English language at school; Comanche was their first language. Both of them went through the boarding school system where Indian children were prohibited from speaking their native languages, and punished if they did.

When asked how she was raised, she said, "I think we grew up less traditionally. Native American language in my family was lost a long time ago." She believes that her Native American culture has affected her in some odd ways. "I have always told that I'm Indian. When I started getting around more full-bloods, I won't call it an identity crisis because I feel real good about who I am and I've always said I'm Indian; but I want to get this T-shirt that's got a picture of my grandfather, who is a full-blood. I want to say this is my grandfather, he's an Indian, he says I'm an Indian. That's kind of how I feel." She is referring to a

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feeling that more identifiable Indians are not easily accepting of her because she does not look enough Indian.

"I had somebody quit dating me in college because he found out I was Indian. He didn't say it, but I knew. When I went to graduate school, I had somebody say, 'Well, your GRE isn't quite good enough, but since you're from a disadvantaged culture, we're going to let you try it. I just couldn't believe it. I didn't even know until a few years ago that some people don't think white people should be married to Indians."

When thinking about native language she said, "I feel like I live in two worlds. I see the world assimilated and the other (Indian world). In the Indian world, we get together and sit and talk, and eat and talk; all day long if you want to be there, and even through the night if you want to be there. We have cousins who are like brothers and sisters, everyone called grandfather. You think which one really is? You've got so many."

When asked how she identified herself, she recalled a conversation between her dad and his father when she was a young girl. "I remember him saying this to his dad. We were driving down the road, and he asked his dad if there were any real Indians left? We were driving, and I am thinking that I feel like I'm a real Indian; and I thought, this is a real Indian (grandfather) right here. It gets into the degree of Indian blood issue with my Dad. He's thinking that his Dad is full blood and he is half. Which

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half of him is Indian? My dad asked those kinds of questions. It took a while for him to realize that he is an Indian. I don't know why that was such an issue with him."

Personal identity was also connected to Native American artifacts and items. "We had native items in our home that not everybody has. Some people get into it because of the art stuff. We have artifacts. We have things; we have a room that we call the Indian room. It has more artifacts in it than in other rooms. There is hardly a room that doesn't have an Indian artifact in it. My grandmother, I remember, wore turquoise, so we got lots of turquoise. Just everywhere you go you seek out Indian things."

When asked about spirituality, the participant believed that the Chickasaw tribe, as a heritage, practices Christianity. Her children are raised in a traditional Christian home. However, her father could remember his great-grandfather praying in his native language.

Next we discussed styles of communication. While pondering this subject, she again reflected on her dad. "I'll tell you what I've noticed about my dad. He communicated through food rather than saying, 'I love you'. When I was coming home from college, my Dad always helped my mom in the kitchen; he'd always have food but he didn't verbally express 'I love you.' He bought me things. He was a non-verbal communicator. He would give me little things like earrings and perfume, or when I would come home he

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would dance me around the room. But he never kissed me on the cheek or anything.

The other thing he did, because he was not a verbal person, after I moved away from home and had the kids, he started doing those same things with them. He was a non-verbal communicator in most things. He talked with my mother a lot. Whenever she would tell me things he had said I would be totally amazed. When he did talk it was very straight forward, not much detail, to the point, and with authority."

When thinking about her own styles of communication with her children, she stated it was a hard question because communication styles are not something you think about. "I have two schooled, very compliant children, particularly my daughter. She is the quiet one. She says what needs to be said, and what people need to know. She's strict on that. It's just the way she is.

My son is kind of like that too. He's not as strict as she is, but almost. I believe it is cultural. I think, now who taught you this, but that's just the way they are. And you're not going to change them. I've told them you need to let your teacher know (things). I don't know if they learned that from me. That's why I ask, how you tell what you've done because you don't know that you've done it.

Another thing; it's this thing of losing track of time, doing things when you want to do it. I lose track of time, and my son really gets into what he is doing and loses track

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of time. We'll both be doing something and think its 9:00 and it will be midnight."

She grew up in a more assimilated environment, while her husband grew up in a traditional Comanche community. She said, "We have a multicultural family. I call it a bicultural family. I didn't know that and I don't think he did either. It came as quite a shock to us. We're two Indians, we were bicultural, but they don't necessarily mean the same thing.

Basically, we have been around Indians all our lives. Like you're fourteen and you go to you grandparents and there is quite often a Tee-Pee in the back yard. Our children have been raised actually different than from what I was. You've got uncles that use a Sweat Lodge; learning two different languages. They just have had a very different upbringing than what I did, from a lot of kids."

Section Analysis

New points appear during this section, as well as previous points reappearing. First, the boarding school system is again brought up, only this time on her husband's side of the family. It was mentioned that they chose not to teach the language to their children because of their grade school experiences, which were in boarding schools. According to many documented histories of tribes, some of these experiences included; 1) being forbidden to speak their native language with severe consequences such as

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isolation, withholding of food, and having mouths washed out with soap; 2) having hair cut short; 3) not being allowed to wear their native clothes.

We also see the appearance of such cultural characteristics as giving, sharing referenced with the gatherings into the night, and eating and talking. This section also demonstrates the interconnectedness of the extended family and the importance of social gatherings as noted by the statements of cousins as brothers and sisters and having many grandfathers.

Very important was the statement of living in two worlds. One of the beliefs supporting the need for this research is that many of today's Indian youth are living in two worlds. If they do not have a strong positive connection with their own culture, yet stand out as different in the non-Indian world, what is their foundation for success? Also the characteristics of "Indian time" and non-verbal communication are introduced.

Finally, the concept of unconsciously inherited culture surfaces in the discussion about the way her children communicate, very much like their grandfather. She alludes to quiet communication as cultural -- you just know.

Expectations/View of Public School

Early in the interview, the participant refers to her children as "doing real well." At the time, she was talking about school. However, she did say that her son

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didn't test well, and used achievement tests as an example. She believes that the tests do not reflect his true level of ability. This comment is brought up again by the researcher as a starting point for this last and very critical part of the interview.

Researcher: "Something you mentioned earlier was your son and achievement tests. In what ways has being Indian affected your children in school?" "I tell you they have had two different experiences. This is the sad thing to me. I believe part of it is related to skin color. When my daughter was in school, 1st grade, my husband was more involved. He went to school more, he went to school activities more for her, and it was obvious that he was an Indian father. With me, we could cover it up. We could say which way do you want to be, and we could tell people we were Indian, but it didn't matter much. He was identified as being Indian.

Her Kindergarten year was horrible. Her teacher thought she was retarded, basically. Her teacher didn't say she was retarded, but she gave me some words that made me think that she thought my daughter was not very bright, that is the feeling I had." She continues, "Now my son on the other hand. Kindergarten wasn't too great for him either. But it was because he needed to wait a year. I think the T-1 teacher we had really liked Indians, and we're grateful for her. And his 1st grade teacher, her husband was Chickasaw, so her children were Chickasaw.

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It was better with him being Indian than it was for my daughter. School was a negative for her and a positive one for him. Well, I can say a negative for her, but not necessarily a positive for him. How can you say, he had these teachers that really liked Indians. So it really didn't matter that he was Indian."

Researcher: "In looking at school for your children, what might be some of the things you would like to see addressed?" "People need to know that because a child is quiet, or their skin color is different that it has no reflection on their intelligence, and that's been proven. Why my daughter ever made it, I know what made her be successful. She had a half-brother at the time that really recognized the pain that a quiet person can have.

Teachers need to know that neither a quiet child, nor their skin color has anything to do with academic ability. You know what I started doing to offset it? I started going to the teachers sometime during the first nine weeks to let them know what she likes. What her strengths are. I was communicating for her. The teachers had no clue. I gave them feedback. They got no feedback from her. I'm sure she was difficult, sitting there making straight A's, but they needed to know that she liked school."

Thinking back on her children's school experiences from a cultural perspective she says, "I think now, like the teachers we've had. Like the teachers that my son has had, they were real positive about things, about experiencing

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things. They had more experiential styles of teaching, and they had some connection to, or knowledge about Indian culture."

She strongly believes that American Indian culture affects Indian students' achievement in public schools. "I have noticed it particularly with what I have learned with my daughter; and with my son in sports. Native American children do not tend to push to the front of the line, they stand back. And my son is a good baseball player. This is not school, but baseball and sports are related to school. He could be really good. It's like when they pick the players to go out on the field. He's not going to be jumping up and down on the side of the field saying 'Let me go, let me go'. Now, do you think they will pick the ones standing back? No, because they think this child is not as interested as the others are. This is what I see happening."

She continues, "And the same way in school. My daughter is not going to push forward and say, 'I'm a real good piano player'. She's had teachers that have recognized the ability in her and pulled her forward, but because of their (her children) quiet manner, they are left out a lot. Something else, because of her darker skin color, she always made a real effort to never draw attention to herself. I think my son does the same thing. Because He just doesn't tell everybody he read 500 books this semester."

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Researcher: "What can be done to help more Indian students be successful in public schools?" "What we have to realize, what I think would help is, like my son and baseball, that was really miserable. Why would you have to pick only the kids who are jumping and doing cartwheels in front of you? Can't we be fair, let everyone participate, have a chance, not just the pusher or the squeaky wheel. There are other children that we are bypassing at the same time. Teachers need to know these behaviors are cultural, so they can seek out the Indian students and give them the same opportunities that other children who raise their hand, or call out the answers have."

She continues, "I didn't realize the differences in culture until having been around them (family and tribe). I have learned a lot. I'll tell you about one incident we had. When my daughter was in grade school, we lived in Lawton. In fact we lived 18 miles out. Every once in a while my husband would go home early. It was that time thing; he'd think 'well I'll go home'. School wouldn't be out for another hour but he would go by and pick her up, and he would be called to the principal's office.

It was real degrading, treating him like a child, but really what it was (picking his daughter up early), it was just part of his culture. I know you can't say that it is always part of the culture, but you could see the difference in the way she was treated, and the way my son was treated. There's no doubt about it because he (her husband) was

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identifiable. He is obviously an Indian. I felt that we got different treatment. By these actions, the school was isolating him more, alienating him. He was the father of his little girl, and he was in the school. That's bad. I tell you, after that, you couldn't have paid him to go pick her up. He was angry. And there is an aggressive side of that tribe as well. They have some aggressive characteristics, more than my tribe."

Another racist experience they had was in (a local town). While going through the check-out counter, the cashier asked him for his identification, and they don't ask her. She said, "It's sometimes hard to define what a cultural issue is. So you have to be willing to take the time and you have to have a person that the student can come and talk to. See, I'm an advisor for a lot of the Indian students that come to the university. There are cultural issues, and we have to be willing to take the time to understand this."

We began concluding the interview at this time. The participant wanted to qualify some of the things she discussed that were really important to her. She said, "The skin color issue, and the way my daughter was perceived verses my son. It really had to do with her dad being around, I felt at the time. I can remember about that teacher. I always thought 'Hey, I'm Indian and my children are Indian'. It's all those little clues you put together and think about later on. I began (putting it together) in

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graduate school. After I completed graduate school, the way my children are being raised is different."

Section Analysis

This participant is concerned that Indian children are overlooked by school personnel, or have lower expectations about Indian students because of their quiet, non-verbal ways in the classroom or on a ball team. Indian students should not be penalized if they are more group oriented and less individually competitive than other cultures. She also believes that her husband and her daughter have been treated differently, with less dignity, than she or her son due to the differences in skin color. Her concern is that skin color affects the way that Indian students are treated in school. Her experience has been that treatment is not as good, expectations are not as high, and lower functioning labels are placed on Indian students with darker color skin.

Conclusion for Case Study #1

Analysis of this interview seems to indicate that Indian culture, whether raised traditionally or in an assimilated world is more than what children are exposed to while growing up. It also indicates that Indian culture may be an inherited way of life that is passed down through generations, consciously or unconsciously. For example, this researcher is Chickasaw, but raised in an acculturated, assimilated environment. She was raised knowing she was

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Indian but the Indian way was never talked about. After growing up and learning about the cultural aspects of her tribe, she realized just how Indian her dad and her grandpa were. They both used silence and other non-verbal ways to communicate in the family.

It seems evident that the examination of this interview leads us to important issues which need further exploration. Some of these issues are:

1. Subtle racism in public schools such as skin color, low teacher expectations, and general attitudes toward Indian students.
2. Further examination of communication styles such as silence and other non-verbal methods of communicating among Indian students.
3. Non-competitive, group oriented characteristics that are perceived in school as being uninterested or standing back, not willing to participate.
4. Accuracy of standardized tests in predicting ability levels of Indian students.
5. Concept of living in two worlds, the Indian world (perceived through the years as inferior) and the White man's world (Materialistic and individually oriented).

Participant #2

This Indian mother is employed by the Chickasaw Nation Health Care system in the area of Health and Wellness. She

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is also a registered nurse, and has worked for the tribe about nine years, since she completed college. She has been divorced 5 years and just remarried recently for the second time. Her current spouse is a physician, and non-Indian, who has children from a previous marriage. Her children are all daughters ages twelve, eleven and seven. They live with her; their father has visitation rights.

Family History

Her mother and father are both living, both are Native American. Her mother is 7/8 Chickasaw/Choctaw and her father has been told he is Indian but his family refused to sign the rolls. "He is the one that gives my children the most culture out of all of all of us. Because he loves Native Americans, he thinks that they are God's chosen people. My mother was not raised in a traditional home; therefore we were not raised with a lot of tradition. Her mother was removed from her father when she was approximately six to eight years old. Her mother died and her father pretty much relinquished her to European schools, beginning with Catholic schools and then what I would consider Indian Schools. That's where my grandmother grew up; therefore, a lot of the traditions were lost."

As a Choctaw growing up in a boarding school, she never talked much, and she never spoke any Choctaw. There would be words sometimes, but never any sentences or phrases of conversation. "She did teach us to sing some hymns in

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Choctaw. But as far as my mother is concerned, I don't think she ever taught her any hymns." This researcher finds it interesting to note that the full-blood grandmother shared a little tradition with her grandchildren, but shared nothing with her own children while they were growing up. She concludes by stating again that her own father was instrumental in teaching her children what they know because it wasn't passed on to her family, it was lost.

Both of her grandmothers' parents were Native American. Her grandmother graduated from Boarding School and soon married. All of her grandmother's siblings attended Indian Boarding School at some time during their school years even though their father had remarried. It seems that during this era, Boarding School for Indian students was the expected thing to do.

The participant is 1/2 degree Chickasaw/Choctaw. She is a registered member and voter of the Chickasaw tribe. Her Chickasaw heritage comes from her mother's father. He was a full-blood Chickasaw. She recalls, "He had a very interesting life in that he was the only child with his mother and father. His father was very transient. We know little about him. He came, they had this child, and he left. His mother remarried. Her new husband said he didn't want this child from a previous marriage and he had to go. So she packed him up and sent him down the road to her sister's. He was pretty much raised by an aunt."

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She continues, "But that is interesting to me what it did to everyone else's parenting skills down the line. He was very in and out of my mother's life and her sibling's lives. She speaks very fondly of him and doesn't seem to hold anything against him. She seems to love him without any restrictions put on that. Although she has a sister who is very bitter and still talks very negatively about him. But he was very in and out. He was not what I would consider a stable person in their lives."

Section Analysis

Indian Boarding School again is an issue. This participant believes that the boarding school experiences of her grandmother were responsible for the loss of tradition in her family. Native language was lost there. Native culture was denied during these times.

As with the first participant, Native language is like a shadow in each family. Both recognized that the language had been important at one time, that it existed. However, both have heard only bits and pieces throughout their years. Did the boarding school years of a generation of Indian grandparents and great-grandparents contribute to the crisis of today's Indian students who must try to live in two worlds?

Native American Culture

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As with the first participant, this one believes that her ancestors are very proud of their heritage. She believes that her grandmother was bitter toward the European race. Because the participant's father could not prove his heritage, her grandmother viewed him as a white person. She was very angry when her daughter (participant's mother) became involved with him. As time has passed, she has loosened up a little because most of her seven children married non-Indian spouses.

The participant then shares a story relating to her grandmother's bitterness toward white people. "She told me of times my grandfather, my mother's father, worked at very different things and I think at one time he worked in the oil industry, on oil rigs. It was somewhere down south. He came back and told her that he was asked to sit in the back of a restaurant, just like black people were, or probably any minority. But I think they are very proud of their culture. What little bit that they have left. They don't try to hide it."

When asked what kinds of things her family members had taught or shared with her about being Indian she again talked about her grandmother first. "Most of it comes from my grandmother, because I don't think she shared a lot of it with her own children. She had a big family, and obviously she was primarily responsible for it. She was working either at a job to put food on the table or to take care of the kids. Once she became a grandmother she had more time

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to give us those things. I think that she is very proud, number one, of the heritage and culture, the way we did things. The way that Native Americans, say their medicine, you know they used a lot of herbs and relied upon their spiritual lives as far as their healing was concerned. Things like that."

Researcher: "Has she in a sense handed that down to you?" "I think in a way as a comparison of how complicated things are today, you might say that we used to live a simpler life. Things were treated more easily, she sees that. Health care for instance. She's very sensitive to medication. If she were offered pain medication or something, she would refuse it. She'd say 'I can't take that, it alters my ability to think and live and exist.' She would refer back to a long time ago, when we used herbs and other natural things that didn't cause these side effects."

She continues, "I think she is saying to me that we have lost something valuable. She has sung to us (Choctaw hymns) and taught us to sing. She actually kept my children, my oldest two daughters until they were two and three years old. She taught them to sing some hymns and to talk, or to count in Choctaw. So it seems that she begins to give us more and more at this point. But it has been a long time coming."

Researcher: "Why do you think that she is beginning to share it now?" Participant: "I think society as a whole is

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more accepting now, and more encouraging of that. And maybe we as Native Americans, as a culture, have said let's get back to our grass roots. Let's hang on to what we had. Let's try to get as much as we can, before we loose those few people out there who can really tell us how it was. She (her grandmother) also feels that movement. People ask her, they refer to her. Obviously, she is someone who has experienced some of that."

The participant then referred to her grandmother's brother, who died recently. He was younger, and had spent more time with their father than the other siblings, so he had more things to share. She thought his early experiences and thoughts about the government and Indian Boarding school was very interesting. "This is his theory. He truly believed that it was the government's position to mainstream or acclimatize the Native Americans, to change their culture to European culture, and the way to do that was to break up the families. They decided early on that they couldn't change adults, couldn't change older people, but they could change the children. He spoke about or referred to situations where they came in and just literally took the children away, which is really scary."

She continues, "Even when my mother was growing up, it was at a time when it wasn't largely acceptable, or to be proud to say, 'I'm Indian.' In many places you know what the racism was against black people. It was the same against Indian people! But I think at this point we have

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recognized that it is a unique culture, and there are important things to contribute to society as a whole. So people are trying to teach and learn as much as they can. I think that is why she (grandmother) has done that with my children."

Earlier the participant had mentioned Indian medicine and spirituality. Our conversation again returned to this topic. Her grandmother had always told her that Indian people believed in God. "He wasn't necessarily referred to as God like we do, and really didn't have a bible or anything like that, but they truly believed that there was one creator, one significant person that was in control of things, the wind, the rain and those kinds of things. I wouldn't say that she told me a lot about that. Probably a lot of that was taken from her early, because she went to a Catholic school first. She does make some cross reference to the fact that we did have a faith and a religion, we weren't beasts or savages like a lot of people referred to."

Researcher: "Could you say that her spirituality would be something that you sensed, an Indian way?" She quickly responded, "Oh definitely! And I would say that she believes in spirits as a whole. I don't know if she would say there were good (spirits) and bad (spirits), but there is good medicine and there is bad medicine. And we are probably most of us familiar with that. She would have definitely a good fear of bad medicine. We were never

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encouraged to toy with, or we wouldn't even talk about that. It just wouldn't be up for conversation."

She was then asked if she had a theory about why her grandmother quit using her Native language. Again, she quickly, she responded, "She told us why she quit. She was prohibited from speaking it. Number one, when she went to Catholic school, not only might they prohibit it from her, but if there weren't other children from her tribe, there would be no one to communicate with her if she spoke her native tongue. "But at the Indian schools, they were not allowed to speak their native tongues." She never shared with her granddaughter any things that might have happened to her if she did try to speak it; the participant believes that she was probably someone who obeyed the rules that were given to her.

At this point, the participant begins to talk about styles of communication, although she does not realize it. "My grandmother is not a very affectionate person and I have always suspected it's because when you go to boarding school there is probably not anybody there to give you a lot of hugs. But she speaks very positively of the nuns that took care of her. I heard stories that some kids had their mouths washed out with soap if they spoke their native language, but she has never shared that with me. I just suspect that she was moderately compliant with what they asked."

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Researcher: "You mentioned that she wasn't very affectionate. Can you describe that a little more?" Participant: "She is not physically affectionate. From what my mother told me growing up, there was not a lot of verbal positive reinforcement. If you did a good job it was just expected of you. You weren't really to be commended for it. I would say there was not a lot of emotional affection either, maybe from that perspective."

Researcher: "Did you see ways that she did show your mother love?" Participant: "I think that my mother knew that she loved her, because she worked very hard to see that they were fed and clothed. You were never dirty, you were never starved. She worked very hard to make sure that they did have those things. And I think my mother felt love from that perspective." Again, we see that love and affection were communicated through non-verbal ways.

The participant was then asked to think about family activities her immediate family participated in that were related to Indian culture. They do participate in some tribal activities. Her children are exposed to kids who have been raised more traditionally at these events. Also, as mentioned earlier, her father is very instrumental in teaching them. They have hand made bows and arrows they use for target practice. He has taught them the traditional way to tan hide and leather. He practices "sweats" and shares that with his grandchildren. He has talked to them about

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sweet grass and about smoking things with cedar. They each have a flute."

The participant believes that these kinds of things are becoming more ingrained in her family's regular lives. Her father really strives to learn and do things the traditional way. He has sought out several Chickasaw elders to get as much information from them as he can. She reads as much as she can to find out the history of her culture. She believes that there is a cultural renewal within her family to the very basic level, an integration which is becoming normal or natural ways, or old ways, due to her father's influence.

Her mother does not interact with her children in this way. The reason for this, she feels, is that her mother has been totally left out of the Indian circle. She does not think her grandmother shared a lot with her mother. She has shared more with the participant, and even more with her great-grandchildren. So her mother is coming full circle. She also believes that she may even learn more from her grandchildren than from passing it on to them.

When asked if she believed that Native American culture had affected the way she was raised, the participant again brought up some interesting theories. "Yes. Not the traditional culture, but the evolution of what happened. Certainly I see parenting skills in my mother that I see in her mother. I think they came from the fact that she

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attended a boarding school. It certainly could not mimic a home life like you would have with your parents."

She continues, "It is almost an inversion, it could be the attempt of the United States government to terminate and assimilate tribes during the time of boarding schools, created a situation where the lack of ability to utilize the culture created almost a dysfunction, I think. I mean not only did they succeed in almost destroying the culture, but they pretty much destroyed the family unit. You've got children who are not being raised by their parents. Like I said, I don't perceive they got too many hugs or pats on the back."

She believes she has raised her children very differently. "One reason is because it has become very prominent, very much encouraged to renew our culture." Because her father was raised in a two parent home, the mix of her parents allowed her to parent her children differently. "My mother would say she gave it to me in different ways. But you have to look at my grandmother's parenting styles. When she was eight years old, she was sent off to boarding school. To me that says you don't need hugs and kisses anymore. You are a big girl now and you go off to school. I believe when the tribe was still collectively together, not only were the mother and father there, but the grandparents, aunts and uncles; and there was a lot of extended family. And you didn't have to be independently responsible for all of that as the parent."

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She was then asked to describe other cultural characteristics which may be a part of her and her family. Once again, we take a hard look at the struggle to live in two worlds. Participant: "It's very interesting because since I have been with the tribe, I have been accused of being white. That's also very interesting because by the white culture I'm called Indian. So where do I fit?

Many times I've been told (pause), well, I don't act Indian. So how do you act Indian? I was told I talk too much. I've been labeled as aggressive at one point, which I don't think I am. There is definitely a difference in perception from the different cultures. I am being somewhat rejected or labeled by what I consider my culture, but I'm also labeled by the other side. Where do you stand? I don't consider that we were a real traditional family. So I consider myself not very traditional. And at the same time, I'm considered very traditional (by the white culture)."

The cultural characteristics of language and communication styles were then introduced as a specific topic. The participant was asked what styles of language and communication she was exposed to while growing up. Remember, that this subject was unknowingly brought up by the participant earlier. She stated that she received very verbal communication while growing up, but she did not receive much physical affection. The first participant also said that she did not receive much physical affection either.

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While growing up she spent a great deal of time at her grandmother's home. There were several aunts and uncles around because they were in high school or college. When asked how much time she spent with her extended family while growing up, she responded, "A lot. I would say fifty per cent at one point. Her extended family within her family unit was a very important part of her life. Although never told so, aunts and uncles were like moms and dads. She believed it was an unspoken feeling, and it is definitely something that exists among Indian people.

After reflecting upon how she thinks she is raising her family regarding language and communication styles, she states that she tries to be physically attentive as well as verbally attentive. In fact, her mother is very affectionate with them, much more so than with her at that age. She even asked her father one time how Chickasaw people parented their children.

From what he read, and from what she has observed from Indian people and their children in the Chickasaw Health Clinic, she thinks Indian people are mislabeled as lackadaisical or not caring. Further, she believes that they may be perceived to have a lack for nurturing with their children because of misunderstood culture. She is referring to the cultural characteristic of Indian parents allowing children to explore their environment, to interact with it as a process for learning.

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"My father said from what he read that Indian kids learned a lot by experiencing. If the fire is hot then you don't allow them to go near it, but if they touch something hot then they learn, and they don't go near it again. It's always interesting to me that sometimes Indian people are labeled as passive people, or maybe people lacking opinions, or things of that nature. I think quite the contrary. They have opinions, they may not go out and share it with the world, but they know what they want."

She definitely believes that she and her family are a bicultural family. She recognizes that she and her kids could assimilate very easily. But she also stands firm in her belief that her children need to know and understand their heritage.

Section Analysis

Many of the constructs observed in this section were also observed in the first interview. One which stands out to this researcher is the seemingly prevalent attitude of the government about just taking the children. The father of the first participant was just a young child when the government bus came by and took him to an Indian clinic to have his tonsils out. That is a serious surgery. P1. stated, "Can you believe that? They just took him without permission!" It is the great uncle of our second participant who was sure that Indian children were taken from their parents and sent to boarding schools. Her

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response, "they just took a child away, which is really scary!" Was there an attempt by the government to assimilate Indian people by breaking up the family unit?

Second, a great deal of time is spent talking about present day affects of early boarding school experiences. The participant firmly believes that styles of communication were passed down from her grandmother. Again, it seems that ways of being and doing are handed down through generations consciously or unconsciously. This particular style, as with the first participant, was the use of other means of non-verbal communication to replace physical and verbal expressions of love.

Another observation similar to the first interview is the reference to extended family. With both participants, extended family was very important to them, and they both spent a lot of time with members of their extended families. Both believed that the extended family provided extra fathers and mothers, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters.

Both participants agreed that their descendants are proud of their heritage. They both stated that they just knew they were Indian. However, it was interesting to note that both reported to have many Indian artifacts in their homes. For both, this seemed to help confirm their culture.

Finally, a very important observation is the continued support by both participants, in a belief that our Indian youth are struggling to live in two worlds. For the first participant, a T-shirt with a picture of her grandfather was

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the answer to full-bloods that did not accept her. The second participant has experienced the same feelings. Neither world was truly accepting of her either. Yet both of these women consider themselves bicultural, and both stated they could choose either world. If educated, financially stable Indian mothers feel this way, what is happening to our identifiable Indian students trying to grow up in these two worlds?

Expectations/Views of Public Schools

The purpose of this final section is to begin understanding what Indian parents think schools need to do to help Indian children. Perhaps by comparing the thoughts of today's Indian parents with the current trends in multicultural education, a bridge can be found to close the gap in educational performance.

The first question asked in what ways has being Native American affected her children in school. She believes that her children have been affected positively by their public school experiences. She does attribute part of that to the quality Indian education programs provided in the school district through federal funding. She did not believe that her children had suffered any detrimental affects due to their culture either. Her statement did lead her to another interesting story.

"Not with my children. When I was in school I think sometimes there were detrimental affects. I always find it

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funny, because of my father's very positive attitude about Native American people, that was the environment I grew up in. I thought everybody was like him; all white people thought that Native American people were neat. I was probably about fifteen when I realized that there were people out there who were racist toward Indian people. I look back now and I grew up with a lot of harassment that I was indifferent about, because that was what was expected of me."

Researcher: "What would you like to see addressed regarding public schools?" "I think just the cultures themselves probably need to be introduced. Some of the history books certainly don't give us a very good position. The references that were made in books; the old movies that were made about Indians. I think that it is going to take a lot to change that, the impact that they have had. The pictures they give society of Native Americans. I don't think that they have a clue as to what Native American culture is about." At this point we clarified "they" to mean the general population including school personnel. "It is really hard to find truth in the books. Most books about Indians are written by white people. It is very disturbing to me. Their interpretation of our culture, or what I consider our culture."

Researcher: "Do you think that culture affects the way Indian students achieve in public schools?" Participant: "Yes. I can't say that I have experienced that myself, and

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it is probably because I am bicultural. But from the accounts of my mother's siblings, native culture definitely affects achievement."

Researcher: "What can be done to help more Indian students be successful in public schools?" Participant: "We have a lot of social programs out there, so it makes me wonder why our kids are not succeeding more. I am not sure what the missing component is. Maybe to attempt to educate them more in a way that is closer to our culture. Maybe they don't learn the same way." She was then asked to reflect on the phrase 'learn in a way closer to our culture.' One suggestion was storytelling verses so much lecture type of situations. Another was to ask the students how the information pertains to their lives. What is important to a white Anglo family may not be important at all to a traditional Indian family.

Upon final reflection, the participant also added that in order to help Indian children in school, non-Indians must stop labeling the children as passive, dumb, or not as smart, simply because they are not as verbal as non-Indian students. She states, "Because some of them may learn more by doing verses listening, which I consider a traditional way. Just recognize that they may learn in a different way. But certainly not label them."

She also suggests that more Indian personnel need to be available for Indian children to talk to. Just like Indian elders, children will not open up to a non-Indian easily, if

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at all. One more good suggestion was parent support. Because of cultural differences, parents may not know how to help their children at school. Many of today's Indian parents weren't raised in the same situation or setting that their children are being raised in, especially from an educational viewpoint.

Section analysis

Her own children have had positive school experiences, and are doing well in school. She does believe that being bicultural has something to do with those positive experiences. After becoming an adult and looking back on her own school experiences, she realizes that racism did exist for her. At the time, she chose indifference; again feeling that being bicultural helped her to fit in more.

She suggested several ways to help Indian children be more successful in school. First and foremost was the need for schools to truly recognize the cultural differences of Indian children. In doing so, they would begin to understand why Indian children often learn differently than the dominant society. Application of this knowledge about Indian culture should lead to a difference in the way public schools teach Indian students. By knowing and understanding Native cultures, children would not be mislabeled as passive, dumb or not as smart as Anglo students.

Finally, schools need to provide more Indian personnel and provide more parental support to the families. Many

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Indian children do not open up easily to non-Indian adults. They need someone they feel they can talk to, someone they can trust. Teachers also need to seek the help of Native American parents; build a relationship with them.

Since statehood, Oklahoma educational systems have been foreign to Native culture. The early boarding school systems were very detrimental to native culture and Indian ways. Today's parents are caught in the middle. Many of their ancestors experienced boarding schools. Today's Indian adults experienced public schools at a time when open racism existed towards Indian people. They need help and support to assist their children in today's public schools.

Conclusion: Interview #2

Patterns are emerging which indicate that the boarding school era may have strongly contributed to many of the educational problems facing Native Americans today. It definitely seems to be a time when Native culture all but ceased to exist. It was a time when much of the language stopped; when Indian ways and traditions were rarely discussed, or handed down to the next generation. It was also a time when the general attitude towards Native Americans was not good. Yes, many were proud of their heritage, they just did not talk about it.

Some of the Indian ways that seemed to sustain these generations of families were spiritual connectedness through Native hymns, natural herbs and medicines for healing, and

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the practice of other traditional ways of life. Extended families were very important as well. Both participants spent much of their time with extended family.

For both, cultural renewal is an active part of their lives. Both have experienced an identity crisis of sorts. They both recognize that they are struggling to live in two worlds. And sometimes they fit in neither world.

Interview #3

Participant #3 is one half Chickasaw/Choctaw; her husband is full blood Choctaw. She is a voting member of the Chickasaw tribe. They have three children, two boys ages eight and five; and a baby girl age 17 months. Her oldest son is in third grade at a small rural school in central Oklahoma. All of her children have Indian names. Both she and her husband grew up in rural Oklahoma, and attended rural schools. She lived in southern, Oklahoma, a part of the Chickasaw Nation; he lived in southeastern, Oklahoma, a part of the Choctaw Nation.

Both of them have college degrees. She has completed a Masters degree in education; he is currently working on his M.S. degree at Oklahoma University. A Chickasaw mentor inspired her to continue college and get her Masters degree. During part of that time she lived with him and his wife. "They took me in and I basically stayed with them at their home. I really enjoyed seeing the success. I saw success

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in a way I had never seen before. I didn't know Indians could live the way they lived, to be honest."

Her perspective of the way Indians lived was quite different. "My perspective was that a native person, certainly you can have nice things, but you had to work really hard, and then it was a struggle. Both of my parents grew up in extreme poverty. They also experienced other types of neglect and abusive situations, so that was my perception of things. Through it all they taught me, especially my mother that the money you make is the money you save. Because of that I was able to go to college. Neither one of my parents were able to go to college."

Both of her parents are Native American; her mother is one half degree Choctaw, and her father is one half degree Chickasaw. Both of her grandfathers are full blood; her dad's dad is Chickasaw and her mom's dad is Choctaw. Her husbands' parents and grandparents are full blood Choctaw. Her grandfather and his brother on her paternal side lived in boarding schools because their dad died at an early age. Their mother was not really able to raise them on the farm because she couldn't properly take care of them. He was twelve years old when he and his brother went to the boarding school.

Her grandfather shared some of his experiences in boarding school with her when she was home from college. "He did that while I was in college. I had come home from college, and I spent a lot of time with my grandparents

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because my parents had divorced in my early teens." He told her that he actually liked boarding school because it was the only warm place, had a warm bed, and all the food you want. He worked in the bakery and had three meals a day.

Although her grandfather never talked about negative aspects of boarding school, this participant did by sharing some of his stories. "The negative aspects, which he never said were negative, are my perceptions. They didn't tie him or anything, but I know for speaking Chickasaw or other Indian languages you often got in trouble. One of his punishments was to beat rocks with a sledge hammer, and make tiny gravel out of it." According to her dad's uncle, her grandfather was known to beat rocks many times.

One of the things her grandfather did not like about boarding schools was not being able to speak his native language. One way they prevented the kids from speaking their own language was to put five boys from different tribes in the same room. According to her grandfather, "they did that to make sure you didn't speak your language. You had to speak English." What they did was teach each other their languages. Her grandfather knew conversational Creek, Cherokee and Chickasaw. "The way I perceive it now as an adult, it helps me get through the rough spots in life. Focus on what you have, not what you don't have."

Another thing boarding school students were punished for was having stomp dances. When they were caught they were always told that doing those stomp dances would cause

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bad things to happen to them. She remembers sitting on her grandpa's truck and asking him if he thought they brainwashed him. He said to her, "Yeah, I guess that is what you would call it." Although he talked about stomp dances with her, he had never talked about them with her dad, his son. "The odd thing is that my grandfather did not teach my dad anything about the stomp dance; he didn't teach him any of the songs. For some reason, it's like he skipped a generation."

She continued, "I started talking to my grandpa about it because I loved to dance. I have always danced, but they were Kiowa dances; my mother is adopted Kiowa the Indian Way; not legally, so I grew up going to Pow Wows. I always wanted to know Chickasaw and Choctaw dances, but neither one of my parents really knew them. Once I started talking to my grandpa, he started telling me about them. I was thirteen when I did my first Choctaw dances. I fell in love with it. Now my husband and I are chanters for our dance group. To me, it is just who I am. It is who God made me to be.

I am very thankful that my Chickasaw grandfather taught me about the boarding school, because I always had a problem being half white. In fact, I always wished if I was going to be half, could I be just a little more Indian than white. But I was a little bit more white than Indian. That had always bothered me."

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Section Analysis

As with the first two participants, her grandfather grew up in boarding school. A consistent pattern of behavior, due to the environment of boarding schools, begins to emerge among these Indian elders who attended boarding school as children. Because none of the grandparents of the first three participants were allowed to speak their language or continue Indian ways while in boarding school, and suffered discipline if they did, they chose not to pass on cultural knowledge and ways to their own children.

However, all of them began sharing traditional ways with their grandchildren. It seems that each of these participants struggled with an identity issue as well. They all have experienced the conflict that arises when trying to live in both the white man's world, and the Indian world.

Native American Culture

P3's grandpa was a fine craftsman, made beautiful turquoise jewelry, and used shells and turtle shells, bones and rocks to make "gorgeous jewelry." One time while in college, she was talking to her grandpa and he said, "Being Indian is what is inside you," and poked her gently in the chest. He continued, "you can put all that stuff on you, but it can rain and the wind can blow, and that stuff is going to be all gone." The stuff he was referring to was her Chickasaw dress, her beadwork, and other Indian jewelry.

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That is something she has never forgotten, because she really hated being half white for a long time.

When she married into her husband's family, it was also very hard because they were all full blood. "I had to work hard on being fully accepted. I knew I had passed some kind of social test five years into the marriage; my oldest son was about two years old when my in-laws spoke Choctaw to me. My husband told them I spoke my language, but they didn't believe it because I am too light skinned. Now they are all my best teachers."

Her grandpa was very proud of his heritage. He also made sure she understood that you have to be able to function in the white man's world. He said, "The Indian ways are dying. You've got to be like the white man. If you don't get out there and be like the white man, you're going to die too. You have to get out there and make a living, and work with white people, black people, all kinds of people, but it doesn't take away from who you are." P3 then commented, "That just settled it for me. It is okay if I function in the white world. I am not going to be an apple (red on the outside and white on the inside). If I go out and get a degree, or if I drive a nice car, whatever it might be, that is okay.

As she responded to the question of what her grandfather meant by the Indian ways dying, she replied, "I think he was talking about language, because I asked him about that. I think he was saying to my father, he would

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speak Chickasaw, but he wouldn't sit one on one and teach him. He would say you don't need to learn this. He may have been talking about stomp dances. He may have been talking about the Pashofa dance. I am not exactly sure if in his mind, he was referring to the way we look, the clothes we wear, or stickball on the weekends; or if he was talking about the way we eat, everything."

Because her dad was a cultural victim of the boarding school era; his father did not intentionally pass on any of his Indian ways. When asked to reflect upon how her dad felt about his native culture today she said, "He's never really said anything other than he talks to my kids in Choctaw. They are teaching him how to speak the language."

She firmly believes because she and her husband have retained, and continue to seek cultural knowledge, that her dad has begun learning about his heritage. "My dad is real proud of that. I realize that although he missed a lot of that, I know now there are certain cultural aspects that were passed on, it just wasn't talked about. Some of those were negative, like the culture of poverty. But my dad pulled himself out of that through sports."

When asked to expound upon that she began, "My dad was a good athlete. His dad was a good athlete. Because of those athletic abilities, he was able to get through school. I believe that physical sports and games are part of our culture today. History tells us that the game of stickball was very important to the Chickasaw and Choctaw; our culture

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today has evolved by substituting stickball with team sports. It is part of who we are. I think we have replaced stickball with fast pitch softball, basketball, volleyball; I do think softball is the number one sport."

P3's earliest memory of her grandpa sharing Indian culture with her began in early childhood when he began teaching her the names of animals in Chickasaw. She also remembers her grandpa teaching her how to make jewelry, how to draw designs that he said were Chickasaw designs, ones he put on his jewelry.

When she began public school, her father was instrumental in getting a JOM Indian education program going. Unfortunately, that was also her first exposure to racist remarks. "I remember there was not a lot of support at the public school level, because they had never had a JOM program before. I remember hearing teachers say they didn't want all those Indians coming into their classrooms in the evening time."

Her mother has only begun to share Choctaw ways with her during the past year. "My mom is a lot quieter about things. I think that part of it is the extreme dysfunction she was raised in; abuse coupled with alcoholism. I think that has had a big impact on who she is. She has taught me things but in a much different way. My mom's way was a lot less verbal. The way I mother my own children is the way my mom mothered me, and I recognize that now. She has never sat down and told me what to do, but I will ask her. As a

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child, she treated me as an adult, yet she made sure the responsibilities she gave me were appropriate for my age level. I teach my children that way."

The words Indian community brings two visions to this participant. "I have two different visions. I think government housing and housing projects; and I think of where my in-laws live, out on a section in the country that was there ancestral allotment land. Down the road is the Indian church which was founded by one of my husband's family members. All around the church are relatives. I think of that because that is what I was raised with. I don't think of reservation, I just think primarily of those houses being in the same area with just all Indian people."

By high school, however, her parents had divorced. She and her mother lived in town during those years; in a little house right next to the school. There were no other Indians in her neighborhood except one Kiowa Indian. She said, "Although I felt connected to him, we sort of felt like the lone Plains Indians, and I really identified with that in high school. I was just learning Choctaw dances. My best friend was Chickasaw and mixed like me. We looked very similar as far as our hair color, skin color and things. We could speak Chickasaw to each other without other people knowing."

She remembers getting in trouble one time when she and her boyfriend wrote a letter in Chickasaw "We were just learning to read and write in Chickasaw; a Chickasaw elder

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was teaching us. He was our counselor at the time. The letter was just stuff like I like you, do you like me? The teacher took the letter and told all of us we were no longer allowed to speak our native language, or to write in native language. The teacher also told us we were no longer allowed to congregate in the hallway before class. We were sophomores in high school."

She continues, "I went to my dad. We were all involved in the JOM program. I was a very good student. I had been selected Outstanding JOM student. I had won state art awards. The way I felt, I didn't know how to say it back then because I didn't know what oppressed meant. Now that I understand the word, I felt oppressed, and I felt embarrassed in front of my white peers, because I was elected with them to serve on our student council. Because the teacher did not know what we were saying, he had a fear we were talking about him." It took some time, but her dad and the Indian education parent committee were able to work things out so the kids were speaking their native language again after a couple of months.

Today, her family participates in a variety of cultural activities. They speak Choctaw on a daily basis, do a lot of storytelling, and create new stories because they do not watch much television. Her family also does Choctaw dancing, some Plains dancing, and always participates with the Chickasaw Nation when they are doing various cultural activities. Her grandpa spoke Chickasaw but did not read or

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write it. Both of her parents' mothers spoke Chickasaw. Her mother's dad was also a fluent Choctaw speaker. Her parents did not speak much of their language and attributes this to that era or generation following the time of boarding schools.

P3 knows that native culture has affected the way she was raised. In fact, she sometimes has a problem separating what is cultural and what isn't until she gets around other Indians. Then she will think, "We did that or I understand that." She also recognizes the negative affects culture had on her parents, the oppression, living in poverty, living in a racist society.

A really positive affect for her during her school years was the JOM Indian education program. She loved learning about native culture. The parent committee brought in speakers from other tribes, and taught the students about the differences between tribes. The program also inspired her to become an artist at an early age. Everything she drew was something to do with who she was as a Chickasaw person.

At first it was hard for her to describe cultural characteristics she believed were part of her family. She said, "That is a tough question because I am still learning what is cultural. I will just tell you the things that we do and you can decide if it is Native American culture, because I don't really know. The researcher responded by saying, "That is the purpose of this research, to discover."

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She then began describing Indian activities. "The kinds of food we eat include pashofa, cobbler, hog meat, fry bread; we do a lot of the cooking outside. We also grew up butchering our own hogs and cows. Another is the use of our time, whether it is at church or stomp ground. We occasionally go to Pow Wows. Most of our social time is spent within Indian communities. One other very important thing is our church. It is mostly Chickasaw people. Much of our social time is church related. We sing English and Choctaw songs.

Without doubt, this participant definitely believes that native culture has affected the way she and her husband have raised their children. "I home schooled the children until they started first grade. My husband and I teach them our games, such as stickball, and hand games. He really enjoys teaching the boys to play different games like football, softball and basketball."

She and her husband also teach their children tribal histories, how they came to Oklahoma and what Oklahoma means (home of the red man). Responding about the concept of warrior, she said, "I Think going back to the warriors, I really teach my boys, and my daughter when she is old enough, how the Chickasaw tribe has helped Americans during the revolutionary war, and for control of the Mississippi; other historical information like that. When my boys hear that, they become empowered and excited. We talk about what

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they learn at school, but we also make sure to teach them the part of the story that is not in the history books yet."

Looking back on styles of language and communication used by her parents to raise her, she replied, "There was a lot of nonverbal communication, especially with my mother. My mother is much quieter than my dad. I don't remember any harsh discipline; it was more of a look, and we knew we had better straighten up. My husband was the same way. He received a lot of nonverbal communication from both of his parents." In her husband's home the family spoke only Choctaw until the children went to school. They learned English in school. With their own children, they do verbalize more than their parents did. In public, they only communicate in Choctaw with the children if they need disciplining.

P3 describes her family as bicultural leaning toward traditional regarding their culture and Indian ways. She feels comfortable living in both worlds most of the time; however, she feels most comfortable with Indian people. She also recognizes that Indian culture has changed over time. She believes the Indian allotments broke up many Indian communities and separated them, causing a gradual loss of the culture over time.

She said, "That's why I really like having a lot of gatherings, because many families don't have an opportunity to play stickball, or dance and sing the old songs. When you have gatherings such as Kullihoma, you give people an

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opportunity to come back to that. So in one way, cultural change has not been good because Indian people are separated. In another way it is good because we have continued on, we have shown the world that we are educated people, successful people. We have reorganized our government, and our Indian churches still exist as strong as ever. If we were in our own little haven, the world would never see that."

Section Analysis

This participant has struggled with her Indian identity since high school. She felt the pain of being too white for acceptance by the full blood students, and desperately wanted to be more Indian than white. She achieved acceptance from her Indian peers because she could speak her Indian language. She used Indian jewelry and clothing, as the first participant did, to be more identifiable Indian. Finally, in college her grandpa helped her to understand that you can still be Indian and succeed in the white man's world. Being Indian was in your heart.

Both she and her husband were exposed to non-verbal styles of communication. He spoke only Choctaw when he entered the public school system. For both of them, native language is a strong tie that binds Indian people together; that it is important to be a part of an Indian community, and gather regularly for traditional meals, fellowship, dancing and singing. This is evidenced by the way they spend most of their social time, at church gatherings or

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stomp grounds. Interconnectedness with an Indian community is of vital importance for maintaining tribal culture.

Expectations/View of Public Schools

This participant believes that public school has affected her son both negatively and positively. A positive aspect is that she has had the opportunity to bring something into the school which had never been there before; such as storytelling, working with the Indian education parent committee, and the parent teacher organization. She is often asked to come and share stories. They have had some wonderful events which she believes helps to break down barriers.

Her family lives in a small community and her son attends a small rural school. She estimates that the school is 95 per cent white. She can count on two hands the number of identifiable minority students. She then relates a story that has happened in just the last year which confirms existing ignorance, racism and intolerance of different colored people, still existing in some of our public schools. "We are definitely a minority there. Because of that status, I think there have been a lot of preconceived ideas about any Indian education cultural activities we have brought to the school.

My oldest son's first grade teacher, when I offered to do storytelling, wanted to make sure, and I quote, 'I didn't have an anti-Columbus agenda behind my storytelling.' I was

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shocked! I was offering this as a gift to the class to help them understand a little bit about Indians. My son had told me that a little girl in his class had made fun of his nose. She had said that his skin was a lot darker than hers, and he had a funny looking nose. We had already prepared him for that because he is a different race. The skin color comment didn't seem to bother him too much, but the one about his nose did. I told him he had a traditional Choctaw nose; a nose like his father, and a nose like both of his grandmothers.

Since that time, I have been back to that class. We had to gain some favor from a lot of parents and some of the faculty. The things we do like wrapping turtle shells around our legs was not an every day normal thing. I think a lot of people thought we were going to worship some unknown god or something. That really shocked me. It surprised me and hurt me that there are still people out there who have absolutely no idea about Indians."

P3 relates another story regarding Indian education programs and federal funds which the school participated in. The situation is very alarming; and similar to the early years when the Johnson O'Malley Indian education program was created by the federal government to help Indian students in public schools. She begins, "My husband approached the school one time three years ago when my son was in first grade, and asked to establish and Indian education parent

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committee and participate in the federal Indian education programs. He was told the school had no need for it.

He actually had a faculty member tell him that they don't like diversity and frankly don't need it in their school. It causes trouble. We found out one year ago that they did have an Indian program there. We just hadn't been invited to participate in it. We saw a little ad in the classifieds that the schools' Indian education parent committee was meeting to discuss Title VII monies.

My husband and I were very excited. We thought they had changed their mind and wanted a program after all. We called some other Indian parents who lived in the community and six of us showed up; we were excited. The school counselor, who was also the committee advisor, wondered what we were doing. He told us he never expected people to come. We found out they had a teacher who was supposedly Choctaw, who always signed the budget." To date, this small group of Indian parents is trying to work through misconceptions and misunderstandings about Indians by the school, and get needed programs implemented.

This year her son had a very wonderful year. His teacher used a lot of hands on activities and experiential learning, which helped him to blossom. His first teachers did not incorporate those learning styles in their classrooms. Her son learns best by manipulating things, observing how things work, taking things apart. He does not learn well by sitting with a book and reading.

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This participant feels that her son has been through quite a lot during his first few years of school. Much of it she attributes to his personality. "He is not as aggressive as a lot of kids, whether it is kickball or basketball. He is pretty shy, and this year we made him play baseball. He is doing real well out there and loves it; he wants to continue playing. Now when we go to church, before and after he is right out there playing basketball with all the Indian kids. I wonder if the difference is that there are more white kids at school."

She had several good suggestions for public schools to address with Indian students, most of them very similar to the first two participants. One thing she would like to see is more emersion of native culture, not just a Native American week. She would like to see Native American history as a part of every day teaching. She feels very strongly that Indian kids need to know that they can succeed in both worlds.

She would like to see more Indian teachers, superintendents and school board members. She also states, "I would like to see the curriculum that is taught, and examine how it can be taught for students who are not doing well, instead of just saying they are a problem child, or they are dumb, or mentally retarded, learning disabled or whatever. Why don't we look at the curriculum and say maybe we need to change our system. Maybe if we flipped things

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around and did all experiential learning, all kids would be more successful."

She believes that many Indian kids are not doing well in school because they are taught that the elder speaks first out of respect. "What is considered successful in public schools are the kids who can jump up and say they know the answer first. I have recognized that. I want my son to speak up more. He knows the answer but he won't speak up. We will continue encouraging him to be more assertive in the classroom."

Finally, she believes that the best way to help Indian children in the classroom is by having a strong Indian parent committee; and by having good collaboration with the school administration, so they know that everyone wants the same thing, for students to succeed. Ultimately, she believes that "it is individual Indian families; by our faith, and by instilling in our children through the family unit, that they are somebody, God made them unique, and they are going to succeed in whatever they do. God has a plan for them."

Section Analysis

This participant has turned a negative into a positive with the small rural school her children are, or will be attending. By volunteering in the classroom, and being involved in the parent organizations, she has been able to share Native American culture with students, parents and

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faculty. Unfortunately, the school already had federal Indian education funds, but was using them in an underhanded way; which is still happening in some of our public schools in Oklahoma. Fortunately, many of our public schools have very good, comprehensive Indian education programs with strong active parent committees.

She was also very pleased with his third grade teacher. The teacher was familiar with Indian culture; she used experiential learning and hands-on activities with her students. She encouraged her students, and helped them move toward success. His first two teachers were more traditional in their teaching styles, relying heavily on pencil/paper tasks, book work, and expected them to sit, listen and learn.

As this participant stated earlier, for Indian kids success at home is not the same as success at school. Many Indian students will not speak out, raise their hand to answer a question, or initiate conversation with their teacher. Teachers must seek them out and encourage them to participate.

Interview #4

Family History

P4 is 47 years old, married with four children; three boys and one girl. Three are grown; a fourteen year old son attends a local public school. She is 15/16 or full blood Chickasaw. Her husband is full blood Choctaw/Mississippi

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Choctaw. Both their parents and their grandparents are full blood, and her grandmother lived to be 106 years old. She has been employed in the tribe's Head Start program as a teacher for many years.

Based upon her experiences with her grandmother, her dad, and her uncles as well as her grandparents on her Mom's side, they were very proud of their Indian heritage. Chickasaw language was a strong priority in their home. All in the family spoke fluent Chickasaw. Respect for elders was prevalent as well. "You didn't speak unless you were spoken to. You didn't stay around older people even if it was your brother, only two or three years older than you. When they were talking, you didn't sit among them, you were out playing.

As she grew older, and into adulthood, cultural ways and beliefs became ingrained by the way her parents raised her. "There were just certain things they did. "When I had children, the boys mainly, my dad would do things to build them up. For instance, when my older son was little, he found a little quail. He put the quail on is head so he could run faster." Her parents did not really talk much about Indian things or give them a whole lot of information; it was just their way of life.

Her grandmother was known in their community as an Indian doctor. She used herbs and would gather the things she needed out in the woods and pastures. She could not remember how her grandmother became known as an Indian

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doctor, she just knew she was, and people all around would come to see her. P4's dad was a little that way too because he knew what to do. She cited an example, "If we were sick and coughed a lot, he had his own remedy. I am sure it was handed down to him from his mother. He was also a minister. When he and her grandmother did any doctoring, they always prayed.

They were raised in the country at Kullihoma. Her grandparents, her five uncles, and an aunt all lived in close proximity to each other.

Section Analysis

This participant grew up in a totally traditional Indian family. Because native culture is so ingrained in her through her family's way of life, it was hard for her to separate Indian ways and cultural characteristics from daily life. All of the family spoke their Native language fluently. Respect for elders was a very important value. All of her extended family lived very close to each other out in the country, creating an Indian community. They still had knowledge of and practiced Indian Medicine. Most notably, none of her ancestors attended boarding schools.

Native American Culture

P4 and her husband are passing certain things on to their children. The first thing she shared, related directly to Participants #1, #2 and #3. She said,

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"Basically just from my experience in school, we wanted to teach our children to speak out. As I said earlier, when we were children, we did not speak unless we were spoken to, so we were all very quiet in school. In the classroom, I knew the answer, but I never spoke up. I would sit there knowing the answer but I wouldn't do it because I was shy. I didn't feel like I could do it. As the years went by I finally began to open up, but it took a long time. All of my cousins and I were basically that way. We were real quiet, so I tell my children to speak up. I try to tell them how to adapt in school by sharing my own experiences.

My husband also does the same thing with them. He grew up knowing only the Choctaw language until he started school. He couldn't speak English, but he got into trouble if he spoke Choctaw." They have taught their children the language, but they made sure they could speak English too. As mentioned earlier, P4 is fluent in Chickasaw and her husband is fluent in Choctaw. They speak only there Native language when they are around her mother or other elders.

Before her kids were born, she and her husband participated in quite a few traditional cultural activities. One of those was the game of stickball. There clan, family members, would travel to Seminole Nation and play against a clan of Seminole Indians. They also made their own ball sticks. After a few of their kids were born in the early 1980's, there families made a lot of traditional clothing and demonstrated Indian dances at some of the local schools.

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Another cultural characteristic she talked about was food. "Like Pashofa, one of the main foods for the Chickasaw, and fry bread. We always have salt pork or salt meat, wild onions, poke salad and things like that. Basically just sharing the food, like when we butchered a hog my Mom would immediately have a big black pot and be cooking in it." Gatherings for these meals would always be different because her dad had a church, or her family would be going to churches all around the area. The nucleus, however, was always her extended family.

Their Indian church was a major part of their family and community, and still is. As their families began to grow, their tradition was to meet every Sunday after church at her parents' house. The gatherings were always big. They always consisted of extended family and friends in the church community, and they always stretched through the afternoon into the evening.

Today, her immediate family, children and grandchildren, gather in the same way. She describes, "When we are eating, we are all at the table. When we finish we will sit around and talk. That's the way it was when I was little. We would eat, and then we would spend time together.

When we all got together on Sundays while my dad was still around, Mom would be cooking. We would all get there and help cook. If we didn't help cook, we washed the dishes. Everybody was always gathering there. The kids

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would all be outside playing, and the adults would be sitting outside, or just among each other. That is a very important Indian way we have continued."

She knows that her children are proud that they were raised in their native culture. She and husband speak enough of their native language that their children understand. She also believes that she and her husband were raised very traditionally; they believe, however, they have raised there children to be bi-cultural. She concluded this section by stating, "I am proud of my heritage as both Chickasaw and Choctaw. They are very similar in both language and culture."

Section Analysis

The Indian way, cultural characteristics common among tribes that had not been nearly extinguished by boarding schools become very evident among this full blood Indian family. The entire clan or family speaks their language. It is a part of their identity and very important in their homes.

Participating in such activities as stickball and Indian dancing are natural, part of their lives. The characteristics of extended family, giving and sharing are ingrained in their lives. Church was a primary focus of their family and the surrounding Indian community. Gathering together regularly, sharing traditional meals, and visiting with each other was a way of life. The extended

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family living close together, out in the country was a way of life.

Expectations/Views of Public School

"Our children have had some tough roads going through school. Much of it was because of the color of their skin; the rest of it just assumed from stereotyping. There were times when they felt like they weren't being treated as fairly as others. However, I always told them that we were concerned parents, and if we needed to visit with the school, we would. Maybe other students and teachers meant nothing by it, but remarks made about Native Americans were offensive to them.

To this day regarding their education, I have told them that in life you may hear it, or see it, and feel like it is pointed at you; but you have got to remember the other colors are probably feeling the same way." She does not believe that the racial discrimination was intentional. Rather, she believes the problem was a lack of understanding of Native American culture.

She believes that many of our Indian students may be shy like she was. They are afraid to speak out. She said, "We have kids that hang their heads down from Head Start on up. I don't want these little children to sit back and know the answer like I did. That's why we taught our children to always feel good about themselves, and give it and effort. Teachers need to know that they must make an effort to let

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the child get to know them; and they need to get to know the child's family."

From her experience as a Head Start teacher for the Chickasaw Nation, she had several suggestions for issues that needed to be addressed in public schools. "I would like to see public schools take more time to get to know the parents. They will do enrollment and that's it. The teacher may never see them again. If you help your parents first, you can almost figure out what your Indian student is about.

I am also concerned that many teachers say that an Indian student isn't going to make it, but they just do not know what is down the line for that child. They may not know how many Indian children live in poverty; that maybe the school meals are the only two meals they have each day. Teachers have to be patient, but most of all; they must take time to build trust and get to know their Indian students. Teachers must take the initiative to get to know the Indian parents and students. If a teacher will take time to get more involved with the parent, they will learn all about their students.

If the parents are unwilling or unavailable, they can reach them through the child; use the child to get to the parents. When an Indian child begins to open up and do well in school, then the parents feel proud and will come and talk to the teacher. Patience and time must be taken to get

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to know either Indian parents or their children, on their terms, to help them both."

When asked to explain "terms" P4 replied, "Take things really slow. Some parents are very young; some parents come from abusive or alcoholic homes. Some of these little Indian children live in this same kind of environment." She believes that it is very important for the teacher to take time to communicate with, and involve Indian parents by getting to know them and their children. "If a teacher recognizes the child's culture, and is sensitive to it, it would benefit the entire class. If more native culture was incorporated in public schools, and more teachers were educated about cultural differences of Indian students, we would see more of our children successful achievers."

Section analysis

Dominant among all participants thus far is the issue of skin color. All described negative incidents in school that involve the color of skin. All described a variance of racist actions and remarks, or evidence of stereotyping at school. All believe that a misunderstood culture is the source of these prejudices in today's public schools.

It seems that one of the most important cultural characteristics or Indian way which affects Indian children in the classroom is shyness about speaking out. For whatever reason, whether they are just that way, as three of the participants described; or because silence and waiting

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to be spoken to was viewed as showing respect for there elders. All believe that it is extremely important for teachers to know how shy Indian students may be; that it is a part of native culture to be quiet and respect elders.

Something else that seems to be important to all of those interviewed thus far is that the teacher must be patient and take time to build trust with the student; while being sensitive to native culture. Teachers must also take the initiative with many Indian parents to get to know them; to get them involved in their child's education. Because of the giving and caring nature of Indian people, they would gladly become active in their child's education.

Finally, all participants believe that public schools must be very aware, and very careful about mislabeling Indian students. Still today, schools are quick to label Indian students as slow, lazy or uninterested in learning, when actually it is their culture to sit back and be silent. If sought out, they can be active learners in the classroom.

Interview #5

Participant #5 has been married for thirteen years and has three children; two girls age twelve and seven, and one boy who just turned five. They are in grades sixth, second, and pre-kindergarten. She is a professional woman in her thirties, who works for the Chickasaw Nation in departmental administration. She has a B.S. in education, and is

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currently working on a Masters degree. Her husband has a B.S. in Criminal Justice.

She is just a hair under one half Chickasaw; her husband is 7/16 Chickasaw, making their children just under one half Chickasaw. Her mother is three quarter Chickasaw; her dad is 1/16 Chickasaw. Her maternal grandmother is full blood Chickasaw, and speaks only the Chickasaw language; she doesn't speak any English at all. She never knew her mother's father.

On her dad's side, although they weren't very much Chickasaw, they were always very proud of their Indian heritage. She said, "That is something they have always instilled in us since we were children." Her husband's side of the family was also very proud of their Chickasaw lineage. His grandmother is one of the elders of the tribe. She also speaks fluent Chickasaw. Neither she nor her husband's grandparents attended government boarding schools.

Section Analysis

Chickasaw culture is a way of life for this traditional Chickasaw family, as with P4. Knowing the language was essential for the children to be able to communicate with their elders. Children and grandchildren in this family have experienced total emersion in the Indian Way. The participant was raised bi-culturally, learning both languages beginning at birth. The third participant, about the same age, also began teaching her children both

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languages beginning with birth. The children of P4 have had Chickasaw language spoken around them all of their lives. They can understand it, and speak conversationally with their elders. Also as P4, none of her family attended any boarding school.

Thus far, native language seems to be the back bone of cultural identity. Extended family and Indian community, especially Indian church communities; social gatherings, eating and fellowship are interwoven into the culture. For less identifiable mixed blood Indians, Indian jewelry, clothing and artifacts are important, and seem to help them say who they are to both white man and Indian.

Chickasaw Culture

This participant's story about Chickasaw culture starts in early childhood. She begins, "When I was very small and growing up, we lived on a huge circle drive, and my grandmother had lived with us for as long as I can remember. We lived in close proximity to her brother, my great-uncle and his wife. We did not participate in traditional activities; it was more a way of life. My father had told me I was taught the Chickasaw language when I first began talking as a baby. He was always afraid I would confuse the two and end up with broken English. It has worked out fine, and something I have always been exposed to."

Her great-grandmother on her mother's side was an herbal doctor, and taught them a lot about the medicinal

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herbs that grew in the pasture. One of these herbs was a purple flower her grandmother used to soothe headaches the participant would get frequently when she was a child. "Because I have always had headaches, I remember a purple flower that was always out in the field. We would have to go pick those flowers then soak them in water. Then I had to wash my face in it. It always seemed to help.

I remember lots of times they used the horn of a deer; my great-grandmother would have amber colored glass. If there was something ailing someone, they would make little slits on their backs, put a lit match inside the horn and close it over them until the match extinguished itself. I don't really remember all of the things they used; I just remember seeing them as a small child doing those things and people leaving, and feeling okay."

She also remembered, although she did not know its purpose, but her great-grandmother would always have snuff in her pocket. She would take the little square of tobacco and tie it on a string, and they would wear it around their neck. She did know it was supposed to cure something. Her family still has the little square box of tobacco.

She doesn't remember any mention of clans in her history. However, everything they did was centered on family, whether it was going to church, or to someone's house; and it was always the large part of the family, not just two or three people. She stressed that everything they

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did was that way. When they ate on the weekends, all of the family came over.

She said, "It seems like whenever I think about those times, it seemed more peaceful, and no stress. I am sure that part of that is because I was a child, but we had times when we would take a bed out, put it under a tree and tell stories before we fell asleep. Those are things you just can't do now. We never locked doors; we never locked cars. If a stranger came up, you gave them whatever you had, if it was the last biscuit or whatever it may be that you had, you gave it to them. It is just not the same kind of society now."

She and her husband share the Chickasaw culture with their children by talking about stories from whenever they were younger; their children were never able to meet their great-grandmothers. She begins, "My children, whenever they were little, they really did not understand why my grandmother could not speak English with everyone else speaking it. They really didn't understand a lot of the times; back then the eldest helped out with children and didn't get to go to school. This was the case for my grandmother. She did go to school for a while, but she was never taught the English language. I heard at one point she only went to second grade."

Thinking back on the way she was raised, one of the most memorable was seeing how the Indian side of her family interacted with each other, as opposed to the non-Indian

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side of the family. "Looking at the Indian side of the family, even though they didn't tell you they were loved, it was shown through everything they did. Again, its that way of life again, always sharing, being compassionate, putting other peoples' needs first, giving, and you always felt like you were special.

On the other side of the family it was more of hanging on to material possessions, and not sharing because if you shared you would have less. I think having parents from both ends of that, one of the things that I was sure of, I wanted my children to know every day that I loved them. My dad did say that to me every day. He told me that he loved me, but Mom didn't. She has probably told me three or four times in my whole lifetime, and I know that was very difficult for her even though she did mean it. It was also at very emotional or trying times in our lives, or maybe it was major accomplishments. It was kind of like it was reserved for very special occasions."

Her husband experienced a lot of that too. He was raised by his grandparents. They both want to make sure they express their love to their kids so they never have any doubt. "There were times looking back whenever I thought, well does my mom really love me, because she doesn't tell me. As I grew older I can look back and see the whole picture rather than one particular day or moment. We wanted to instill this in our children."

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They also wanted to make sure that, in their home, although as a Christian family, her husband was the head of the household, each family member had a voice. She said, "I think that is so important when you are little because there were times when I wanted to say things but I wouldn't out of respect. I want my kids to be able to voice their opinions and to also know that at times, it is okay to be angry. In their own childhood, the father ran the family."

As with most participants and their families thus far, church is their center. When asked about church and Chickasaw culture, she replied, "From what I have read in history books and other sources, the Chickasaw people were Christian people. Many writings have been found that talk about praying to one God. We have gone to church as long as I can remember. We went to a regular church, but on fifth Sundays, we would go to an Indian church. That has just always been a part of our lives. It is the same way with my husband; his grandfather was a Methodist preacher. They were always at church too. It is just one of those things we grew up doing and believing in. It is something I want to instill in our children as well. Many times when we are talking with them about their problems; we try to focus on that."

She continued, "We were told stories about medicine men and what they would do, and I knew that they existed. I had always been told that there were some who did good, and some who did evil. I know that whenever bad karma was going

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on, we would burn cedar; put it in a bucket and burn it; and go around the house to cleanse it." Researcher: "What were the different purposes for burning the cedar?" "It was basically to cleanse the house, or to get bad spirits away, but then also to protect. You would put the circle around the house; it would be protected, and while you were there at night sleeping or whatever, you could rest in the comfort of knowing that nothing was going to break that barrier."

Another way they share Chickasaw culture with their children is through Chickasaw arts and crafts. Her husband is very involved in these types of activities. When he is preparing different things like ball sticks and dream catchers, he includes his children so they can learn the crafts. They also keep a lot of Native American books in their home about other tribes so their children can learn the differences between the cultures. One of the reasons, she said, "Sometimes when people look at Indian people, they look at them as a whole and don't realize that each of the tribes do have unique characteristics.

The girls have Chickasaw dresses; my son has the Chickasaw shirts. He was so proud when he first got those, he could not wait for the next event the Chickasaw Nation was having; so he wore them to school. He had three shirts, and he wore them to school three days in a row."

This participant believes that her family fits in the category of bicultural. They do not go to different stomp grounds on the weekends; they do not follow Pow Wows

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anywhere. They do attend Chickasaw Nation events that are culturally related. She believes that the kids are fairly assimilated into doing all the things non-Indian kids do.

When describing a traditional home, she began, "When I think of my grandmother's home, there were always extended family members living there. There weren't a lot of bedrooms so people shared their beds. Much of what they do now centers around food. Even though they have modern day meals, they always have pashofa. Usually they also have biscuits or cornbread, salt pork, and beans.

Another thing that made her grandmother's home traditional was the era itself. Then, women didn't work outside the home during the day; they stayed home with the children. She said, "They taught me how to cook. I learned to cook biscuits when I was little. Rolling the biscuit and then patting it down, and then putting a little dab of grease on top." Other things she considered cultural include; living in the country, farming, and a garden that everybody helped in no matter how young or old. They played a lot of baseball and softball; all the kids would get together for those games.

For her, Chickasaw culture has changed over the years in the following way. "When I was little and growing up, I just thought our culture was a way of life. I just thought that is who we were, and that is how we lived. Now, there are a lot more of the activities where you have people who may not do that every day of their life, but they

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demonstrate it. Back then, you didn't demonstrate it, you did it. We were just part of it."

She does believe that today's cultural events are valid. "If people don't demonstrate our culture, then our children and others around their age may never be exposed to Chickasaw culture. They wouldn't understand how much hard work it took to make something, or the love or sacrifice involved in a certain activity. Culture was not something that people did for show way back then, those were the only resources available to them, and that's how they did it. It might seem like it was harder because we have so many conveniences now."

Section Analysis

Chickasaw culture is a way of life for this Chickasaw family. Chickasaw and English were taught from birth. Living with and being around extended family members was normal. Church, family and community were the center of their social and spiritual lives. Giving, sharing and being compassionate are a part of who they are.

She and her husband recognized they were loved by there parents and grandparents although it was not verbalized often. They want to make sure to both show and tell their children they love them every day. They teach their children their language, Chickasaw arts and crafts, and involve them in cultural events. They also want their kids to have voice in family matters. Respect is very important,

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but there are times to speak out. They want their children to be respectful, but also know their thoughts and concerns are listened to.

To these Chickasaw parents, a traditional Chickasaw home means extended family and community gatherings, country living, traditional foods, native language spoken in the home, and church related activities. Games and sports are part of their lives as well. Cultural events are important for those who were not exposed to traditional Chickasaw culture and ways.

Expectations/View of Public School

The public school her children attend has a very comprehensive and solid Indian education program. Cultural events and activities are planned every year. Her children are often called upon as resources for these types of activities in the classroom. When she was in school, Indian students would get free pencils and paper from the program. Other students didn't understand why the Indian students received those items for free. She remembers the comments from other students about them getting to go to the office and get a free pencil, when regular students had to pay for them.

After she grew older and begin teaching 6th grade things changed. She then described her 6th grade classroom. "When I started teaching, my own students asked me what nationality I was. After I told them they asked, which I

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thought was pretty inquisitive of them, why are you entitled to all of these freedoms?

Another comment made was that the federal government has been paying Indians back for broken treaties for years, shouldn't they be paid off now. Some of my own peers would make comments. It seemed like the older I got the whiter in color I became. I don't think that a lot of the people I worked with in public school knew I was Indian.

She did notice some positive things for her students because she was Indian. For her Indian students, she could just tell by observing, that they felt like they had someone to talk to; somebody to look up to. She said, "They had somebody to show them that you didn't have to have all the money in the world to be successful; and even though you may not have come from a rich family, with all types of advantages, if you work hard, you can still achieve the dreams that you have. No matter what circumstances you come from, you can overcome them."

This participant, as all of the others, had some very good suggestions for public schools. "One thing that comes to mind is even though we can all be classified as Native Americans, we still have unique traits for our individual tribe. Many people still want to throw us into one category. That is really difficult because our languages are different, our dress is different, and the traditional foods we eat are different. They are unique for each

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particular tribe. You can't just put us into one little group."

She knows that Native American culture does affect Indian student achievement in a variety of ways. She believes, "It depends on the background, the beliefs of the parents, the type of home environment the child has. It not only applies to Native American homes, but any home. Poverty, alcoholism and those kinds of things are not just specific to Native American homes, it runs the whole gamut. If you have a loving supporting family, your children are going to thrive. If those things are missing, it is going to be up to the individual child what path they choose to take."

Ways for schools to help more Indian students immediately is to stop stereotyping them into a group. Teachers need to help Indian students express their culture, through different cultural events. It is a way to help them feel special. Anytime you can tap into that and let a child express himself, you are only doing them good, and you are doing yourself good; you are being exposed to something different."

Section Analysis

Although schools with strong Indian education programs have made much progress developing and providing cultural awareness programs, there still exists stereotyping, racist comments and lower expectations for Indian students.

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Presence of Indian personnel does make a positive difference for Indian students. In order for Indian students to achieve, teachers need to respect their cultures provide multiple and active ways for them to learn, take time to get to know them, and work hard to involve their parents.

It is also very important that Indian students, as well as all students, know they can be successful. They need to know that money does not equate with success. If they work hard, and have a support system at home and school, they can achieve their dreams.

Findings

The lives and histories of these five women provide us with much insight about Native culture and its affect on today's Indian students in public schools. Many of their experiences relate directly to the cultural characteristics being studied, commonly referred to as the "Indian Way." Often during this study, these characteristics were described as something you just know. It is just a part of you. These kinds of continued references, intuitive in nature, seem to indicate that some aspects of culture may be passed on unconsciously, or without knowledge by anyone.

One such aspect is style of communication. In a majority of the interviews, an Indian parent of each participant did not show affection physically or verbally very often. These participants stated that they were shown love through other avenues, whether it was food and gifts,

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or providing basic daily care. There were not many hugs or verbal expressions of love in their families. All had no doubt, however, that their parents loved them very much. They just seemed to understand that it was cultural. As P4 stated, "…you just felt special."

A theory suggested by the second participant is that this type of parenting was learned at boarding school. There was no one to provide this kind of affection. In turn, her grandmother passed on this type of affection, or way of communicating love, to her mother, who then parented the participant in that way. She described this as a way that the boarding schools may have created a change of culture which is not positive. She actually described this possible phenomenon as almost a dysfunction.

Another recurring aspect among three of the participants was their cultural history regarding government schools. All have or had grandparents who attended boarding schools, and who spoke their native language until they went to school. In the early lives of these women, they heard Indian words spoken every once in a while, but not many sentences.

Their parents didn't talk much about being Indian, they just knew they were. One was taught to sing Choctaw hymns as a young child; another learned Comanche hymns as a young adult; while the third participant started learning Choctaw songs in high school. All three came from bicultural

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families, so they are continuing to search for information about their culture.

Perhaps it is this search, knowing that you are Indian, without having the opportunity to really know your culture, which creates the crisis of living in two worlds. Being bicultural, these women experienced periods of time in their lives when they were not considered Indian by Indians, nor were they considered white by Whites. They also referred to having to resolve some identity issues because of these experiences. How then do Indian students, without the wisdom or good judgment of adulthood, handle their identity issues when the worlds of Indian homes and Anglo American schools collide?

Several suggestions for helping Indian students be successful in school were provided by all participants. They believe that Indian students are mislabeled as passive, uninterested, or not as smart as other children because of their quiet ways and non-verbal characteristics. Teachers need to be more than just aware of these types of cultural differences, they need to understand them and apply them in their teaching methods. Specifically, teachers need to understand that many Indian children learn much during their early childhood years by interacting with and experiencing the environment around them. Teaching methods such as experiential learning and cooperative group projects fit their learning styles better than lecture or pencil and paper tasks. Also, teachers need to ask students how

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information relates to their lives. What is important to Anglo families may not be important to traditional Indian families.

There were two suggestions that were very important to all five of these Indian women. The first was the need for more identifiable Indian personnel in public schools. This would provide role models, and someone to talk to for Indian students. As P2 stated, "I see Indian elders daily at the hospital. They will not talk or open up to a non-Indian. If adults are this way, then surely our children are this way also." Indian children need Indian people to talk to; to help them understand what is expected of them in school.

Secondly, schools need to provide parent support to Indian families. This is more than a token attempt such as Indian education parent committees. Indian parents need help and assistance from schools so they can teach their children what to do in school. As the first participant stated, "I started going to school and telling my daughter's teachers about her. That she liked school. She wouldn't talk, she wouldn't tell her teachers." One participant cautions, however, that parent support programs should not be grouped as Indian parents only. Many parents need help learning how to help their children be successful in school, to segregate would only perpetuate the division between the two worlds, Indian and White.

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After a careful examination of common themes and patterns, the following implications should be considered for further study.

1. Cultural ways or traditions seem to be passed on through generations unconsciously, as well as consciously. An Indian family may believe there is an absence of tradition in their home until they began to learn about their culture.

2. Boarding school experiences of many Indian students' ancestors may have directly impacted the cultural characteristic of non-verbal communication.

3. The United States boarding school system for Indian children seemed to greatly damage Native culture, and its purpose may also have been to break up the family unit in order to achieve assimilation more quickly.

4. Some Indian students do live in two worlds. The ways and traditions of these two worlds are in conflict with each other. The dominant

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society can no longer expect Indian people to adapt to the White man's world.

5. Public schools must take time to truly understand Native culture and apply that understanding in the classrooms and the culture of the school community.

Secondary issues which seem to directly relate to the implications cited above include the following:

1. Subtle racism in public schools such as skin color, low teacher expectations, and general attitudes toward Indians.

2. Further examination of communication styles such as silence and other non-verbal methods of communicating among Indian students.

3. Non-competitive, group oriented characteristics that are perceived in school as being uninterested or standing back, not willing to participate.

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4. Accuracy of standardized tests in predicting ability levels of Indian students.

5. Concept of living in two worlds, the Indian world (perceived through the years as inferior) and the White man's world (materialistic and individually oriented).

Conclusion

Indian culture, whether raised traditionally or in an assimilated environment, seems to be more than what children are exposed to while growing up. The research indicates it may be an inherited way of life that is passed down through generations, consciously or unconsciously. These traditions seemed to be ingrained intuitively in Indian families.

Even so, three of these women have recognized that Indian boarding schools created a chasm for them and their culture as Indian women. In fact, they strongly believe that their culture was greatly damaged during this time period because of the way Indian students and adults were treated. However, they are continuing the search for knowledge and answers about their culture which were they feel were silenced by the boarding school era.

Chickasaw culture, as other native cultures, seems to be a way of life. This research suggests that this way, or balance in life was broken for many Indian people when

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Indian Nations in Oklahoma were divided into individual allotments. This division separated Indian people from each other; and from their Indian communities.

The research also seems to indicate that Indian ways of life were almost distinguished for many Indian people who were sent to boarding schools as young children. Most important of these Indian ways were their native languages, their only means of communicating before entering government schools. They were forbidden to "talk Indian. They could do nothing related to their cultures for fear of harsh punishment. As a result, the boarding school generation seemingly made the decision not to share tribal culture, or pass on tribal ways to their children.

Today, tribes have rebuilt their governments, and united their people; federal funding provides for cultural awareness and relevance of Native culture in public schools; and it is okay to be Indian. As a result, it seems the lost generation, which may have resulted from the government boarding school era, are renewing and rediscovering their cultural history and Indian ways.

More elders are now passing on their knowledge to grandchildren and great grandchildren. Public institutions such as schools and universities are very slowly beginning to understand the Indian's conflict in trying to live in two worlds. Indian people themselves are recognizing that they can be successful in the white world, and still retain their cultural identity.

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Chapter V

Implications for Educational Leadership

Delpit (1995) reports that about 30 per cent of school aged children attending public schools are comprised of Hispanic, African American, Asian and Native American children; a conservative estimate. Minority students represent a majority in twenty-three out of twenty-five of America's largest cities. Unfortunately, the number of minority teachers across the nation is below ten per cent (p. 105).

Fifty per cent of the Native American population in the United States is split between Oklahoma and California; approximately twenty-five per cent in each state (U.S. Census, 2000). Oklahoma is also the home of over thirty federally recognized tribes. Because these tribes have sovereign relationships with the United States government, many of Oklahoma's public schools receive a large amount of federal funds; due to the impact of Indian land and Indian populations within their school districts.

Large populations of Indian students attend a majority of Oklahoma public schools. Their parents and families live in the school districts. Tribal governments impact these communities with their programs and landholdings. These three factors qualify many school districts to receive a large amount of federal funds. Some of these programs include Title IX United States Department of Education

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funds; BIA Johnson O'Malley Indian education funds; and federal Impact Aid funds.

In turn, schools receiving these monies are required to have an active Indian education parent committee. The purpose of these committees is to get input from Indian parents about the cultural and academic needs of their children. Each federal program requires these committees to meet with the school administration of each district a minimum of once a year to provide input, make suggestions, and to affirm the yearly Indian education budgets. Additionally, Impact Aid guidelines require schools to notify, and request the presence of an official tribal representative of Indian governments, which are located in the public schools' service areas, to attend Impact Aid meetings.

The mechanisms are in place for public schools in Oklahoma to successfully address all of the cultural and educational issues cited in this study thus far. Those mechanisms include public schools, Indian parents, tribal education departments, teacher education programs, and state policy makers.

First, all involved must understand what is needed to successfully educate Indian students in public schools. Second, each entity or mechanism must recognize its own individual responsibility to ensure that these students receive a quality education in Oklahoma's public schools.

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What is needed to successfully educate Indian students? How can these stakeholders work together to help all Indian students receive a quality public school education? Following are some possible answers to these two questions. First, educational implications arising from this study, which seem to indicate successful strategies for educating Indian students will be examined. Finally, this study will conclude with a description of possible ways for all stakeholders, working together, to positively change the current educational indicators for many Indian students.

Implications for Educational Leadership

1. Pedagogy must be carefully examined and redesigned to meet the multicultural challenges of the 21st Century.

Nieto (2000) cites historical research from multiple sources which confirm that many of today's schools have changed very little in their teaching methodology over the past 100 years. This methodology is commonly referred to as traditional school learning. Methods include routine and rote learning rather than creativity and critical thinking; textbooks are used frequently and mechanically, while other materials were used infrequently if at all (p. 100).

Nieto states, "Most classrooms, for example, reflect the belief that learning can best take place in a competitive and highly charged atmosphere. Techniques that stress individual achievement and extrinsic motivation are

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most visible. Ability grouping, testing of all kinds and rote learning are the result" (p. 101). Yet, cultural research indicates that Native Americans and other minority students seem to be more successful in non-competitive, group oriented classrooms.

The Native women in this study want teachers for their children who provide meaningful learning in the classroom. They want teachers to teach students experientially; provide hands-on and manipulative learning activities; take away the individual competition, and replace these styles with a classroom culture of group oriented, cooperative learning, and sense of community.

2. School leadership must ensure that professional development in Native cultures is available for teachers; supervision and accountability for implementation is provided; and evaluation methods are in place to examine progress for minority students.

Nieto (2000) reports, "Young people whose languages and cultures differ from the dominant group must often struggle to sustain a clear image of themselves because differences are commonly treated as deficiencies by schools and teachers" (p. 138). She also believes that many schools and teachers do not want to acknowledge cultural or racial differences in order to be color blind; to treat all students equally. By doing so, they actually may end up refusing to accept differences, which results in accepting the dominant culture as the norm. "It may result in denying

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the very identity of our students, thereby making them invisible" (p. 139).

For institutional change in the way schools and teachers view minority cultures, and how they need to incorporate cultural sensitivity in the classroom, they must understand the foundation of cultural differences. First, according to Nieto, school personnel must acknowledge the differences that children bring to school. Some examples include race, ethnicity, gender, and social class. When schools and teachers are unwilling to accept differences, the results often lead to labeling children's behavior as deficient (p. 139).

Second, school personnel must admit the possibility that the differences in students, their personal identities, may affect or influence how they learn. Nieto believes that educators are "…reluctant to accept this notion because they may feel in doing so, they must lower their expectations or water down the curriculum so that all children can learn. Yet neither of these practices is necessary" (p. 139).

Last, by accepting student differences also means making provisions for them. Nieto states, "When students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds are viewed as a strength on which educators can draw, pedagogy changes to incorporate students' lives. This approach is based on the best of educational theory, that is, that individual differences must be taken into account in teaching" (p. 139).

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The Chickasaw women in this study want teachers to know about cultural differences. They want them to be familiar with Indian ways so they can better understand their children. They want them to be aware of subtle racisms; to know and apply cultural awareness in the classroom. For these things to consistently happen, teachers must take time to learn and understand cultural issues of Indian students. It is the responsibility of public schools and teacher education programs to provide the foundation of knowledge cited above; then to implement these constructs into school culture.

3. Public schools need to carefully examine current curricula and practices for cultural and historical authenticity; then begin implementing a curriculum with cultural sensitivity for student differences.

Neito (2000) defines culture as "values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and/or religion (p.140). Tangibles are common characteristics such as food, clothing, holidays, and artistic expression. Less tangible characteristics include style of communication, attitudes, values, and family relationships. These are harder to pinpoint, but it is necessary to understand how student learning may be affected (p. 140).

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The Indian mothers in this study recognized that reading books, library books and history books often depicted stereotypes, incorrect history, and negative images of Indian people. They would like to see Native American history integrated into curricula, not just a "Native American Week." They also believe that children need to know that there are unique differences between tribes. Participant 4 summed it up, "If more Native culture was incorporated in public schools, and more teachers were educated about cultural differences of Indian students, we would see more of our children become successful achievers." 4. Public schools and teachers must reach out and seek a personal relationship with Indian students and families; rather than expecting them to initiate a relationship first.

Many Indian children are quiet, shy, and very respectful of adults or elders. This does not mean that they are less capable, uninterested, or lazy. It takes time and patience to develop positive relationships with many Indian children. Once and Indian child becomes trustful, they will open up and participate in activities; especially if these activities are non-competitive, cooperative group oriented, and experiential in learning.

Many Indian parents may be the same way. They may not seek out the teacher, but if sought out, and asked to be involved, teachers will find a wealth of resources for their multicultural classrooms. Also, the word will spread

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quickly within Indian communities, about teachers who genuinely care for their children.

Collaboration of Stakeholders

As stated earlier in this chapter, the mechanisms are in place and a possible solution is available for all involved; however, stakeholders must be willing to shoulder their share of the responsibility for true systemic reform of traditional pedagogy in public schools. This means that all entities must collaborate together; agree that the primary concern is what is best for all children; and that all students receive quality educations and are successful achievers in school.

First, public schools must be willing to accept the differences of minority students. Teachers must be willing to learn about culture, and how it affects the way a student may learn. They must positively affirm the cultures of their minority students. School leaders must insure that teachers are provided the tools, funds, and professional development needed to become culturally sensitive in the classroom.

Public schools must positively embrace Indian education committees; encourage parent committee involvement; and use the funds to meet the cultural and educational needs of the students. They must also hold themselves accountable to federal guidelines, and proper use of appropriated federal funds.

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Tribal Governments and Education programs that contract JOM funds to public schools must be responsible for ensuring that the schools are following federal guidelines in the use of these monies. They must also encourage and help develop Indian education parent committees at the schools located within their tribal service areas. Additionally, tribal education and cultural resources personnel throughout Oklahoma must advocate for Indian education, and Indian families in local, state and national policy development, discussions, and approval processes.

Finally, Indian parents and communities must help in this collaborative process by stepping up, getting involved, and sharing their cultural ways with teachers and students in public schools. By becoming more involved, parents can help schools move towards more cultural immersion in the classrooms. By sharing a Native craft activity, Indian parents provide examples, and extra hands for cooperative group learning. When schools have active Indian parents, the Indian presence may help facilitate a change in school climate, to one which is more multicultural.

Collaboration is hard when several entities are involved because everyone must work together in order for change to occur. However, it can be done. Each group must be willing to accept responsibility, focus on student success as the primary objective, and become advocates for minority students in our public educational institutions.

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