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MEETING THE CULTURALLY-RELATED ACADEMIC NEEDS OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF ELVA JOHN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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MEETING THE CULTURALLY-RELATED ACADEMIC NEEDS OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF ELVA JOHN MIDDLE SCHOOL

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beautiful daughter Jaylee and in loving memory of my grandparents, Rev. John Tsatoke and Elva Mae Tapedo who left behind a legacy of love and always encouraged me to strive for excellence.

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ABSTRACT

Many issues (e.g. impact of cultural hegemony, cultural mismatch, marginalization, stereotypes) contribute to conflicting and difficult learning environments for American Indian children and other children from marginalized cultural groups. The purpose of this study is to determine how the cultural integrity of American Indian students is supported in a public school named the Elva John Middle School. The research method is a qualitative case study designed to obtain understanding about the perspectives and subsequent impact on curricular and pedagogical decisions made by the principal and four faculty members who agreed to participate in this study. Case study procedures involved data collection from interviews, direct field observations, school documents, and existing demographic and academic performance data. The findings from this study will present strategies and practices that were planned and implemented in order to meet more effectively the unique culturally related academic needs of American Indian students.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the study, provide background information and present a conceptual framework to use as a lens to understanding public school experiences of American Indian children. In addition, the problem statement, need, and purpose of the study are introduced. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the relevance of the study and the research question.

Background Information

American Indians have experienced a long history of Eurocentrism and Euro-American cultural hegemony in the U.S. educational system. To fully grasp the current state of American Indian education, an understanding of its history is required. Many contemporary educational issues are historically linked (Reyhner & Eder, 1992). From coercive cultural assimilative school practices in colonial times to marginalization through the hidden curriculum and Eurocentric school curricula in contemporary times, cultural hegemonic impact has been present in varying degrees to the present. U.S. education, first introduced by benevolent members of the aristocracy, represented, and still represents an effort to effect a complete "transformation of beliefs and behaviors of Indians" (Deloria, 2001, p. 60). Cultural assimilation has been a constant theme throughout the history of American Indian education. As Porter (2002) articulated,

> Indian children today, like their ancestors who were sent to the concentration camp-like boarding schools from the last century, are subject to the same

> powerfully assimilating influence of the White Man's "education" in the public schools. (p. 632)

As early as 1885, written reports and recommendations submitted to government officials in Washington, D.C., including to the Director of Indian Schools, suggested that appropriate textbooks should be developed for American Indian students (Reyhner & Eder, 1992). The Secretary of Interior formed "a committee of One Hundred Citizens" to discuss improving education for American Indians in 1924 (Reyhner & Eder, 1992, p. 50). The documentation of this national discourse signaled early recognition of the *cultural* disconnect between standard American school curricula and American Indian children.

Continuous problems resulting in ineffective practices and subsequent failure to adequately serve American Indian students in public schools and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools have led to early investigations (Reyhner & Eder, 1992), including findings sited by Meriam (1928) and Kennedy (1969). In the first part of the twentieth century recommendations in the Meriam Report, published in 1928, reflected a dramatic shift from forced cultural assimilation as the primary educational approach, towards consideration of American Indian culture in school decision-making and reform. Following the Meriam Report and throughout the twentieth century, suggestions for improving American Indian education have been made through congressional reports, legislation, and presidential remarks.

Studies and reports throughout American educational history have acknowledged that American Indian children have unique educational needs, as well

as documented the legal and moral responsibilities of the U.S. educational system in meeting those needs. All the while imposition of assimilation into American mainstream society was (and continues to be) stressed upon American Indian people through the education system. A Senate Report in the 91st Congress (1969) stated:

> We have concluded that our national policies for educating American Indians are a failure of major proportions. They have not offered Indian children-either in years past or today-an educational opportunity anywhere near equal to that offered the great bulk of American children. …We have recommended programs to meet special, unmet needs in the Indian education field. Culturally sensitive curriculum materials, for example, are seriously lacking; so are bilingual education efforts. (Prucha, 2000, p. 254)

These congressional remarks were made in response to over two years of data collection across the nation, which yielded appalling statistics and revealed issues such as questionable school governance, inadequate and mismanaged resources, and shockingly high rates of attrition. The report also indicated that in 1968, during the time of data collection, most American Indian children (61.3 %) between the ages of 6 and 18 attended public schools (Prucha, 2000). The trend of increased public school enrollment versus BIA or tribal school enrollment has continued. In 2009, most (91% of fourth graders and 90% of eighth graders) American Indian/Alaska Native students attended public school (Mead, Grigg, Moran & Kuang, 2010).

Again, in 1988, in Public Law 100-297, Congress acknowledged culturally related educational needs, stating, "Congress affirms the reality of the special and unique educational needs of Indian peoples, including the need for programs to meet the linguistic and cultural aspirations of Indian tribes and communities" (Prucha, 2000, p. 321).

In 1994, in remarks to Native American and Alaska Native tribal leaders, President Clinton stated:

> Yet nothing is so striking in tribal communities as your love of family and extended family and your devotion to your children. Every segment of our society could well take a lesson from you. But in spite of your best efforts, too many of your children also suffer from poor health and inadequate education. (Prucha, 2000, p. 345)

As referenced in these presidential remarks, as a group, American Indians continue to have unmet educational needs. Certainly, educational issues of American Indian children are not a new area of inquiry; however current data reflecting low academic achievement and troubling rates of retention is worthy of further inquiry. This study seeks to identify practices and strategies utilized with American Indian student populations within the school context. Examples of implementation are sought because they provide concrete applications of theoretical best practices with American Indians in the public school system.

Theoretical Framework and Lens

Cultural Hegemony

In this study American Indian public school experiences are approached from the theoretical view that Euro-American cultural hegemony (i.e. influence and imposition of a dominating Euro-American culture over other cultures) in public schools contributes to culturally incongruent educational experiences to the detriment of academic achievement among American Indian students. One definition of hegemony is "a predominant influence, as of a group, region, or state, over another or others" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2003). The theory of cultural hegemony, developed in the 1930s by the Italian Marxist leader and theorist Antonio Gramsci, contributed to structuralist theories of social and cultural reproduction (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). In the social sciences, the theoretic application of cultural hegemony is useful in examining major discourses in sociology, political science, anthropology, cultural studies, and particularly, education. The theory of cultural hegemony establishes that a dominating cultural superstructure is reflective of economic processes, social class, and political power.

Modern societies are a "situation" of diversity, characterized by a conglomeration of different, often competing cultures (Dictionary of Sociology, 2005). A dominant culture is one that is able, through economic and/or political power, to impose its values, language, and ways of behaving on a subordinate culture or cultures (Dictionary of Sociology, 2005). In this study *majority culture* is the term that will be utilized to describe the dominating culture in the United States

(U.S.), which has been largely and historically shaped through the social, economic, and political power of Euro-Americans (American citizens with European origins).

In the context of public schools, cultural hegemony involves: (1) the production of ways of thinking and behavior valued by the majority culture, (2) production of knowledge deemed worthy of learning from the perspective of the majority culture, and (3) excluding the perspectives of minority cultures. It is important to note that in this study the term *minority culture* is utilized as a sociological term and therefore does not necessarily refer to numbers. Although in the case of American Indians in the public school system, as in broader American society, they are both a cultural and numerical minority. This study focuses on a single public school setting as an extension the values, social norms, and interests of the majority culture in the U.S. as a whole.

Discussion of Related Terms and Concepts

Culture and Cultural Norms

Central to this study is the perspective that the diversity of cultural representation (cultural pluralism) in a school context should play a more vital role in decisions about school-wide practices. In order to develop instructional practices that are responsive to cultural pluralism, cultural characteristics such as communication styles, thinking styles, value systems, socialization processes, relational patterns, and performance styles must be considered as highly significant (Gay, 1994).

The consideration of *culture* is fundamental to this research. However it is a widely utilized term with varied meanings. In 1952, over one hundred definitions of *culture* were compiled in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). A definition of *culture* utilized for the purpose of this study is "the integrated system of socially acquired values, beliefs, and rules of conduct, which delimit the range of accepted behaviors in any given society" (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2008). This articulation of the term is more closely aligned with definitions utilized in the field of social sciences, such as cultural anthropology or sociology.

In this study, the application of this definition of culture to describe American Indian culture specifically also takes into account knowledge that has been passed down generationally (i.e. generational knowledge) and is inclusive of a collective identity and history. In the school context there are observable aspects of American Indian culture recognizable in culturally-defined behaviors, many of which have been identified in the literature on "cultural learning style" theory. Behaviors such as patterns of speech, nonverbal communication, dialect, and demonstration of knowledge are important considerations in recognizing how some students' home culture diverges from majority behavioral expectations at school (Banks, 2006; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009).

In the discussion of cultural behavioral norms among American Indian children, diversity between tribal nations and between individual experiences further complicate the categorization of a single comprehensive set of cultural behavioral

norms. For example the proximity and level of involvement of individuals in relation to tribal communities are both factors that can affect American Indian cultural influence. Red Horse, Lewis, Feit, and Decker (1978) presented American Indian life on a cultural continuum ranging from *traditional*, based on culturally defined styles of living, to *pan-traditional*, which encompasses a struggle to reconfirm and redefine lost cultural ways, to *non-traditional*. The issue of oversimplifying cultural differences (Signorini, Wiesemes & Murphy, 2009) is a primary criticism of cultural learning theory.

Deculturalization and Cultural Mismatch

The issue of cultural invalidation is another concern with American Indian public school experiences. A term utilized to describe educational processes that validate a majority culture and fail to adequately support minority cultures is referred to as deculturalization. Spring (2001) defines deculturalization as the educational process of abating one culture and replacing it with a new one. The expectation of students to conform to existing teaching and assessment styles reflect deculturalization because possibly cultural influences simply are not considered. Any cultural influence that diverges from the Euro-American standard can be mistakenly regarded as a barrier to the educational process. Hegemonic impact can be significant in public school experiences because understanding minority cultures (e.g. American Indian culture) is systemically less valued than the maintenance of the majority culture. Public school curriculum, which is state-mandated, is an

excellent example of this impact apparent through the majority culture's values and themes in content that is mandated to be taught.

Cultural mismatch, in the school context, is a term used to describe the cultural misunderstandings and limited knowledge (e.g. cultural histories; contemporary issues) among educators about the cultural groups in which their students identify (Pather, 2006). Cultural mismatch exists when educators who have been trained from a predominantly Eurocentric worldview can be completely oblivious to the possibility that mainstream pedagogy and curriculum can and does create conflict for American Indian students. When cultural mismatch is not addressed it often results in students that have school experiences that conflict with their own cultural values and norms (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Gay, 1995; Sue, Bingham, Porche-Burke & Vasquez, 1999; Cross, 2003). A culture clash between American Indian students and non-Indian teachers has continued into the present era (Ebbott, 1985; Weeks, 1992, as cited in Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997). Both cultural mismatch and deculturalization within American public schools demonstrate cultural hegemonic effects. An introduction of these terms helps outline the conceptual framework in this study, which will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

Problem Statement

In light of these hegemonic effects, the American public school system is a product that reflects its history. Throughout the history of the United States, the cultures of American Indians have been viewed as obstructing the educational

process (Dale, 1949; Ebott, 1985; Josephy, 1989; Hodgkinson, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990; Weeks, 1992, as cited in Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997). Although educational opportunities have improved for American Indians, cultural issues persist. For example, cultural considerations are still neglected and American Indian stereotypes continue to be socially accepted and are even perpetuated through school mascots and insignia. The reality is that many American Indian students who attend public schools are impacted by cultural hegemony and many of them fail to thrive in these environments. The academic performance of American Indians and other students from historically disadvantaged minority groups suffers as a consequence. This relationship is amplified by the academic achievement gap between majority children and culturally marginalized children.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was, in part, a legislative response to the pervasive failure of schools to provide high-quality education that ensures the success of all students, including "disadvantaged and minority students" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). For example, Title VII, Part A of NCLB (2002), which is the section that deals with Indian Education stated:

> The Indian Education program supports the efforts of school districts, Indian tribes and organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other entities to meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students so that they can meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards as all other students. (p.161)

The NCLB Act (2002) which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, embodied four key principles: (a) stronger accountability for results, (b) greater flexibility for states, school districts and schools in the use of federal funds, (c) more choices for parents of children from *disadvantaged backgrounds*, (d) and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been demonstrated to work. The Act gave widespread public recognition to the academic achievement gap that still exists in the United States educational system.

Many issues (e.g. impact of cultural hegemony, cultural mismatch, marginalization, stereotypes) contribute to conflicting and difficult learning environments for American Indian children and other children from marginalized cultural groups. These issues impact every aspect of school life (e.g. school climate, pedagogy, and curriculum). For American Indians, these cultural diversity issues manifest in various ways. For example school curricula are affected when the legacy of Euro-Americans is imposed and the subject matter primarily consists of knowledge, values, and norms of Euro-Americans. Consequently relevant American Indian topics (e.g. historical and contemporary figures, contributions, influences, and perspectives) are marginally included in the curriculum. The marginal inclusion of American Indian subject matter and neglect of diverse perspectives in school curricula thereby denies validation to American Indian students.

The public school system as an American institution of social order has a pivotal role in instilling a positive national identity. Patriotic themes are central in

teaching a favorable view of United States as well as individual state histories. In the discussion of American literature and who and what is selected to represent our nation, Moon and Davidson (1995) point out that national identity is always an ideological construct. Issues of race and gender challenge nationalist paradigms and realign the borders of both the nation and the field of American literary history (Moon & Davidson, 1995). In the process of reinforcing a positive national identity, the unintended result is the creation of a system of public schools that largely validate students from the majority culture. Ramón Saldívar (1995) speaks of the absence of "minority" perspectives in the teaching of state histories:

> [In the writings of Paredes] the focus is on the effects of struggle and on the end of the heroic past of Mexican American armed resistance to Anglo American hegemony. …In instance after instance, the rhetorical tone of *The Hammon and the Beans* is that *"even the dead"* are not safe from the enemy when the social history of the region is obliterated from the narrative of American history. Indeed, by the time I was growing up in Brownsville in the sixties, all mention of Mexican American resistance had been erased from our Texas history lessons. (p.378)

Another example of Euro-American cultural hegemonic impact is apparent through the sanctioned use of American Indian stereotypes through school mascots and insignia (i.e. generic and/or warlike imagery) and the use of derogatory terms (e.g. savages) in reference to American Indian people. All of these typical instances illustrate the pervasiveness of cultural marginalization that occurs in schools and

speaks to the fact that cultural hegemonic impact is institutionalized, and even in the presence of well-intentioned, qualified educators, issues can go unaddressed.

The implications of these cultural issues relate to low academic performance, participation, and retention of American Indian students. Negative implications can be harmful to the academic potential as well as the overall psychological well-being of American Indian children.

Data showing national American Indian academic performance are quite alarming. For example, American Indian academic performance scores in reading and math are provided as evidence of the existing achievement gap. In 2007, American Indian/Alaska Native students in eighth grade scored lower in reading and math than the average total population of eighth grade students (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Whereas the total average reading score for all eighth grade students was a value of 263, the average score for American Indian/Alaska Native eighth students was a value of 247, a difference of 16 on a scale score range of 0 to 500 (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The total average math score for all eighth grade students was a value of 281, while the average score for American Indian/Alaska Native eighth grade students was a value of 264, a difference of 17 on the scale (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

The failure of public schools serving American Indian students is ultimately evident in the subsequent low rates of K-12 completion among American Indian students. In 2006, a higher percentage (15%) of non-institutionalized American Indian/Alaska Native young adults ages 16 to 24 were status dropouts compare to

the total national average (10%), and their White (7%), Black (11%), Asian (3%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (7%) peers (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). However, the status dropout rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives was lower than the rate for Hispanics (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008).

The purpose of presenting these data is not to reinforce any negative perceptions about minority groups; these data illustrate the frightening achievement gap that exists presently. Only if the achievement gap's full magnitude is understood will Americans grasp the need for a radical rethinking of what counts today as educational reform (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). It is important to note that while factors outside of school can contribute to low academic performance, the scope of this research focuses on how the culturally related academic needs of American Indian students are addressed in a public school setting. Socioeconomic factors, among others, have a further impact on student academics; however the focus of this study is the critical role played by the school. The possibility of improvement within the school context is center point of this study, while resisting the tendency to attribute educational problems to factors (e.g. parental involvement) outside of the school.

Need and Relevance of the Study

Low educational opportunities contribute to larger social problems faced by American Indian/Alaska Native youth including high rates of violence, unemployment, suicide, substance abuse, and poverty. Young adults who do not finish high school are more likely to be unemployed and earn less when they are

employed than those who complete high school (DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). In response to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (1997) drew up a strategic plan that stated that by any socioeconomic measure, American Indians trail the general U.S. population and higher levels of poverty, unemployment, single parent families, and mortality than the United States population at large.

In 2003, the American Indian/Alaska Native unemployment rate was three times as high as the unemployment rate for the Anglo (White) population (Freeman & Fox, 2005). Without a secondary education, opportunities to improve the quality of life among American Indian youth diminish. It is critical for educators to take a proactive approach in order to change the current trends and finally address the cultural hegemonic issues that persist in the public school system.

Public schools are in a continuous state of change and reform influenced by social, political, and economic factors. This research aims to continue the work of reforming conventional school practices that hinder the academic success of American Indians students. This research topic is highly relevant for teachers and administrators who work in schools that serve American Indian student populations.

It also is relevant for elementary teachers, who are charged with teaching across subjects (e.g. social studies, reading, science, etc.) or teachers of social studies courses (e.g. history, civics, government) because of the volume of American Indian topics embedded within their subject areas. There is potential for public school teachers and administrators to improve their professional practices by

learning more about effective ways to address cultural hegemony and serve culturally diverse students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine what culturally responsive educational approaches are implemented with American Indian students in a school context. Educational practices are explored through a case study approach with five consenting individuals at the Elva John Middle School (EJMS) located in Oklahoma. Those participating at the school include a school building administrator, three classroom teachers, and one Indian Education resource teacher. The design of this case study poses a developmental approach as opposed to a deficit approach. It does not evaluate the individuals in terms of what practices are not implemented and does not determine the effectiveness of current strategies, but rather determines:

1. What approaches to serving American Indian students are currently in use, and
2. How these approaches might be further developed or enhanced to facilitate more culturally supportive environments for American Indian children.

The goal of the case study report is to provide insight into current educational practices with American Indian student populations.

During the process of selecting a school site in which to approach for this study, assistance was sought from the K20 for Educational & Community Renewal

Center (K20 Center) at the University of Oklahoma. The K20 Center is an interdisciplinary research and development center focused on creating and sustaining interactive learning communities through school, university, industry, community organization, and governmental agency partnerships. These partnerships are based upon the IDEALS Framework: Inquiry, Discourse, Equity, Authenticity, Leadership, and Service, and are grounded in the knowledge base on school-university-community partnerships (K20 Website, 2008). The K20 Center connects the University of Oklahoma and over 500 schools and industry partners to facilitate improvements in learning at all levels of academics. The K20 Center offers many grant opportunities to schools. Among them is a program is intended to develop teachers, principals, and superintendents to lead systemic change and create 21st century interactive *professional learning communities* using the IDEALS Framework. School data available through the K20 Center was helpful in identifying a potential school that would be agreeable to this research topic.

This case study followed six sequential stages: focus, design, preparation, data collection, analysis, and reporting. Background on the methodology and a detailed outline of each stage of research is explained in Chapter Three. The qualitative nature of this case study enabled rich descriptions of the perspectives and practices of five individuals (participants) employed at Elva John Middle School during a 10-week period in the spring 2008 and background on the characteristics of the school itself during that timeframe. These descriptions help create understanding about participants' level of training and readiness related to

addressing cultural diversity issues, as well as awareness and sensitivity to cultural conflicts at school faced by American Indian students. Awareness levels are important to understanding because they guide and translate into educators' curricular decision-making and practice. Personal interviews, review of classroom and school documents, and observations were utilized as data sources. Additionally, the case study report will describe interactions between school personnel and students to give the reader a sense of how the actors make meaning of contemporary cultural issues of American Indian students. Consideration of school-wide activities is as important to this study as are classroom practices to help construct a more comprehensive view of the school climate.

Research Question

This case study seeks to understand, *"How do educators address the culturally related academic needs of American Indian students?"*

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The first section of this chapter offers a discussion of terms utilized in this study. Following that are two sections of historical nature. The first one introduces historic accounts that demonstrate the majority ideology at the time of introduction of the U.S. educational system to indigenous American Indian groups. Next, key events are highlighted to provide a backdrop for educational conditions in the current context. Contemporary issues are presented next to illustrate school conditions that the construct of cultural hegemony makes possible. When commonplace contemporary issues are considered collectively, they form a greater pattern of cultural hegemonic impact on aspects of American Indian school experiences. These examples are provided to demonstrate that American Indian children face unique, often difficult circumstances as students due to the struggle between American Indian cultural identity and the dominating Eurocentric cultural pressures within the institution of U.S. public education. Next, concepts identified in the literature that address culturally related academic issues are presented. This section is followed by the methodology, and the chapter summary completes the review of literature.

Discussion of Terms

There are many definitions of the term culture. In 1952, over one hundred definitions of *culture* were compiled in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). One definition of culture is the

integrated system of socially acquired values, beliefs, and rules of conduct, which delimit the range of accepted behaviors in any given society (The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2008). For the purpose of this study, *culture* is utilized in reference to American Indian culture, inclusive of a collective history and identity and in relation to a cultural heritage passed down from preceding generations. Cultural capital refers to cultural and linguistic knowledge, skills, and dispositions transmitted from one generation to another (The Greenwood Dictionary of Education, 2003). In the 1960s, in the midst of discourse on acculturation and ethnic minorities in the United States, the term culture was important to define for addressing cultural diversity issues in the context of schools. Elam (1960) in addressing general problems of acculturation and in particular its effects on Puerto Rican Children, eloquently defined culture as learning that permeates all behavior from fundamentals of dressing and talking to complex communication patterns and the development of a value system. Culture is also considered to be a determinant of the way one perceives oneself and others, involving the totality of living from the biological to the social and intellectual (Elam, 1960).

Spring (2004) utilizes the term *culture* to include historical traditions, religion, literature, and art, as well as a group's beliefs regarding acceptable behaviors, manners, style of dress, accents, and patterns of speech.

When considering culture and American Indian children, diversity between tribal affiliation also must be acknowledged. American Indian children enter the public school system representing a range of experiences from upbringing in more

traditional homes to having a pan-Indian sense of identity with little or no cultural ties. In the school context American Indian students' patterns of speech, nonverbal communication, dialects, and other behaviors (e.g. demonstration of knowledge) are among important considerations in recognizing cultural and individual distinctions.

In this study the term *majority culture* is used to describe that which reflects Eurocentrism and is largely shaped through the historic social, economic, and political power of Euro-Americans in the U.S. In the United States majority cultural influences are marked by Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism in sociology is defined as the assessment and evaluation of other societies from a decidedly European (read also American) point of view and cannot be dissociated from the political economic and cultural domination of Europe and, later, the United States (Pickering, 2007). The traits of Eurocentrism as manifested in sociology and other social sciences include (1) the subject–object dichotomy; (2) the foregrounding of Europeans; (3) the view of Europeans as originators; (4) the imposition of European categories and concepts; and (5) the view of the objective superiority of European civilization (Pickering, 2007). Eurocentrism also reflects historic dominance in development and achievement from a European and Western position and excludes contributions from non-European cultures to world civilization, and deprecates the contributions of non-European cultures to world civilization (Greenwood Dictionary of Education, 2003).

Now that these key terms have been introduced, further application will be presented throughout this chapter. The following section introduces some notable

events worthy of mentioning as a backdrop to the discussion of contemporary issues.

Key Historic Events and Examples of Conditions

Certainly, the comprehensive history of American Indian education cannot be captured in this section; however the intent is to provide a general historic review of select topics that relate to the education of American Indians and of particular relevance to educating American Indian children in Oklahoma. Cultural hegemonic influences in current school settings can be better understood with knowledge of key historic conditions and events leading up to present times.

This background enables readers to gain an enlightened historical perspective on contemporary problems. Notable topics, particularly federal American Indian policy had implications on American Indians across the nation. However this overview will be presented with particular attention paid to historical educational topics and events relevant in Oklahoma, beginning with a discussion on the introduction of new Euro-American education systems to American Indian nations in Indian Territory in mid-nineteenth century. The examples provided demonstrate that cultural conflict has been embedded in the education to which American Indians in the U.S. have been exposed from its inception. That is, the condition embedded in U.S. public education requires that American Indians must sacrifice aspects of their cultural identity in exchange for school participation and success.

Ideology in the U.S. Educational System in Indian Country

Early on, some tribal leaders in Indian Territory encouraged the acculturation of American schooling. For example among the Kiowa Nation, comprised of multiple small independent bands occupying the southwestern region of now Oklahoma and parts of northern Texas, some leaders showed interest in enrolling children in residential and day schools. The principal chief, T'ené Angópte (Kicking Bird), of the Kiowa Nation, invited and assisted Thomas C. Battey, a Quaker missionary and teacher, in organizing a school among the Kiowas between 1872-1873 (Battey Report 11 *n.d.* as cited in Mooney, 1898). During that time Battey was working at the newly established school built among the Caddos. Kicking Bird learned of Battey and his work at the school and sent messengers to arrange a meeting with him. American Indian leaders such as Kicking Bird perceived that the American education system held potential advantages for the future of their children and perhaps understood that the wave of immigration to their homelands was certain to dramatically and forever change their way of life.

The expansion of American education, however, was an extension of the aims of the federal government and served as the primary tool of cultural assimilation and indoctrination. As a consequence, American Indian children were offered a curriculum that negated their indigenous cultural values and exclusively transmitted Euro-American culture in which religion played a vital role. Battey's ethnocentric bias is laced throughout his writings. For example, he described the students as "wild children, of a strange language" (Battey, 1875, p. 30) and even

likened them to wild or untamed animals as he did in this account of an event that disrupted a particular school day:

> The scene was somewhat entertaining and enlivening, and I could not decide which were the greater curiosity, — the wild turkeys running and skulking among the brush, or the wild boys and girls who were chasing them. But I was abundantly more successful in collecting these untamed children into school again, than they were in catching the turkeys. (p. 37)

Even the ways in which the children played was scrutinized and the teacher intended to replace their traditional sports with ones "suitable" for the playground (Battey, 1875, p. 37). At one point in his accounts at the Caddo School, Battey expressed his growing frustration and impatience due to his expectations of the children's behavior not being met. He requested an interpreter to relay his message to the students that they should strive to behave like white children and that white children exemplified "correct" ways of behavior:

> All white children go to school; that they do not talk and laugh out loud — *they* tried hard to learn; and he wanted them to be like the white children — mind all their teachers tell them, and try hard to learn. He also told them that at night they went to bed to sleep, not to play, and they should go to sleep at once; not talk and play, so as to keep all in the house awake. (p. 42)

Battey also expressed his preference for residential school as opposed to day schools in order to exert maximum control and limit influences of the children's home culture, which was regarded as an uncivilized and inferior lifestyle:

> Home influences being naturally strong, the children under our care should be removed as much as possible from them, in order to make much improvement in the ways and arts of civilized life. (p. 153)

During Battey's appointment he completed several years of work, including teaching, observing, and documenting American Indian cultures in southwestern Oklahoma before returning to his home. His goal of establishing a permanent school among the Kiowas was hindered by illness and a growing distrust among Kiowa leaders of the government due to unfulfilled promises made by agents and appointed figures. The concept of the permanent school dwelling was also counter to the Kiowa culture and lifestyle, in which their self-contained communities could easily be relocated based on ceremonial events requiring all bands to commune during specific seasons, as well as other environmental reasons.

In 1897 federal appointed Indian agents, stationed at the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache (KCA) Indian agency, reported that Kiowas were forward-thinkers, thus agreeing to forfeit twenty-five thousand dollars from their own grazing fees towards the building of primary schools on their reservation (Ellis, 1996).

Other American Indian nations that were removed from their homelands east of the Mississippi River were assigned to the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), but maintained their own school systems, in which some were established prior to removal. For example, the Choctaw Nation, originally from the southeast region of the United States, financed highly successful schools, which were described in relatively sophisticated terms and flourished well into the 1890s (Debo, 1934; Fuchs

& Havighurst, 1972). Choctaws reestablished their government and continued to develop schools following their arrival to what is now southeastern Oklahoma.

In many cases, American Indian leaders embraced the idea of their children attending American schools, which included missionary and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools. But, resistance grew from educational practices implemented to eradicate existing cultural identities including native languages. From the American Indian perspective the existing cultural norms and collective identities were as highly valued as those being imposed from the Euro-American culture. Here, Battey (1875) explains how he advocated for Kiowas to convert to a more Euro-American lifestyle, but he also expressed how Kiowas regarded the imposition of the Euro-American way of life:

> I would explain the advantages of living and dressing like the white people…They usually listened attentively to my talk, but mostly consider their own mode of life far preferable for them. (p.192)

In fact, from the point of initial contact with white settlers, [American] Indians were pressured to conform to their ways of behavior, dress, and religion (Reyhner, 1992 as cited in Van Hamme, 1995, p. 1)

Some American Indian leaders desired for the younger generations to benefit from an American education, but they did not want to forfeit their cultures to do so. From 1879 and into the 1930s American schools, including boarding schools, had a central focus in assimilation policies imposed during that era (Littlefield, 2004). Hegemony manifested through English-only school instruction and included

prohibition of native languages to be spoken even outside of class. There was a separation of children from American Indian adult influences, including parents, family members, and authorities, as well as military-structured regimes and uniforms. The majority culture was imposed on the students in American schools by disrupting the transmission of native languages and life-ways from parents to children (Littlefield, 2004). To the degree that school activities modeled military life, such as with regimentation, rigid discipline, uniforms and marching (Littlefield, 2004) are also reflective of cultural assimilative and hegemonic impact. Littlefield (2004) also points out that the prohibition of Native languages, dress, and hairstyles as well as religious observances were common and corporal punishment was used as enforcement. As Lomawaima (1994) describes in detail that:

> Education was an exercise in power, a reconstruction of [the young women's] very body, appearance, manners, skills, and habits. Federal educators hoped to manufacture civilized and obedient souls in civilized and obedient bodies, uniformly garbed in olive drab or snappy gray. (p. 99)

In addition to these aspects of school life, the nature of instruction also illustrated the maintenance of what the majority society deemed important to teach. In most cases, the curriculum emphasized agricultural skill for boys and domestic skill for the girls, which were linked to school maintenance as well as inculcating speed, punctuality, efficiency, and subservience (Littlefield, 2004). Issues of the cultural conformity imposed by schools that were designed for Euro-American children remains central to cultural hegemony in the present.

The Meriam Report

In 1928, the Meriam Report, prepared by the Institute for Government Research (Brookings Institution) was published. This report, compiled from data from the Meriam Survey, presented the social and economic conditions of American Indians and recommendations for solutions to the problems discovered (Prucha, 2000). The education chapter of the Meriam Report (1928) emphasized the need for relevant curriculum and a consideration of American Indian cultural values:

> The most fundamental need in Indian education is a change in point of view. Whatever may have been the official governmental attitude, education for the Indian in the past has proceeded largely on the theory that it is necessary to remove the Indian child as far as possible from his home environment; whereas the modern point of view in education and social work lays stress on upbringing in the natural setting of home and family life. The Indian educational enterprise is peculiarly in need of the kind of approach that recognizes this principle; that is, less concerned with a conventional school system and more with the understanding of human beings. (p. 346)

Recommendations to change existing assimilative educational tactics toward more culturally-sensitive methods was first captured in the Meriam Report and called for educational leadership with more understanding for the Indian point of view in place of the dictatorial methods used (Meriam, 1928).

The report (1928) called for a value to be placed on children as individuals and consideration of children's home culture is further emphasized:

> It is true in all education, but especially in the education of people situated as are the American Indians, that methods must be adapted to individual abilities, interests, and needs. A standard course of study, routine classroom methods, traditional types of schools, even if *they* were adequately supplied—and they are not—would not solve the problem. The methods of the average public school in the United States cannot safely be taken over bodily and applied to Indian education. Indian tribes and individual Indians within the tribes vary so much that a standard content and method of education, no matter how carefully they might be prepared, would be worse than futile. (p. 346)

The Meriam Report documented a dire need for reform, but efforts would be halted by the volatile nature of public attitude towards American Indians, which is reflected in shifts in policy (e.g. House Concurrent Resolution 108; Public Law 280) (Prucha, 2000).

Johnson O'Malley Act

During the era of newly developing states, state leadership wanted nothing to do with the schooling of American Indian children, but asserted that the sole responsibility was that of the federal government (Spring, 2001). On April 16, 1934 the Johnson O'Malley Act was passed to authorize states to enter into contracts for provision of services, including educational services, to eligible American Indians. The original intent of the Act pertaining to the education of American Indians was to transfer students from federally operated schools to public schools and *reimburse*

states, essentially school districts, for the associated costs of educating American Indian children (U.S. Department of Interior, 1974). The stated Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and departmental objectives were to encourage and assist Indians to "enter the mainstream of American life" and "adopt the non-Indian culture" (U.S. Department of Interior, 1974, p. 6).

The Johnson O'Malley Act was effective in transitioning American Indian children to the public school system by providing funding to states; however, once they were placed in the public school system, provisions in the Johnson O'Malley Act did not address the culturally related academic issues that would emerge. American Indian children continued being educated in a system predicated on Euro-American cultural assumptions and patterns. Many [American] Indian children were not successful in schools that did not recognize their languages and cultures, while many older [American] Indians worked strenuously to preserve their heritage (Reyhner & Eder, 1992). Fifty years after its inception an evaluation of Johnson O'Malley conducted in 1974 (U.S. Department of Interior, 1974) recommended that new objectives should include "retaining the valuable elements of Indian life and to strengthen the pride of Indian groups and the recognition by non-Indians as to the contribution of the Indian heritage to the national life" (p. 14).

The Kennedy Report

At the height of the social and civil rights movement, American Indian activists began pushing for the acknowledgement of the unjust and inconsistent record of American Indian policy. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 addressed Indian

issues, in Title II through VII, primarily giving focus to the jurisdiction of tribal courts on tribal lands and the rights of tribal members (Prucha, 2000). On December 13, 1968, following initial exploratory hearings of a subcommittee during the 91st Congress, a plan was prepared taking into consideration that, "The failure of Indian education has deep historical roots and is closely interrelated with a general failure of national policy" (Prucha, 2000). On November 3, 1969 the Kennedy Report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge,* prepared by a special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education, documented, the success of tribally-controlled educational systems in the 1800s, and the failures subsequent to federal supervision. Although the report evaluated all types of schools across the country, very importantly, the report of the Kennedy Subcommittee dealt with American Indians in public schools (U.S. Department of Interior, 1974). According to the report, in 1968 among American Indian children between the ages of 6 and 18, most of them (61.3%) attended public schools alongside non-American Indian children. Interestingly, the report specifically noted a case in Oklahoma where one school had 100% American Indian student body and yet was controlled by a three-person, non-Indian school board. This example pinpointed the imbalance of power and representation in school decision-making. Beginning in 1971, locally-elected American Indian Advisory School Boards began to express the need for the emphasis of Johnson O'Malley funding to shift from meeting the financial needs of public school districts to (1) providing financial help to parents of American Indian children so that their children could fully participate in school activities, and (2)

meeting the educational needs of American Indian children (U.S. Department of Interior, 1974).

The Kennedy Report illuminated the educational state of many nations as proof of the tragic results of foreign control over American Indian education. For example, the dropout rate of Cherokee students in Oklahoma was as high as 75 percent. The report recommended educational experiences that are more closely aligned with American Indian home and community life, in essence, a community-based education. At least since the 1960s, schools have attempted to move toward more democratic forms of governance including getting the schools' surrounding communities more involved (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

In his opening statement at the committee's first hearing, Senator Robert Kennedy expressed that the statistics on Indian education were evidence of the government's failure (Prucha, 2000). In Report No. 91-501, Senator Kennedy illuminated that the statistics on Indian education should be considered a national disgrace and called for a system of education that no longer presumes that cultural differences mean cultural inferiority (Prucha, 2000).

The report called for more attention and sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity.

Indian Education Act of 1972

The efforts of the Kennedy Subcommittee resulted in the passing of the Indian Education Act of 1972 (U.S. Department of Interior, 1974) in response to the harsh criticisms of the Kennedy Report. Congress passed the Indian Education Act

on June 23, 1972. Until 1972, there had been no sound Indian education policy, which also was supported by a strong legislative program (Noley, 1983). The Indian Education Act was the first truly comprehensive piece of American Indian oriented legislation passed by the United States Congress in the twentieth century (Noley, 1983). The Act served as affirmation of the special educational needs of Indian students in the United States. Congress declared that it is the policy of the U.S. to provide financial assistance to meet these "special educational needs" through various means, including the following:

1. Planning and testing pilot programs that are specifically designed to improve educational opportunities for Indian children,
2. Preparing individuals to serve Indian children as teachers (and as other educational personnel), and
3. Improving the qualifications of persons already serving Indian children as teachers and other educational personnel through seminars, symposia, workshops, conferences, etc. (U.S. Department of Interior, 1974).

The Indian Education Act of 1972 also led to the establishment of a National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) and an Office of Indian Education within the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). In fact, another important provision of the Indian Education Act of 1972 solidified the need to include the voice of American Indian parents in school activities affecting their children. In 1975 Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education

Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638) to increase American Indian control over educational activities of their children (Reyner & Eder, 2004).

Educational policies that were assimilative in nature have been replaced by some policies (e.g. Bilingual Education Act, 1968; Indian Education Act, 1972; Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act, 1975) that encourage more American Indian control and the meaningful incorporation of indigenous languages and cultural knowledge into school curricula (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1998).

Historical context serves to promote understanding and acknowledgement of the historical record of cultural issues that exist in public schools today. The uniqueness of individual tribal and community situations notwithstanding, all indigenous peoples in the United States share a history as the targets of federal policies aimed at eradicating their languages and lifeways (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1998). As the next section focuses on investigating contemporary American Indian educational issues, since the Indian Education Act of 1972, this historical context frames how today's issues are grounded in past philosophies of educating American Indians. Although this historical background only provides a glimpse into the history of American Indian education this information is useful in understanding the current state.

Contemporary Educational Issues

Cultural Hegemony as a Framework

Cultural Hegemony is the framework utilized for this discussion of the dynamics of culture and power in the public school system and the purposes of this study. Hegemony is defined as, "The dominance of one individual, group, or state over others" (American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology, 2007). A dominant culture is one that is able, through economic or political power, to impose its values, language, and ways of behaving on a subordinate culture or cultures (Dictionary of Sociology, 1998). Another definition of hegemony is "a predominant influence, as of a group, region, or state, over another or others" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000). In addition, hegemony refers to a process of social control that is carried out through the moral and intellectual leadership of a dominant society over subordinate groups (Gramsci, 1971 as cited in Sleeter and McLaren, p. 332).

Cultural hegemony is a philosophic and sociological concept conceived by the Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, and within this social thought contains remarkable insights into the question of dominance and subordination in modern capitalist societies (Jackson Lears, 1985). Cultural hegemony as a theory, which was developed in the 1930s, contributed to structuralist theories of social and cultural reproduction (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). In the case of the Marxist sociology of education the result was a shift from an instrumentalist perspective (i.e. the role of capitalist ideology in using the educational system to shape consciousness in its interests) to one based on "social reproduction" whereas the educational system provided an indirect form of social control (Borgatta &

Montgomery, 2000). Research based on instrumentalist and structuralist approaches has been applied to a range of cultural activities, including the areas of law, literature, art, and sports, but education (and the mass media) figure most prominently, and can serve as ideal illustrations. Early structuralist research on education attempted to demonstrate the way in which the hidden curriculum of the school corresponded to the type of labor required by capital (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). Cultural hegemony, which is generally identified as the major dimension of this manipulation, involves the production of ways of thinking and seeing, and of excluding alternative visions and discourse (Scott & Marshall, 2005).

The theory of cultural hegemony establishes that the dominant cultural superstructure is reflective of economic processes, social class, and political power. Gramsci used the concept of cultural hegemony to address the relation between culture and power under capitalism (Jackson Lears, 1985). In some twentieth century Marxist writings the term refers particularly to the success of the dominant social class in imposing its ideology on other classes, so that it *seems* like the natural order of things (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2007).

As Jackson Lears (1985) points out, Gramsci's writings do not contain a precise definition of cultural hegemony, but offers only a characterization as:

> The spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent

> confidence), which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (p. 568)

Within the educational context, cultural hegemony involves the production of ways of thinking and knowledge deemed worthy of learning from the dominant culture's perspective and excludes the perspectives of minority cultures.

Toussaint (2001) articulates a manifestation of cultural hegemony through cultural bias on standardized tests,

> …we [as a country] continue to lose when members of white middle- and upper-class America continue to force acceptance and conformation to ideas and interpretations that contradict real life experiences. Standardized testing does have some value in assessment, but it does and will continue to fall short and even do harm if it continues to assess everyone from the perspective of the dominating ideology without taking into account varying racial, cultural, and socio-economic interpretations.

Maintenance of Cultural Hegemony in the Twenty-First Century

This section provides some examples of cultural hegemonic effects (e.g. deculturalization, cultural mismatch, perpetuation of cultural and racial stereotypes) related to American Indian children in public schools. Deculturalization is a modern term to describe educational processes that validate a "majority" culture and fails to adequately support the cultural identities of minority student groups. Spring (2001) defined the educational process of obliterating a people's culture and replacing it with a new culture as deculturalization. From the beginning, the

treatment of American Indian children in schools was primarily assimilative in nature, in order to promote Euro-American ideals and norms. The assimilation of American Indians necessitates replacement of tribal sets of beliefs and actions linked to distinct tribal groups with Western sets of beliefs and actions (Brayboy, 2005, as cited in Robbins, Colmant, Dorton, Schultz, Colmant & Ciali, 2006, p. 69). The culture clash between American Indian students, and their majority culture teachers (usually Anglo-American), has continued into the present era (Ebbott, 1985; Weeks, 1992, as cited in Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997). Students are expected to conform to existing teaching and assessment styles, which are reflective of deculturalization; cultures other than the majority culture are not taken into consideration and often are treated as barriers to educational success.

Practices rooted in deculturalization are compounded by lack of cultural understanding, or *cultural mismatch,* which describes the limited knowledge of student cultural groups and the historical and contemporary issues of those cultures (Pather, 2006). Practices grounded in deculturalization and issues that continue to be problematic because of cultural mismatch are cultivated in cultural hegemony of majority racial and ethnic groups; because existing practices seem to be a "natural" way of teaching, educators an be completely unaware that some teaching methods and materials create cultural conflict for particular student groups. When cultural mismatch is not adequately addressed it often results in school experiences that conflict with some students' cultural values and norms (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Gay, 1995; Sue, Bingham, Porche-Burke & Vasquez, 1999; Cross, 2003). The

existence of cultural mismatch and deculturalization within public schools is part of the cultural hegemonic impact as conventional school programs best serve the majority cultural group, which is reflected in academic performance data.

The limited knowledge of American Indian cultures possessed by teachers and administrators is understandable when teacher demographic data shows that an overwhelming majority of teachers come from the majority culture. Nationally, most American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students (79% of 4th grade students; 77% of 8th grade students in reading/language classes) were taught by teachers who identified themselves as White only (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). In addition, statistically, faculty of pre-service teachers also are overwhelmingly "White" (Talbert-Johnson & Tillman, 1999). Teachers are products of their own personal education, including their teacher preparation programs, many of which do not require much multicultural education. Data support that many pre-service and in-service teachers, due to limited cultural knowledge and experiences, feel ill-equipped to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005). Because of the lack of cultural knowledge and experience, it is logical that many teachers may not even recognize inadequacies in curriculum or pedagogy for culturally diverse students. A single multicultural course offered by some teacher preparation programs cover more breadth than depth. Generally this kind of course covers a small amount of content on a number of cultural groups; therefore it can be concluded that even teachers who take a multicultural course may learn very little about American Indians in both historical

and contemporary sense. Limited knowledge of cultural diversity among teachers can have negative implications for American Indian students. Gilliland (1986) identified eight sociocultural factors as potentially responsible for the poor academic achievement of Indian students:

1. Differences between native culture and school culture
2. Ignorance of native culture among school staff
3. Differences between students' and teachers' values
4. Differences in native students' learning styles
5. Poor motivation of Indian students
6. Language differences of students and teachers
7. Students' home and community problems
8. Inappropriate use of tests with Indian students

When white teachers learn little about cultural diversity through their own educational experiences the result can further complicate any cultural mismatch between teachers and their students.

Scholars describe this cultural gap between the pool of teachers and public school students as cultural/racial mismatch (Cross, 2003). Gay (1995) articulates how cultural mismatch is manifested in virtually every component of teaching:

> The fact that many pre-service teachers do not share similar ethnic, social, racial, and linguistic characteristics as their students may lead to cultural differences in the classroom which can work against educational effectiveness. These differences are evident in value orientation, behavioral

> norms and expectations, social interactions, self-presentation, communication, and cognitive processing. (p. 159)

Today, teachers continue to voice their concerns that their preparation programs do not prepare them adequately for the diversity issues they face once they begin teaching (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005). A substantial amount of evidence shows that teachers hold beliefs about students that lead to differential expectations and treatment based on race and ethnicity and social class (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001). Clearly, if schools are to better serve the needs and interests of all students, particularly students from groups that have not fared well in the U.S. educational system, then low expectations, negative stereotypes, biases and prejudices, and cultural misconceptions held by teachers must be identified, challenged, and reconstructed (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001).

Research by DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho (2005) shows that teachers blame students home lives and parental low value of education as reasons for deficient academic achievement. Another report documented the perceptions of teachers working in public schools with 25% or more American Indian student enrollment. The data demonstrate that teachers view issues outside of school, mostly home and community issues, as the most serious problems in their schools (Freeman & Fox, 2005). According to the report, *The Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians* (2005), the four most frequent issues selected by teachers in schools with significant American Indian student populations are:

> 46.9% Unpreparedness of students

41% Poverty

40.2% Lack of parental involvement

31% Student apathy

In addition, the same study of pre-service and in-service teachers indicated that an overwhelming majority (83%) of respondents disagreed with the statement, "A major reason for the pattern of low academic achievement among poor minorities is the structure and values of schools, *not the home"* (Freeman & Fox, 2005). This finding shows that teachers attribute blame for low academic achievement among minority students outside of the schools. This perception is troubling because it indicates that the culturally-related educational needs of American Indians may not yet be fully understood or acknowledged by many teachers, and for that matter; school administrators, school board members, and educational policy-makers. This perception hinders improvement efforts to address cultural mismatch and other effects of cultural hegemony.

Maintenance of Stereotypes as a Function of Cultural Hegemony

It is through the lens of cultural hegemony that the significant role and function of cultural stereotypes and social stigmas can be understood as a manipulation of cultural hegemony and the influence and power that a majority group has over the way that "other" cultural groups are widely perceived and perceive themselves. Those who generate and perpetuate stereotypes of others are usually in positions of greater power and status than those who are stereotyped (Pickering, 2007). Stereotypes not only define and place others as inferior, but also

implicitly affirm and legitimate those who stereotype in their own position and identity (Pickering, 2007).

Prevalent American Indian stereotypes have been identified as a topic of critical discussion and inquiry for many years. Many have written about the inadequacy and inaccuracy in the depictions of American Indians in children's literature (Slapin & Seale, 1989; Seale & Slapin, 2005), history textbooks (Costo and Henry, 1970; Loewen, 1995; Sanchez, 2007), and high school literature (Charles, 1989; Harwood, 1993) and have created guidelines and mechanisms for identifying stereotypes and bias (Slapin, Seale, Gonzales & Fadden, 1996; Antell, 1981; Reiten, 1995; Charles, 1986). For example, Stensland (1974) identified stereotypic groups in which specific descriptions, portrayal, and images could be classified such as; noble red man, heathen war-like savage, beautiful Indian princess, and the vanishing American. These classifications were the most prevalent in textbooks in circulation at the time of the study. In addition Stedman's work (1982) identified some related themes (e.g. character portrayals focused on the past, dichotomy of exalted characters or dishonorable characters). Charles (1986) grouped the most prominent stereotypical traits into four categories:

Table 2.1

Prominent Stereotypical Traits of American Indians Found in Textbooks

Stereotype	Description	Actions/Conduct
Noble savage	Romanticized representations: Simple, natural, child-like, naked, passive	Willing to share all possessions; unconcerned with laws, personal property or religion
Savage savage	Emotionless representations: Wild, humorless, warlike, deceptive, heathen, demonic, stoic, cruel	Murder, scalp, pillage, rape, ravish
Generic Indian	Identical representations: Indistinguishable between individuals or groups	Speakers of common "Indian" language
Living fossil	Historical representations: Fixed in a particular time, disappearing or destined for extinction	Focus is set on what American Indians *did* or *knew* or *were* like

Charles (1986)

It is important to note that some stereotypes that have been identified may not necessarily be considered derogatory. For instance, characteristics such as noble or beautiful may be deemed complimentary, however all stereotypes uphold misconceptions and gross generalizations. An example of one criteria was proposed by Reiten (1995) called the Five Great Values authenticity guideline. Reiten's guideline includes five general areas of American Indian values, but acknowledges that American Indian cultures are not uniform. The guideline is an evaluative tool to identify positive attributes in the representation of American Indian cultures and people, as opposed to a tool for scouring texts in search of stereotypes.

Consideration of Stereotypes Found in Various Types of Text

Whether subtle or overt, American Indian stereotypes continue to persevere through multiple media in public school experiences. In fact, distorted images of American Indian cultures are found in every possible medium from student textbooks and scholarly publications to the gamut of school logos, insignia, and sports imagery (Mihesuah, 1996).

It should also be noted that the issues of inadequacy and inaccuracy affect two categories of reading material. There are books that are self-selected by students in classrooms and school libraries and those that are the mandated texts. Costo and Henry (1970) acknowledge here, that textbooks should hold to a higher standard where accuracy is concerned:

> There is a difference between a book for general readership, and one accepted for classroom use. In the first case, the individual has a choice, and this choice we must protect. It is part of our freedom. The student, on the other hand, has no choice; he is compelled to study from an approved book. In this case, we have a right to insist upon truth, accuracy, and objectivity.

In recent times more authentic and accurate depictions of American Indian people in children's literature have been authored and illustrated by both American Indians and others for elementary grade levels (e.g. Yolen, Bruchac, Dorris, Santiago, Joosse, Goble), for middle grade levels (e.g. Harper, Begay, Brown), and secondary schools (e.g. Hogan, Carvell, Seale, Slapin, Silverman). Today there are more accurate American Indian children's books to select from, however it is unknown how often or the criteria utilized in public school libraries updating the availability of more accurate selections and/or discontinuing the use of outdated or biased books.

Stereotypical References in Speech

The maintenance of stereotypes through print and visual media enable stereotypical references to enter everyday speech. Stereotypical and even offensive verbal references to American Indian culture are widely tolerated. Some of these terms and phrases (e.g. powwow, rain dance, warpath, chief, squaw, sit Indian-style, maiden, guide, firewater) are so embedded in everyday American vernacular that teachers, administrators, and students have become desensitized to them. This desensitization demonstrates the seemingly notion of the *natural* order of things cited in the APA Dictionary of Psychology (2007) definition of hegemony whereas stereotypical expressions in speech are not challenged or even questioned.

For example, stereotypical references (e.g. Indian giver; on the warpath; going off the reservation; sitting Indian style; acting like wild Indians; having a powwow; bury the hatchet) are casually spoken in the school setting without disciplinary consequence. Such references continue to evoke a primitive and derogatory view of American Indians, and hinder the acceptance, respect, and regard of American Indians in modern times. Slapin and Seale (1989) articulate how American Indian stereotypes are socially accepted though various schools activities:

> Some children who go back on their promises are still called "Indian givers". "Ten Little Indians" is still a popular counting song. Children still dress as "Indians" for Halloween. Around Thanksgiving, teachers all over the United States routinely trim their bulletin boards with feathered "Indians," and girls

> and boys take part in school pageants, dressed in makeshift "headdresses" and Indian "costumes." (p. 3)

Stereotypical references to other racial or ethnic groups would likely be met with outrage.

Cultural hegemony also is exemplified through school athletic programs by the continued use of racist imagery and insignia. In Oklahoma there are 540 individual school districts which constitute 1012 elementary schools, 296 middle and junior high schools, and 468 senior high schools, totaling 1776 individual school sites (Oklahoma Office of Accountability, 2008b). According to recent data, available from the American Indian Sports Team Mascots (AISTM) webpage (2009), Oklahoma schools employ over 150 mascots bearing names such as *Indian*, *brave*, *warrior*, and *chief* which are visually depicted by generic, stereotypical caricatures. Among these kinds of school-sponsored mascots, the most blatantly offensive are names such as, “redskin” and “savage”.

As a national ranking, Oklahoma schools rank first in the use of “savage” and second in the use of the term “redskin” as school mascot names (“American Indian Sports Team Mascots webpage”, 2009). In Oklahoma, it would be difficult to shield public school students from this early exposure to American Indian stereotypes because the imagery is saturated in the “sports culture” of the state. Exposure from the sports coverage of the local media (i.e. newspaper and television) contributes to the desensitization of this imagery. Even students who do not attend a school with a stereotypical American Indian mascot may be exposed simply by

attending a school sporting event where the opposing team does. Because many schools have resisted recommendations to remove stereotypical mascots, there remains a level of acceptance towards racial stereotypes that would be socially unacceptable if directed towards other racial groups.

As pointed out by Yellowbird (1999), various scholars have written about the relationship between negative labels and oppression. Scholars concerned with the psychological effects of stereotypes assert that the manipulation of individual or group identity by a dominant group is a clear indication of oppression (Bulhan, 1985 as cited in Yellowbird, 1999). As an issue of both civil and human rights the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) gave national recognition to the issue in resolution form first in 1992, and again in 1999 at the NAACP National Convention held in August, 1999 in New York City. The resolution ("NAACP Resolutions Database", n.d.) stated:

> WHEREAS, the National NAACP is committed to caring for and affirming the gifts of all people with special regard to those oppressed or disenfranchised on the basis of race, national origin, and cultural origin; and…
>
> BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National NAACP call upon all professional sports teams and public and private schools and universities currently using such names and images to reject the use of Native Americans and all historically oppressed people and their cultural traditions, as sports

mascots and symbols and affirm their commitment to respect racial and cultural inclusion in all aspects of their institutions.

In 2005 the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives adopted a resolution calling for the retirement of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities in educational settings and other organizations. The APA resolution referred to the issue as a civil rights issue and a mental health issue. The use of American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities potentially has negative implications on the mental health and psychological behavior of American Indian people (American Psychological Association, 2005). The use of stereotypical imagery by school systems is a form of discrimination that undermines educational experiences (Connolly, 2000; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001), can lead to negative relations between groups (Coombe, 1999; Cook-Lynn, 2001; Witko, 2005), and establishes an unwelcome and often times hostile learning environment (Staurowsky, 1999; Fryberg, 2003; Fryberg & Markus, 2003). Yet many schools, including those in Oklahoma, refuse to heed these concerns and make the appropriate changes.

The previous examples of the cultural hegemonic treatment of American Indians in public schools cultivate a sense of marginalization, alienation, and isolation. As Merskin (2001) points out, stereotyping not only communicates inaccurate beliefs about American Indians to non-American Indians, but also to American Indians, themselves. Negative stereotypes can also impact students in other ways. For example, a phenomenon called stereotype threat describes when

one who is a potential target of negative stereotypes experiences hardship because they must cope with the possibility of being viewed (or treated) differently, or of doing something that would confirm the stereotype (Steele & Aronson, 1998). Steele and Aronson (1998) show that *stereotype threat* has a negative impact on academic performance among successful students and creates apprehension, anxiety, and self-doubt.

The internalization of negative stereotypes is apparent when American Indian children engage in negative self-labeling (e.g. rez Indian; big Indian; 'skin) or the term "Indian" is used as a negative descriptor (i.e. broken, inadequate, tarnished, unwanted) of something (e.g. Indian car, Indian dog). If, during the transition of adolescence, American Indians internalize negative stereotypes, this misinformation can have a lifelong impact on perceptions of self and others (Merskin, 2001). Self-depreciation is one characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from the internalization of the opinion that the oppressors hold of them (Freire, 1993). The fact that most [American] Indigenous people today may not even comprehend the magnitude of how they have been the target of disintegrative forces does not obviate the underlying injustice (Porter, 1999). Hall (1986) refers to the condition where one who cannot see out of the box (i.e. individuals are focused on their immediate circumstances, not on the fundamental sources of (their) oppression) as the Hegelian-Gramsci hegemonic limited state of focus. Constant exposure to negative messages and imagery causes an identity crisis in American Indians that is unlike any other group. As noted by Mihesuah (1996) there's no

other ethnic group in the United States that has endured greater and more varied distortions of its cultural identity than American Indians.

Other Implications

The research of Cole et al. (2001) shows that elementary school-age childrens' self-concept and self-perception, which are highly positive and optimistic upon entry into elementary school, experience a decline soon after. Between kindergarten and third grade (ages 5-8) children undergo significant cognitive and social changes (Cole et al., 2001). Identity formation and social functioning within the mainstream cultural in public schools at about grade four can result in low self-image for American Indian children as they are threatened with loss of their home culture (Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997).

Children are perhaps the most important recipients of stereotypes for it is during childhood that difference is first learned (Merskin, 2001). While exposure to negative stereotypes over time is potentially psychologically harmful to the healthy development of self-esteem and self-concept among American Indian. The tolerated presence of stereotypes also affects on their mainstream peers by sending a message of acceptability.

According to Moshman (1999) an identity is, at least in part, an explicit theory of oneself as a person. Psychologists have long recognized that even young children have highly structured knowledge, including structured knowledge about themselves (Moshman, 1999). From early childhood children discover their own distinctions and those of others. They also begin to establish characteristic

behaviors that are often times grounded in a set of values and ideas from the family, society, and cultural influences and disposition. Moshman (1999) points out in his discussion of Erikson's Theory of Personality Development that identity formation is a challenging process even under the best circumstances; problems in early development may render it even more difficult and decrease the likelihood of positive outcomes. Children who are not from American Indian cultures and have experienced repeated exposure to negative stereotypes may develop bias and prejudice early in life as a result.

The Power and Influence of School Curriculum

Schools have a significant amount of power and influence over students as they learn to comply with the pressures of institutional conformity (Jackson, 1990). The procedural expectations of the institution (i.e. what teachers consider as good behavior, such as neatness, promptness, listening, obedience) that Jackson (1990) refers to are mastered by some students, but not by all. Most education for American Indian children is still characterized by a curriculum presented from a purely Western (i.e. European) perspective that ignores the cultures and values of American Indians (Van Hamme, 1995).

Public school students are exposed to a rapid socialization process and are expected to conform to school norms. Although there are always exceptions in individual children, the transition into the school setting introduces a variety of new social interactions and experiences with children of different backgrounds. As Coggins, Williams, and Radin (1997) assert:

> As mainstream children enter the local public school system they move into a setting which is generally compatible with their family culture, styles of learning, and values. American Indian children often enter a system, which is culturally alien to them.

Hegemonic Effects on School Climate

As all of these curricular and co-curricular issues come into view, a broader perspective of the character of schools is gained by considering the overall school climate. School principals, as leaders of their schools, prioritize the mission, vision, and goals for their schools and therefore are especially influential in shaping the school climate. All of the issues discussed thus far (i.e. maintenance of stereotypes, cultural mismatch, deculturalization, curriculum bias) not only affect classroom activities, but the overall school climate which includes the organization of the school and all school-sanctioned activities.

According to the Center for Social and Emotional Education (as cited in Cohen, 2006) school climate is complex and there is not a single consensus of the definition of school climate, however this description is provided:

> School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

Although there is not one commonly accepted definition for school climate, the vast

majority of researchers and scholars suggest that school climate, essentially, reflects the *subjective* experience in school (Cohen, 2006).

The school climate is reflective of the leadership at the district and state levels, however building-level administrators and faculty have the most significant impact on school climate. For example, many decisions made in staff and committee meetings have a direct impact on the school climate. The building-level leadership also guides the focus of continuing education opportunities and professional development for faculty. The school climate not only influences processes and interactions during instructional time, but also very importantly those that take place outside of the classroom, but within the context of school. This includes school-wide and school-sponsored activities, holiday and special observances, assemblies, and extracurricular activities (e.g. student government, athletic events, after-school programs, field trips, and student clubs). Because the nature of school climate is subjective, it reflects the values and knowledge deemed worthy by those in authoritative school roles, whom more often than not, represent the majority culture. This influence on the school climate is another example of how cultural hegemony exists through the formal and informal transmission of norms, values, and organizational structures.

A comprehensive report was published in 2005 through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) entitled, *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians*, which examined the current conditions and recent trends of schools serving American Indian student populations using statistical measures

(Freeman & Fox, 2005). Principals in schools with significant American Indian student populations rated the three most important goals for their students from eight possible selections. In public schools (not operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs) with an American Indian student enrollment of twenty five percent or more only 13.1 percent of principals rated "Multicultural Awareness" among three important goals for students in their schools. *Multicultural Awareness* as one of eight possible selections ranked seventh. "Basic literacy skills" was the most frequently selected response at 84% (Freeman & Fox, 2005). The attainment of basic literacy skills is essential for all students; however the data show that *multicultural awareness* is not among high priorities for principals. Despite recommendations for schools to show support of children's cultural identities, some maintain that the role of public schools is a narrow one, based solely on academics with little focus on children's lives outside of school:

> No one believes that parents should be shoved aside, or that the "intellectual and social climate of the home" should be disparaged. The values of the home can be maintained- at home, and in afterschool programs. But the public schools have a different role: connecting students to the world of academic accomplishment, putting them on the ladder of economic opportunity, and introducing them to the history, culture, and institutions of the nation in which they live. (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

This opinion reflects the consideration of a student's home culture as an aspect of children that is a liability to academic success. In fact, the annual report by the

National Advisory Council on Indian Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2005) stated, "American Indian students are more likely to thrive in environments that support their cultural identities while introducing different ideas" (p.3).

Martin (2002) discusses *cultural abundance* and *curriculum selection, w*hereas teachers feel overwhelmed and often conflicted about the merits of one subject versus another. These issues may also interfere with the support and inclusion of children's cultures in the curriculum. The public school curriculum changes over time, in fact it is under constant revision (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2003). Also noted by Ornstein and Hunkins (2003) when studying the history of curriculum in America, the decision of what to teach has always been contested. However the minimal teaching of American Indian topics in school curricula is deeply rooted in the historical conflicting interests of the majority culture and American Indian people. One scholar wrote of the general perception of American Indian people:

> The view of Indians as hostile savages who captured white ladies and tortured them, obstructed the westward movement of peaceable white settlers, and engaged in bloodthirsty uprisings in which they glory in the massacre of innocent colonists and pioneers is dear to the hearts of producers of bad films and even worse television. However, it is a view that is most deeply embedded in the American unconscious (Allen, 1986 as cited in Martin, 2002).

State curricular objectives typically include statements for the concern of democracy and equity, however a state curriculum that includes marginal teaching of American

Indian topics denotes and contributes to Eurocentric cultural hegemony in American society- as a whole. As issues in curricula, teacher demographics and cultural competence, and the overall school climate have been discussed, this chapter will move towards concepts that address these cultural diversity issues.

Promising Approaches to Addressing Cultural Issues

Comprehensive Multicultural Education

Political action was required to put the need for multicultural education on the agenda of public education. As an extension of the integrationist thrust of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the purpose of multicultural education was to provide equality of opportunity in the existing economic system by reducing racial and cultural prejudice (Spring, 2001). The concept of Multicultural Education has been the primary response to the concerns and issues raised during the civil rights era by advocates of marginalized, underrepresented groups. Further, Van Hamme (1995) asserts that:

> the emphasis on multicultural education today is a result of the failure of the traditional American school system to promote academic achievement in students whose cultural backgrounds are different from that that of the dominant orientation. (p.3)

For example, *Puerto Rican Children in Mainland Schools* was published in 1968 by Cordasco and Bucchioni (Eds.) to educate teachers about the issues of acculturation, cultural mismatch, and the social and cultural assimilation faced in public schools by Puerto Rican children and those from other minority and emigrant

groups. The Conference on Education and Teacher Education for Cultural Pluralism was held in Chicago on May 12-14, 1971 to change the view of the cultural diversity, that characterizes American society, as a major asset as opposed to its view as a problem or threat among educators and community members (Rivlin & Fraser, 1973). During this era many texts were published on the discussion of cultural pluralism and related topics. In 1973, Stent, Hazard, and Rivlin published *Cultural Pluralism in Education: A mandate for change*, which urged school communities to recognize and accept cultural diversity as a positive feature of our educational system.

Multicultural Education is a broad term with multiple interpretations and applications. Multicultural education is defined by Spring (2001) as the effort to teach children about a variety of cultures for maintaining social harmony and integrating immigrant groups into American society. Post-secondary multicultural education within teacher education colleges is coursework designed to teach cultural diversity and related classroom issues for pre-service teachers. Within K-12 schools, Nieto (1992) defines multicultural education as a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students.

There are other related terms, as well. Bicultural education refers to the incorporation of teaching minority children about their cultural background and the culture of white society (Spring, 2001). Ethnocentric education focuses on instruction in a particular culture in an attempt to improve educational achievement, empower students, and maintain cultural traditions (Spring, 2001).

In the school context multicultural education can be applied on the classroom level, or on the broader school-wide level. Several approaches could contribute to multiculturalism in the overall school climate. For example increasing community involvement, recruiting culturally diverse administrators and student government, and implementing appropriate multicultural assembly programs would promote a feeling of purpose among all students (Boynton and George, 1992). The multicultural school climate describes a school climate where multicultural education is a school-wide comprehensive approach. Because a multicultural school climate promotes a feeling of purpose among culturally-diverse students, it helps reduce the effects of cultural hegemony. As a result feelings of exclusion, disconnection, and marginalization are reduced among students who are members of underrepresented cultural groups.

Banks (1994) introduced four levels of multicultural education application in curricular decisions.

Table 2.2

Four Levels of Multicultural Education Application to Curriculum

Level	Description
Level One	The Contributions Approach- Focus is on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements
Level Two	The Additive Approach- Focus on selected content and concepts which are added to the curriculumwithout changing its structure
Level Three	The Transformation Approach- Existing curriculum is structurally changed to enable students to consider and think critically about content from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups

Level Four	The Social Action Approach- Extends the transformation approach to enable students to take personal, social, and civic actions related to the concepts and issues they have studied

Banks (1994)

Banks (1994) defined the most effective and highest level of multicultural education utilized by educators as the Social Action Approach, which incorporates the Transformation Approach and extends beyond critical thinking to the pursuit of projects and activities that take personal, social, and civic actions related to the concepts, problems, and issues under study. Multiculturalism compels educators to recognize the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is transmitted in schools (Hooks, 1994).

To the extent that school achievement is tied to healthy self-esteem, multicultural literature [and curricular experiences] can have a beneficial effect on the performance of children who have historically been denied realistic images of themselves and their families and community (Bishop, 1997). The work of Hoge and Renzulli (1991) underscores the value of multicultural education as a means of fostering self-understanding and self-appreciation, which cultivates personal development and growth in students. Awareness and acceptance of all cultures helps students in their self-esteem [development] in the hopes of helping them achieve school and life success (Banks, 1994; Tavanaiepour, 2001). Children, who are highly impressionable, can benefit from multicultural education because it helps them to recognize and think critically about stereotypes and misconceptions about other cultures and their own.

The benefits of multicultural education are for all children, not only for those who represent the cultural minorities. Bishop (1997) asserts that all students need to learn how to recognize, respect, and accept the diversity that defines our society in order to meet the challenges of democratic pluralism. As noted by Hooks (1994) it is crucial that "whiteness" is studied and the affirmation of multiculturalism and an unbiased inclusive perspective can and should be present whether or not people of color are present.

Comprehensive multicultural education can provide interactive learning opportunities that permeate all school functions. Multiculturalism can be a lens in which school leaders make high-impact decisions that shape the overall school.

Authentic Pedagogy

With the accountability demands increasing in the political realm of public education and the venture of improving education by implementing effective practices has emerged "Authentic Pedagogy". Awareness of Authentic Pedagogy is growing among educators as a means to help meet the diverse academic needs of individual classrooms. For example, "Authentic Pedagogy" is one of the guiding principals of the IDEALS Framework outlined by O'Hair, McLaughlin, and Reitzug (2000) as a framework for attaining democratic educational goals.

The term "authentic" has been used to describe many educational processes (e.g. authentic assessment; authentic achievement), and some used interchangeably (e.g. authentic pedagogy; authentic teaching; authentic instruction). In the precise

definition of authentic achievement [or learning] Newmann and Wehlage (1993) rely on three criteria:

1. Students construct meaning and produce knowledge
2. Students use disciplined inquiry to construct meaning
3. Students aim their work toward production of discourse, products, and performances that have value or meaning beyond success in school

Newmann, Bryk, and Nagaoka (2001) summarize the distinct characteristics of *authentic intellectual work* as, "construction of knowledge, through the use of disciplined inquiry, to produce discourse, products, or performances that have **value beyond school**" (p.14). While this definition of authentic achievement demands that all three of these standards be met, this does not mean that all instruction, including assessment activities must always fulfill all three standards (Newmann, Marks, and Gamoran, 1995). To define authentic pedagogy then, one can utilize these criteria and conclude that authentic pedagogy would include the implementation and adaptation of instructional practice and curriculum that creates a learning environment that provides experiences that help students to meet the criteria of authentic achievement. Authentic achievement is the product and the objective of authentic pedagogy.

Research has shown that disadvantaged students in poor schools can engage in a*uthentic intellectual work* and when its emphasized students demonstrate complex intellectual performance (Knapp, Shields, and Turnbull, 1992; D'Agostino, 1996; Lee, Smith, and Newmann, 2001), as cited in Newmann, Bryk, and Nagaoka

(2001) and make gains on standardized tests (Newmann, Lopez, and Bryk, 1998; Newmann, Bryk, and Nagaoka (2001).

Although, authentic pedagogy can include cooperative learning, student-lead activities, and service learning projects it is much more than that. As pointed out by Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1995) authentic achievement is rooted in a primary concern for high standards of intellectual quality. I utilize the term "authentic pedagogy" in reference to teachers' instructional practices, which includes assessment practices that are in accordance to the definition and work of Newmann, Wehlage, and others.

Authentic Pedagogy is grounded in theory on student engagement that underscores that learning experiences are most optimized when instruction is authentic, challenging, requires skill, and promotes student autonomy (Yair, 2000). Authentic learning also reflects constructivist ideas, but it also differs from constructivism. Under constructivism, the negotiation and assimilation of new information is heavily influenced by the learner's prior knowledge, and by values, expectations, rewards, and sanctions that shape the learning environment (Newmann, Marks, and Gamoran, 1995). The constructivist perspective and the authentic learning perspective both share the "value beyond school" concept. However the criterion of disciplined inquiry absent in constructivism is where authentic learning theory and constructivism diverge. Authentic learning requires a learner to demonstrate in-depth understanding using substantial knowledge from an

authoritative field, whereas constructivism does not require that knowledge conforms to knowledge considered authoritative by others.

Authentic pedagogy is an approach that has been successfully utilized in schools with students of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Indications of the third criterion, *Value Beyond School*, are intellectual accomplishments have utilitarian, aesthetic, or personal value (Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001).

Cultural Responsiveness

Today's foremost challenge in education is to create learning environments that maintain the cultural integrity of every child while enhancing their educational success (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). In the discussion of the future of today's classrooms and strategic changes in the curricula, Roettger (1992) underscores that schools must accommodate themselves to the needs of new student populations, rather than expecting students and their families to mold themselves to the expectations of the schools. Such learning environments have been referred to as culturally harmonious, culturally synchronic, culturally congruent, and other terms. Concepts have emerged grounded in sociocultural theory that establishes that the "cultural context" of learning and the role of culture both play a central role in human development (Vygotsky, 1978; Cole, 1996).

If a teacher is to support a child's culture, it is necessary that there be an understanding of the world in which the child actually lives (Van Hamme, 1995). Understanding of cultural differences is an initial step in the process of making

adaptations to teaching methods and curriculum in order to address cultural hegemony. Cultural responsiveness, on the part of teachers, implies then a sense of readiness and willingness to adapt practices in order to better meet the culturally-related academic needs of students.

Culturally Relevant Curriculum

Much research describes the practices that address cultural needs of students. Au and Jordan (1981) as cited in Ladson-Billings (1995) used the term "culturally appropriate pedagogy" to describe the practices of teachers in a Hawaiian school who incorporated aspects of students' cultural backgrounds into their reading instruction. Later, Jordan (1985) and Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp (1987) as cited by Ladson-Billings (1995) began using the term "culturally compatible" to explain the success of classroom teachers with Hawaiian students. The term "culturally responsive" was used by Cazden and Leggett (1981) and Erickson and Mohatt (1982) as cited in Ladson-Billings (1995) to describe similar language interactions of teachers with linguistically diverse and American Indian students. Studies of cultural appropriateness, congruence, or compatibility have been conducted within small-scale American Indian communities, however an earlier generation of work considered cultural mismatch between African Americans and the schools in larger, urban settings (Labov, 1969; Gay & Abrahamson, 1972; Piestrup, 1973 as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995). In addition, the demand for cultural relevancy for American Indian students has also been expressed in literature since the 1970s:

> In an effort to describe our national effort to effect teacher training programs for cross-cultural education, I feel it is appropriate to express concepts and principles in terms of the American Indian cultures that have survived systematic approaches designed to exterminate them… teachers who have been trained to teach Indian students are beginning to supplement their school curriculum with relevant information on local ethnic groups as well as to utilize available resources from local ethnic communities (Sekaquaptewa, 1973, p. 36).

Jones, Pang, and Rodriguez (2001) define "culturally relevant pedagogy" as instruction that incorporates interactional patterns, instructional methods, and social contexts for learning that are culturally compatible with students' primary cultures. The concept of cultural relevance also applies to curriculum. As stated by Jones, Pang, and Rodriguez (2001) "at its most powerful, culturally relevant teaching provides cultural and historical examples from the students' own cultural and ethnic groups." The concepts described in these studies address cultural hegemony by tailoring both instructional practices and subject matter to better fit the linguistic, cultural, and communicative characteristics of students.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy incorporates notions of hegemony in order to demystify the asymmetrical power relations and social arrangement that sustain the dominant culture (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). A central tenet of critical pedagogy maintains that the classroom, curricular, school structures teachers enter are not neutral sites

waiting to be shaped by educational professionals (Kincheloe, 2008). Every dimension of schooling and every form of educational practice are politically influenced and shaped by history and other often invisible forces; they can operate in the name of democracy and still be oppressive (Kincheloe, 2008).

Cultural hegemony refers to the dominance of one "mainstream" culture over other cultural groups. The dominance of a single culture (cultural hegemony) serves to work against concepts that are based on the recognition, inclusiveness, validation, and maintenance of multiple cultures (e.g. multiculturalism; cultural pluralism). In the realm of education, cultural hegemony permeates all aspects of school including structure, governance, school-wide events, and curricular [and non-curricular] activities; while critical pedagogy demands that both teacher and students challenge these existing structures. Finally, in order to examine teachers' perspectives and practices related to these issues, the case study method was chosen for this study and will be discussed further. A qualitative case study was the chosen methodology for this study because interest in insight, discovery, and interpretation is sought rather than hypothesis testing (Merriam, 1998). Case study as the methodology will be thoroughly outlined in Chapter Three.

Chapter Summary

The American public school system is a product reflective of its history. For much of its history, the cultures of American Indians have been viewed as obstructing the educational process (Dale, 1949; Ebott, 1985; Josephy, 1989;

Hodgkinson, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990; Weeks, 1992, as cited in Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997). As Van Hamme (1995) points out, "Early efforts by Europeans to educate American Indians involved blatant attempts at enforced assimilation and destruction of Indian cultures" (p. 1). Van Hamme (1995) goes on to state that much of the history of American Indian education to this day has been characterized 'in increasingly subtle ways by the same purpose" (p. 1). Arguably, educational opportunities have improved over time for American Indians, however, contemporary cultural hegemony manifests in public school settings in more subtle ways (e.g. marginalization of minority cultural groups; Eurocentric school programs; perpetuation of American Indian stereotypes). For example, research by Robbins et al. (2006) on Indian boarding school practices showed that participants believe that conditions have improved compared to 25 years ago, however the study suggested more improvement is needed in regards to the "introjection of foreign values and beliefs which are directly connected to colonization" (p. 85). The reality is that many American Indian children experience difficult issues in public schools stemming from their "minority" cultural status and consequentially, many of them are failing. The academic performance of historically disadvantaged minority student groups, impacted by cultural hegemonic effects, suffers as a result. This relationship is amplified by data showing the academic achievement gap between children from the majority culture and those from marginalized cultural groups.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an overview of case study research followed by the research question and rational for this research design as appropriate for the

purposes of this particular study. Six sequential stages that were followed in the course of this case study are outlined, along with the procedures within each stage.

Overview of Case Study

As Stake (1991) points out, it is difficult to precisely define *cases* or *case studies* because practices already exist in many different disciplines and conflicting precedents exist for these labels. Merriam (1988) defines qualitative case study research as "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27). The definition of a case study as defined by Jensen and Rodgers (2001) is a study in which the focus is a single entity (e.g. an organization, institution, department, agency, person) and the underlying sample size or unit of analysis is always equal to one.

The terms *case*, *unit of analysis*, and *unit of study* are used interchangeably. Stake (1995) asserts that abstract processes or relationships (e.g. motivation) are less commonly considered a case because they lack the specificity and the boundedness to qualify as a case. A case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing (Stake, 1995). Soy (1997) defines a case as the object of a case study and explains that it is most often a program, an entity, a person, or a group of people. One useful way of thinking about this approach to inquiry is to compare the distinction between a case study and a variable study. In a case study the *case* is the focus of the study, not the variables (Schwandt, 2001). Although case study research is not sampling research it is applied research in which the researcher is immersed in the bounded case in order to maximize understanding about participant interactions during an allotted

time. Generally, case study research enables observation of 'interaction' between the individuals or groups within the bounded case (Tellis, 1997b). This allows a multi-faceted view of the case, taking into consideration the perspectives of and interaction between participants, and groups of participants in the bounded study.

Case Study Types

Case study types have been identified by researchers in the field. Yin (1993) identified the exploratory, explanatory (causal), and descriptive types, in which either three can be single or multiple case studies. Stake (1995) identified three other categories of case study research; intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The intrinsic case study is a case study in which the researcher has a personal stake or intrinsic interest in the case. The intrinsic case study is not selected for its value of potentially providing information about other cases or a general problem, but may be undertaken as an employment obligation or because study of a particular case is beneficial to the researcher. The instrumental case study involves seeking understanding of phenomenon. The case study that is conducted to accomplish something other than understanding a particular case may be called instrumental case study research (Stake, 1995). It is important to note that even instrumental case study research is not considered sampling research. Even in instrumental case studies where the case is selected by the researcher to maximize what can be learned from that case, the first obligation is still to understand that particular case (Stake, 1995). Finally, collective case study research is the study of multiple cases. It is important to note that all types of case studies, not only the collective case study,

can involve single, or multiple cases, or case-within cases. The distinctions between case study types are not provided for their usefulness in sorting or categorizing because some will not fit precisely into one type (Stake, 1995).

Triangulation in Case Study Research

Many well-known case study researchers such as Robert E. Stake, Helen Simons, and Sharan B. Merriam have written about case study research and have suggested techniques for the organization and conduct of successful case study research. Since researchers make inferences from data, triangulation provides a way to check the integrity of the inferences made. Denzin (1984, as cited by Tellis, 1997b) identified four types of triangulation. Data source triangulation occurs when the researcher looks for the data to remain the same in different contexts. Investigator triangulation is when several investigators examine the same phenomenon. Theory triangulation takes place when investigators with different viewpoints interpret the same results. Methodological triangulation occurs when one approach is followed by another, to increase confidence in the interpretation.

As required in all ethical case study research, consideration and proper protocol must be followed to address trustworthiness of data. In case study research triangulation is generally achieved with the use of multiple sources of evidence and/or multiple means of analysis. The strategy of triangulation is wedded to the assumption that data must be viewed from different vantage points and aggregated to reveal meaning and truth (Schwandt, 2001). Case study researchers generally

consider case study as a triangulated research method based on the employment of different sources of data and sometimes through multiple methods of analysis.

Advocates and critics of case study research continue to argue whether triangulation is appropriate for case study research that is qualitative-oriented because triangulation is coupled with the assumption of "meaning realism". Stake and others who have vast experience in the case study method have developed vigorous procedures that when followed are as well-developed and tested as any in the scientific field (Tellis, 1997b). Mathison (1988, as cited by Merriam, 1989) suggested a shift of focus on triangulation as a "technological solution" to relying on a "holistic understanding" of the [case] to construct "plausible explanations about the phenomena under study" (p. 204).

Criticisms of the Case Study Method

The issue of generalization is at the core of criticism on case study research. Critics claim that the findings of case studies are not widely generalizable. Critics of the case study method, as pointed out by Soy (1997) believe that case study research does not offer sufficient grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Others contend that the researcher's intense exposure to the case biases the findings, while others dismiss case study as only useful as an exploratory tool. Yin (1984) refuted this criticism and provided an explanation that addressed how terminology in the quantitative research field was being inappropriately applied to describe case study concepts and processes. Researchers continue to employ the

case study method in carefully-planned studies of real-life issues, problems, and situations. As Stake (1995) asserts:

> …the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. Case study researchers take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. We do not choose case study designs to optimize production of generalizations. More traditional comparative and correlational studies do this better, but valid modification of generalization can occur in case study.

There also is disagreement as to whether the case is an empirical unit (i.e. existing and yet to be discovered) or a theoretical construct that serves the interest of the researcher (Schwandt, 2001). Stake (1995) acknowledges that a case can be selected because of its potential to be useful in furthering understanding of a particular problem, issue, or concept (i.e. instrumental case study). He also reiterates the foremost concern of all case study research is to generate knowledge of the particular and to discern and pursue understanding of issues intrinsic to the case (Stake, 1995, as cited by Schwandt, 2001).

Research Question and Case Study as the Appropriate Method

Peshkin (1997) asserts that in order for education to be more useful to American Indian students it involves pedagogical decisions relating to the nature and content of instruction. Case study is an appropriate choice of research method for exploring such phenomena as pedagogical decision-making because it allows

exploration within a school context. Case study as a research method is most appropriate when an in-depth, comprehensive view of a bounded unit is sought by utilizing multiple data sources including qualitative data and in some cases quantitative data (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). The case study method will help answer the research question, "How do educators address the culturally related academic needs of American Indian students in the Elva John Middle School?" In this qualitative case study, the bounded unit under study is the Elva John Middle School. In particular, five educators within this school consented to personal interviews, observations, and review of relevant school documents (e.g. curricular resources). Case study procedures make a comprehensive view possible, by acquiring multiple data sets and by having direct and close contact to the participants who interact within the bounded unit (i.e. observing participants within the context of their work space). Case study knowledge differs from other research knowledge as it is more concrete, contextual, developed by reader interpretation, and based more on references determined by the reader (Stake, 1981 as cited by Merriam, 1998). A strong point of case study research is its usefulness when insight, discovery and interpretation are sought rather than hypothesis testing (Merriam, 1998). Capturing the phenomenon of *how* teachers and the school administrator addressed cultural issues within the context of their school could most thoroughly be identified through the closeness to the participants that case study research makes possible. Interview data revealed not only how, but also provided insight into *why* (i.e. the motivations, desires, values, intent) the participants felt that

concerted efforts needed to be made to adapt their methods of instruction and leadership.

This research aims to gain understanding of issues within the actual environment of a school that serves American Indian students. Characteristics of the case that are both common and unique are disclosed, not for the sake of generalizing conditions or outcomes to other schools, but to offer in-depth insight into perspective and practice.

Sequential Stages of the Elva John Middle School (EJMS) Case Study

The procedures of this case study research was organized into stages according to the recommendations of case study experts, Stake and others:

1. Focus Stage: Research question and framework was defined
2. Design Stage: Selected a case and determined data collection and analysis
3. Preparation Stage: Necessary steps were taken to prepare for data collection
4. Data Collection Stage: Collected data at the site
5. Analysis and Interpretation Stage: Coded and interpreted the data
6. Report Stage: Prepared the case study report

The Focus Stage

The Focus Stage encompassed initial steps in this case study research. A literature review was conducted in formulating the conceptual framework. The framework draws upon the "concepts, terms, definitions, models, and theories of the literature base and disciplinary orientation" (Merriam, 1989, p. 46). In turn the conceptual framework helped refine the guiding research question.

The focus stage of this case study included an extensive review of literature that explored the following:

1. Historical documents related to the experiences of American Indians in the U.S. public school system
2. Current educational status and trends of American Indian public school students
3. Concepts related to cultural hegemony
4. Promising theoretical concepts and approaches to address cultural issues in schools
5. Case study methodology

The research focus was further refined by the formulating questions about the issues, problems, or situation under investigation. Unresolved questions helped form the basis of the study's focus and purpose. As Stake (1995) suggests perhaps the most difficult task of the researcher is to design good research questions that will direct the study enough, but not too much. The thoughtfully defined research questions shaped from the literature review at the inception of the study guide the selection of data sources, data collection methods, and analysis. As pointed out by Soy (1997) the process of referring back to the research questions and study purpose is continuous throughout the study to ensure that the study purpose is being satisfied and the research questions are answered. The purpose of the study was a continuous

consideration throughout the study, however particular attention must be paid early on to consider the potential audience for the final report (Soy, 1997).

The review of literature sharpened the focus of this study and helped to describe what educational issues exist for marginalized groups of students, and specifically American Indian students. Initial queries helped formulate the research question, "How do educators address culturally related academic needs of American Indian students?"

The Design Stage

Ideally, as the transition from focus to design stage takes place, a clear research emphasis emerges and the research questions become more refined. Essentially, the design stage involved decisions about the study prior to actual data collection. The parameters or boundaries of the case helped narrow potential sources of data. The criteria of the case, central to the phenomena under study, were determined by the research focus and questions. In this case study, the Elva John Middle School (ELMS) is a single bounded case as particular and specific school practices, related to teaching and leadership were under observation. The selection of the case is intricately connected to historical, social, political, and personal issues and adds complexity to the study and established a basis for a more refined guiding research question. The process of "case selection" required defining the boundaries of the specific case. During this process it was important to determine how the case unit is typical and how it is unique.

During the process of case selection, assistance was sought from the K20 **for Educational & Community Renewal** Center (K20 Center) at the University of Oklahoma. The K20 Center is an interdisciplinary research and development center focused on creating and sustaining interactive learning communities through school, university, industry, community organization, and governmental agency partnerships. These partnerships are based upon the IDEALS Framework: Inquiry, Discourse, Equity, Authenticity, Leadership, and Service, and are grounded in the knowledge base on school-university-community partnerships (K20 Website, 2008). The K20 Center connects the University of Oklahoma and over 500 schools and industry partners to facilitate improvements in learning at all levels of academics. The K20 Center, an interdisciplinary research and development center offers many grant opportunities to schools. Among them, the OK-ACTS program is intended to develop teachers, principals, and superintendents to lead systemic change and create 21st century interactive *professional learning communities* using the IDEALS Framework. School data available through the K20 Center was helpful in identifying a potential case site.

Creating the criteria for the case and the actual case selection were initial steps in the design phase. Three criteria were established in the selection of the case. The first criterion was that the school must be an elementary or middle level public school. In contrast to high school students, elementary and middle school students have less choice and liberty while secondary students self-select their coursework and co-curricular activities. Elementary and middle school students

have little choice in choosing classes and the extracurricular activities available are often pre-determined by the school leadership. Circumstances unique to secondary schools are not within the scope of this study.

The second criterion is that the school must have a significant American Indian student population. *Significant* has been used to describe a student population that comprises 20 to 25% of a total school population according to various data sources. For example, the National Core of Education Statistics (NCES) refers to a school where American Indians/Alaska Natives account for 25% or more of the total student population as *high-density* schools.

Since American Indian students comprise roughly twenty percent of the state's public school population, the minimum criterion of 20% was also applied in the criterion. Demographic data were collected from the Oklahoma Department of Education and the National Core of Education Statistics to ensure that the case met this criterion.

The third criterion was established with the assistance of the K20 Center by attempting to identify a school in which the school leadership might be more deeply concerned with principles of equity and authenticity, which are highly relevant in the discourse on American Indian educational issues. This idea was born from the notion that conducting a study in a school under such leadership might yield more promising findings related to the implementation of recommended practices and strategies identified in the literature.

In contrast to the autonomy of the "conventional" school model, a *learning community* encourages all community members to learn and differing voices are welcomed and summoned, yielding a more fertile ground for enhanced practices for increased student performance (Cate, 2004, p. 22). Several related terms (e.g. learning community; democratic learning community) have been utilized to describe similar concepts or models. Astuto and colleagues (1993) label *the professional community of learners,* one in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. O'Hair, McLaughlin, and Reitzug (2000) introduced the IDEALS Framework which describes practices of *democratic* learning communities and is implemented through programs initiated by the K20 Center. The IDEALS Framework identifies six democratic practices that help create a professional learning community: inquiry, discourse, equity, authenticity in teaching and learning, [shared] leadership, and service. The *authenticity in teaching and learning* component of the IDEALS Framework is of particular interest to this study because *authenticity* as a shared best practice can be easily blended with the *cultural relevance* which was a key concept identified in the literature review in terms of effective strategies for serving culturally-diverse students. It is with assistance provided through the K20 Center that a school was selected for this study.

Any method of data gathering can be used in case studies, although certain techniques are used more commonly (Merriam, 1989); some common data sources for qualitative case studies are interviews, observations, document review, and

physical artifacts. Other potential data sources might be focus groups, surveys, or content/textual analysis data.

This research design included data from observations, personal interviews, school documents and existing demographic and academic data. The field observations were conducted over the first 6-8 weeks of the study. The interviews and document data were collected during the first 6-8 week period of the study, but continued for an extended period of 10 weeks (total of 16-18 weeks of data collection).

The researcher carried out all recruitment procedures. Recruitment procedures were as follows:

- ✓ Cover letter was distributed via public work email addresses available from the school's website and in letter form distributed through staff in-boxes
- ✓ Information sheet disseminated at the case study site in staff in-boxes and displayed on bulletin boards in teacher lounge area
- ✓ Informational session was held to provide information about the study and to answer any questions from potential participants

Five (of approximately 21) educators who work directly with American Indian students in the Elva John Middle School consented to participate. Participants consented to a personal interview of approximate 60 minutes long. The time and location of interviews were determined according to the needs of the participant. All interviews were conducted during non-instructional times and times when the

school was not in session. The interview prompts were based on four areas of inquiry:

1. Education/Preparation Background (multicultural education or training)
2. Personal Experiences (cultural experiences or exchanges in AI community)
3. Professional Experiences (teaching/working with American Indian students)
4. Perception Related to the Research Topic (awareness of cultural issues)

Participants consented to observations in their regular work setting on a bi-weekly basis over a period of 6-8 weeks in 15-60 minute intervals. The duration of each observation was dependent on the needs of the participant and the activity that was being observed. The researcher utilized an observation log/journal to write details and descriptions of the setting and the activities observed.

Inferences can be made from observations as the researcher attempts to capture interactions with detail that cannot be indicated by quantitative data alone. Although the immersion of the researcher in the case is the basis of the researcher bias argument (Stake, 1995) it is immersion in the case that enables the rich narratives that include testimonies, stories, and illustrations that are invaluable during the reporting stage. The observational field note component of this case study proved to be highly purposeful.

Participants also gave access to review classroom and school documents (e.g. lesson plans, activity calendars, lists of class library titles, lists of visiting class speakers, research articles, etc.). Access to teaching documents or examples of class artifacts used as curricular resources were made available during non-instructional

time. In addition field notes recorded during observations and public information including demographic data was accessed during this time.

The Preparation Stage

Once the design and criteria were clearly defined and the case study site was determined, many preparations were in order to gain the appropriate authorizations from both the research institution and the case site. Written permission from the school site was granted and institutional requirements were also met. Upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and initial email correspondence with the site's principal, a cover letter, information sheet, and consent documents were provided to the principal. In order to recruit participants, the following protocol was followed:

1. Cover letter was distributed to faculty and staff via email and paper copies
2. Information sheet was disseminated at the case study site in staff in-boxes and displayed on office bulletin board
3. Informational session was held to provide information about the study and to answer questions from potential participants

From these measures participants consented to the study and observation and interview scheduling commenced. Since case study research generates a large amount of data from multiple sources systematic organization of the data collected was planned and implemented to avoid being overwhelmed and to prevent a lost focus of the original research question and purpose. Careful planning was required in the anticipation of large amounts of data. It was important to establish clear

procedures in advance. In some cases it is necessary to expand the literature review or conduct pilot research to remove potential barriers or problems. Data storage was considered and prepared for the sorting, categorizing, storing, and coding of anticipated data. The protocol was essential in this process also to maintain the protection of consenting participants. Timelines, formats for narrative reporting and field notes, as well as guidelines for data collection and field procedures were formulated. A key piece of this phase was to anticipate problems, identify key people, prepare correspondence letters, establish confidentiality rules and documents, and revisit the research design when necessary.

Data Collection Stage

Once the preparation stage was completed data collection commence as outlined in the case study design. Data collection identified and investigated relationships associated with the phenomenon under study. Renegotiation or additions to the research design may be appropriate as the study progresses however design modifications must be warranted and documented. The organization and storage of data commenced according to the design. Data sets produce evidence that leads to understanding the case, answers research questions, and fulfills the purpose of the study. All data were organized in a systemic order to allow for efficient access for analysis.

In the spring of 2008 upon written consent from participants, observations began and interviews were scheduled. Interviews were conducted with consenting participants during non-instructional time. A wealth of information was gathered

from the interviews about perspective and practice. The interviews were semi-structured and member checks were conducted throughout the interview in order to clarify meaning. Weekly observations of school-wide and classroom activities were also conducted over a period of eight weeks. Written notes about the observations were kept in a field journal. During the time frame of observations, standardized tests were administered, which affected observation schedule. During the observational period, the following types of school events took place: staff and faculty meetings, school-wide CRT test preparation, fifth-grade orientation for upcoming school year, departmental meetings, and a music assembly. American Indian resources and titles in the school library were also cataloged. Relevant teacher resources that were available to EJMS faculty were also collected. Copies of school documents, announcements, and notices disseminated by the school administration were collected, as well as open records of the school's demographic and academic performance data. Twenty-four faculty members, one special resource instructor (the Title VII/Indian Education academic tutor), and the school's administrator were contacted for participation. A total of five (three full-time faculty members, one special resource instructor, and the school administrator) participants consented to personal interviews. Four consented to audio-recorded interviews and one interview was conducted without audio recording. Listening and observation skills were employed throughout in order to take precise field notes and conduct quality interviews.

The Analysis and Interpretation Stage

This instrumental case study included three data sets. They were: school documents, observational field notes, and interview transcriptions. The school documents helped establish the characteristics of the case described in Chapter Four. This data set included artifacts such as:

1. Demographic data
2. School achievement data (e.g. quarterly spreadsheets on student group progress)
3. Staff meeting data (e.g. agendas and research articles distributed to staff)
4. School activity data (school-wide event artifacts, including photographs)
5. Curricular data (e.g. lesson and activity plans, book titles, lists of resources)

The second data set was comprised of field notes from researcher observations. The field notes were kept in the researcher's reflective journal derived from interactions with Elva John Middle School faculty and staff. Field notes were taken during formal observation times, as well as during informal interactions between principal and staff. The third data set included data attained through semi-structured interviews with Elva John Middle School staff.

Through the analysis stage, all data was kept securely. Paper documents were categorized and relevant documents are cited in Chapter Four. Audio recordings were transcribed, reviewed, and coded. As codes were categorized, themes emerged from the data. Interview data were analyzed with the technique of applying hand written notes and comments on the margins of each transcript according to method inspired by Miles and Huberman (1994). The process of

reviewing the transcripts and written notes aided in the search for codes that related to the research question, "How do educators at EJMS address the culturally related academic needs of American Indian students?" Related or similar codes were grouped together and general themes emerged. A continuous review of literature aided in the analysis process.

The Report Stage

The case study report will allow the reader to examine the case critically and reach an independent understanding of the research. The goal of the report in Chapter Four is to provide rich detail so that the reader gains in-depth understanding of the unit under study. Typically, techniques for reporting case study research either follow a chronological recounting of events or are captured in narrative forms of reporting.

The EJMS case study report is presented in narrative form. The characteristics of the case are described in detail, including details about the local and state context. Confidentiality of the participants was maintained and the identity of the school was protected by the use of a pseudonym throughout the study. The findings also are presented by themes that emerged from the data.

This chapter presented case study as the selected methodology for this research study and procedures were presented in detail. The following chapter reports the findings of the study with an in-depth description of the case. Further discussion and conclusions are presented in the final chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS: CASE STUDY REPORT

Introduction

Documentation of the characteristics of the case is included in this report, a description of the setting and its physical properties, and background of the actors from whom specific information was obtained. This chapter begins in this manner and continues with a presentation of findings that emerged from interviews, observation, and document review. It is not suggested that school attributes identified in this report represent an exhaustive list of the school's efforts, but they do give an in-depth view of the case at a specific point in time. Although children from cultural minority groups face many of the same problems in schools, a particular emphasis was placed on the experiences of American Indian students in this study.

This qualitative case study was conducted in a public middle school given the pseudonym, Elva John Middle School (EJMS). Research procedures involved data collection from transcribed interviews, direct field observations, and documents such as academic records and existing demographic information about the school and the town in which it is located. The goal of this case study report is to determine and report, (1) What approaches (if any) to serving American Indian students were in use, and (2) How these approaches might further be developed or enhanced to facilitate understanding about how more culturally supportive school environments can be cultivated.

While existing literature on American Indian educational issues prescribes theoretical constructs to address needs, this case study report provides accounts of actual practices in the natural school setting. Some of the theories include educational integrated American Indian cultural revitalization programs (Coggins, Williams & Radin, 1997), instruction compatibility to American Indian learning preferences (Walker, Dodd & Bigelow, 1989), increasing American Indians in administrative and teaching positions (Pavel, 1999), culturally responsive teaching (Pewewardy, Hammer & Cahape, 2003), and addressing cultural discontinuity through curriculum (St. Germaine, 1996). A list of the themes that emerged during this research are provided here and further discussed later in the chapter. They are:

1. Cultural mismatch between teachers and students
2. Lack of multicultural education in participants' college education
3. Data-driven instructional leadership
4. Cultural responsiveness
5. Student voice
6. Modeling cultural pride

This chapter presents themes found in administrative and teaching perceptions and practices related to educating American Indian students at EJMS. The participants' perceptions, which were primarily captured through interviews, provided insight into motivations and how they made meaning of some of their deliberate efforts that resulted in support, inclusiveness, and overall enhancement of American Indian academic experiences (i.e. supported the cultural integrity of

American Indian students). Some of these efforts pertained to school climate (e.g. expanding the focus of school-wide events), pedagogy (e.g. learning style adaptations), and curriculum (e.g. infusion of American Indian cultural aspects). Some examples of school documents that were utilized to support themes were:

Faculty biographical webpages on school website

Spreadsheets of quarterly academic progress of student groups

Articles and literature distributed to faculty

List of children book titles in class library

Teaching resources and tools

Teacher lesson plans

Examples of student processed projects and papers

List of topics from displayed posters

Contact information for guest speakers on American Indian culture

List of cultural activities shared during advisory class

Titles of video footage utilized in class

List of cultural artifacts displayed in classroom

These themes will be discussed in detail following a section on the characteristics of the case in order to provide context of the findings.

Characteristics of the Case

American Indian Cultural Diversity in Oklahoma Schools

A thorough case study report provides characteristics explaining how a case might be considered typical as well as unique. The American Indian cultural

diversity reflected within the student body in Oklahoma public schools is of such magnitude as to make it distinctive. Populations of American Indians in other states usually have a concentration of only a few groups with shared cultural traits and reservations (or tribal lands) within the state's boundaries. Due to various Indian removal actions taken by the United States of America and the uniqueness of the state's history of American Indian land ownership, the population in Oklahoma is extremely culturally and linguistically diverse. Each of the thirty-eight (38) federally-recognized tribal nations headquartered throughout the state tribal nation that is headquartered in the state has its own political, economic, and cultural center (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2012). Obviously this has a direct effect on the cultural representation and diversity in Oklahoma public schools.

In addition, the proximity of tribal nations and school districts in numerous locales has an impact on the American Indian cultural diversity of schools. As tribal administrations govern tribally-owned lands and/or lands with federal trust status occupied by American Indians, and also oversee tribal housing within these boundaries, it is common for the majority of American Indian students within a particular school district to represent a common tribal affiliation or cultural group (e.g. plains and woodlands cultures, et. al.). The proximity between Elva John Middle School and the nearest tribal headquarters is less than twenty miles. Consequently, the majority of American Indian students at EJMS are members of the tribal nation that is headquartered nearby. In larger, more urban districts,

American Indian student populations have more variance in tribal and cultural representation.

Locale

The community in which Elva John Middle School is located was categorized as rural fringe (locale code 41), meaning that it is a census-defined rural territory less than or equal to five miles from an urbanized area and includes rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The race and ethnicity of the town's population was similar to demographics statewide. The percentages from largest to smallest racial groups were: Caucasian, American Indian, African-American, Hispanic, and Asian. According to census data, many town residents commuted to places of employment outside of the town's city limits and there were post-secondary educational institutions nearby (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The town's median household income was between $30,000-32,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Approximately sixteen percent (16.3%) of the population was below the poverty line and 64% were homeowners, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Physical School Setting

This description of the physical setting of the school was compiled from observational field notes. Upon entering the school building one encounters an open and spacious common area. This common area served many school functions, including as a cafeteria. At the end of the each day, the common area became a bus

loading area. School-wide functions such as special assemblies also took place in the common area.

Large glass display cases were a prominent feature of the common area; the contents changed periodically. At the time of observation, the cases displayed visual elements of the local American Indian culture and photographs of American Indian students. The photographs depicted students engaged in a special school wide event. Among them was a photograph of two American Indian students in traditional regalia and exhibiting cultural performances. The prominently displayed cases contributed to a visual presence of cultural validation in the physical setting of the school.

The official school insignia, which was visible throughout the school, featured a stereotypical war-bonneted Indian head profile. The exclusion of alternative visions and discourse (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2005), which differs from the majority viewpoint is one dimension of cultural hegemony that perpetuates the social acceptance of racist American Indian mascots that are still pervasive in many schools. The visibility of the school's generic Indian mascot alongside authentic American Indian depictions in the display cases illustrates the irony of attempting to create a culturally inclusive school climate within the manipulations of cultural hegemony. Participants were apparently oblivious to the stereotypical nature of the imagery, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Participants

Five individuals (the school principal and four faculty members) consented to participate in this study. Their identities are disguised so as to not compromise their candor. This is to say that specific information about each is generalized in order to maintain confidentiality; at the same time certain characteristics of each participant are provided. This information was obtained through interviews, observational field notes in which pertinent information from informal conversations that took place during observational times were recorded, and biographical information collected from the school's website.

Of the five members of the school staff, one was American Indian who clearly was familiar with cultural identity concerns, three were Caucasian, one was African-American; four were female and two had previous teaching experience in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding schools. Four were teachers, one was an administrator, four were full-time, and one shared time with other schools in the district.

Per observational field notes, the administrator emphasized the importance to be responsive to all students and be visible in the building at all times. Several examples, verbalized by the principal during observational time, of students who took the initiative to speak honestly and present their concerns were recorded in observational field notes. This open line of communication was attributed to the level of accessibility and responsiveness.

One of the teachers interviewed said that her teaching philosophy involved encouraging creativity and independent (student-led) work. Another of the teachers was highly experienced in the district and familiar with the dynamics of the school district and its staff. Her personal experiences contributed to her motivation to advocate for the needs of marginalized children. Information recorded in field notes stated that one interviewee was a veteran teacher who had a strong sense of belonging at EJMS and finds that, due to her longevity; some of her present students are the younger siblings of former students. She gave particular attention to students she perceived to be in need of additional academic support. She aspired to be sensitive to the needs of students she believed that didn't have adequate parental support. And lastly, the final interviewee had a graduate education and was motivated in his current position by the personal fulfillment and enjoyment he received from teaching and working with students.

Themes

Themes emerged which contribute to understanding factors and conditions that affect American Indian student experiences and how the participants reveal their level of awareness of American Indian educational issues and receptiveness to those needs.

Cultural Mismatch Between Teachers and Students

School data are published annually based on the previous year's enrollment. Demographic information published in 2008, the same year of data collection, showed that Caucasian students at EJMS made up 61%, while American Indian

students (19%) represented the second largest racial group in the school (Oklahoma Office of Accountability, 2008). At EJMS the American Indian student population was equal to Hispanic and African-American students combined and at the state level the comparison was nearly the same. The racial demographics at Elva John Middle School as a whole and those of the state were similar.

Stated in another way, Oklahoma's total public school enrollment was 639,014 and American Indian students constituted nearly one-fifth of the total public school population (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Statewide, the American Indian student population was approximately the same as African-American and Hispanic students combined.

Table 4.1

Student Racial Demographic Data of School Site and Statewide Published in 2008

	Elva John Middle School	Public Schools Statewide
African American	7%	10.8%
American Indian	19%	19.3%
Asian	1%	1.8%
Caucasian	61%	58.6%
Hispanic	12%	9.5%

Oklahoma Office of Accountability (2008)

There was not much cultural diversity among the faculty at Elva John Middle School during the time observations were made. Of 21 regular education teachers, 20 were Caucasian. The school counselor and two administrative support staff were Caucasian as was the shared-time resource teacher. The homogeneous

pool of teachers at EJMS exemplifies what Cross (2003) referred to as a cultural/racial mismatch between the faculty and student body.

EJMS student demographics are similar to statewide demographics whereas one out every five students is American Indian; however American Indian faculty representation is nearly nonexistent.

Table 4.2

Racial Demographic Data on Teachers and Students at EJMS

	EJMS Teachers	EJMS Students
African American	5% (1)	7% (24)
American Indian	0	19% (65)
Asian	0	1% (3)
Caucasian	95% (20)	61% (209)
Hispanic	0	12% (41)

Oklahoma Office of Accountability (2008)

Lack of Multicultural Education in Participants' College Education

According to interviews and field notes, staff that participated in this study indicated that multicultural education was not a part of their formal education. Additionally, some spoke about cross-cultural experiences in their personal lives that primarily influenced their approaches to educating culturally diverse students. One interviewee said about her graduate education,

> I don't remember it (multicultural education) being required at all. I got my degree in_I have to look at my certificate_ in '94 and I really don't remember anything about multiculturalism being part of our master's program.

Also, she stated that multicultural education was not required in her teacher preparatory program. She also went on to say,

> Not so much at the university level, but once we became teachers in the district we would have different in-services that addressed the multicultural issue. There was always at least one in-service each year that addressed multicultural needs. And I don't know if that was legislated or because of the fact that we are so close to the [omitted] tribal agency that the district just saw it as a need.

In fact, all of the participants in this study reported that multicultural education was not a part of their preparation programs. However, although multicultural education was not a component of their formal college education, several teachers spoke about pivotal events in their professional growth that aided in their developing more cultural understanding. One teacher shared a vivid memory about a time when she first arrived at the realization that children who grow up without interactions with people from other races and cultures, lack cultural understanding upon entrance to school. The provision of school experiences that help students develop an appreciation of culture is an important aspect of being a teacher from her viewpoint. She recalled,

> It was a preschool class. This little girl looked at my hand as I reached up to help her on the monkey bars and she said, "Your hands are brown". And I thought, well yeah that's how the Lord made me. "I am brown and your skin is white." And it floored me for a minute. I thought maybe she wasn't used to being around African-Americans. That's when I thought (sigh) I'm going to go into teaching.

This teacher pinpointed this single experience as her motivation for aspiring to a career in teaching. Promoting the values of cultural appreciation, central to her

classroom practices, originated in part from her perception that children, in general, lack a greater cultural awareness of others and themselves.

Another teacher admitted that multicultural education was not emphasized in her program, and as a result, multicultural courses were not required. During her collegiate years she gained cultural awareness through her association with a student religious organization and through her travels abroad. She highly valued these experiential opportunities because they enabled her to build relationships with diverse people. She talked about an early experience abroad where she recognized an imbalance of power based on race. During a time when she started to recognize the existence of power inequity, she said,

> I did do a summer in [another country] and that probably opened my eyes … being a middle-class white girl from a farm family going to school at a small country school where everyone else in class farmed ... I went to [another country] and there I saw how people were treated differently because of their color and it bothered me.

Some participants spoke of their experiences in American Indian communities prior to their current positions at Elva John Middle School. It was perceived that these experiences were regarded as positive.

The resource teacher had moved from another town that had a significant American Indian population near several tribal headquarters. The cultural knowledge previously gained was applied at EJMS to better relate to American Indian students. This teacher reported,

> I'm well-acquainted with the (omitted) tribe because we lived in [town]…We had very close contact with them at the [name of powwow] every August, and we got to know a lot of them personally. And year to year I had personal experiences with a whole bunch of them…We went to a

> couple of powwows with them…In terms of being with the Indian People, I think my experiences in [town] has helped me *(audio low)*. If fact, I'm getting better every year.

Other teachers had previous teaching experiences in American Indian classrooms and in other tribal communities. One, who often spoke of previous teaching experiences with American Indian children as aiding in her current teaching position, said,

> When I was at [town] there were a lot of Native Americans. In the summer I was working for the U.S. government out of [American Indian community] and taught computer classes at [American Indian boarding school] and that was really my first experience with Native American kids. I absolutely loved how I saw technology spark them to want to learn. And so as far as college goes, I don't think college prepared me for that. I think my experiences around other things did.

A veteran teacher of many years now teaching at EJMS previously taught on an American Indian reservation. She said that it was during that time that she first realized that American Indian children had distinct needs. Participants with previous teaching experiences in culturally diverse classrooms seemed to regard those experiences as an aid in their current positions.

Some participants expressed a sense of connectedness towards the school experiences of American Indian students. Witnessing or experiencing racial prejudice and discrimination seemed to have contributed to a greater sense of relatedness to students from minority and marginalized groups.

One interviewee shared her childhood memories, including those dealing with issues of cultural identity and being a member of a minority group. She stated,

> I think *that* [being a member of a minority group] in itself has helped me to identify with students who come through my school now. I know what it

> feels like to be called [racial slur]. I know what it feels like to be excluded. I know what it feels like to have teachers or people think less of you because of the color of your skin. When you've experience those things yourself, in life, you have a relationship. You have a better understanding of how kids feel and you don't brush it aside so quickly.

Cultural Mismatch Effect on Teacher Expectations

The school principal and faculty acknowledged that there were general expectations for *all* students pertaining to behavior, communication, and socialization. Several acknowledged that at times teachers perceived that American Indian students did not satisfy their expectations of preferred social and communicative behaviors. One sentiment expressed was that it is desirable for American Indian students to be more verbal in class. While the cultural differences between the teaching staff and American Indian students exemplify a *cultural mismatch*, it also might accurately be described as a mismatch in expectations.

Another teacher made several statements that illustrate how she attempts to make meaning of the mismatch of expectations,

> I know, too, we don't take time to understand the culture. We expect Native Americans to look us in the eye and their culture's not that way. Respect is when their head is down. And so little things like that, I've learned just with involvement with them.
>
> These kids are being taught by middle-class, upper-class white women and I think that's a disservice sometimes because we expect them to act the way we expect our own children to act.
>
> It's a lack of understanding…We perceive it to be slothful or laziness and it truly is not. It truly is cultural…We don't take the time to listen to the fact that a lot of times at home they are expected to perform family chores or duties or powwows or other things which make them very tired for school the next day.

The social behaviors that are expected of all students may, in fact, conflict with cultural teachings and home behaviors. Certain behaviors are imposed on students without flexibility or consideration of culturally preferred behaviors. This area is also highly subjective from the teacher's viewpoint.

The themes formerly presented provide insight into current conditions affecting American Indian school experiences. The following themes present findings related to educational practices that participants employed to address the perceived needs of students.

Data-driven Instructional Leadership as a Means to Address Academic Gap

According to comments recorded in observational field notes, one of the school principal's high priorities was to provide instructional leadership driven by data; this priority resulted in an ongoing conversation about data, accountability, and equity. The principal spoke about how she aimed for her leadership to have an impact the achievement gap reflected in academic assessments indicating that it took many years of improvement to get to the point where the school is now, but that more work remains to be done. Since being first hired the principal believed one of the largest tasks to be confronted would be to "achieve equity" (a phrase often used by the principal) among all subgroups of students.

A computer software program was used to disaggregate student assessment scores and grades by gender, grade, subject, socioeconomic level, and race. A review of the spreadsheets generated by the software showed the researcher that a convenient visual aid could be easily generated to reveal gaps in academic

performance by group making it an effective way to improve accountability to American Indians as a student group. A spreadsheet from a previous year compared with one showing the most current grades revealed a trend towards improvement among American Indian students.

Data entered into the software program was presented to the faculty on a quarterly basis. On one occasion, the fact that the grades of American Indian students were often disproportionately low was pointed out. In fact, clearly the quarterly data recurrently showed academic achievement levels of all racial groups other than Caucasians were substantially lower. When the principal first initiated this process of review, the intent was to engage a discussion about the achievement gaps and how to move towards more effective teaching strategies. However, as the data showing these disparities began to be pointed out to faculty in departmental and faculty meetings their initial reactions were defensive and sometimes indignant. The principal recalled,

> The first year I was here we were in the library and I put the first quarter grades up and it showed that the Native American students were way beneath the expectation level. And I just said, "Guys, here is the numbers for the first quarter. What do you think about it?" And [they] just sat there and looked at me and they were <u>not</u> ready for that conversation. Well, my secretary came to me about an hour later and she said, "What did you say to them? They are so mad at you."

The principal said that they had come a long way since then. She explained that a level of comfort had to be achieved before they were able to speak openly about the gaps in achievement. Teachers are now accustomed to reviewing data on a regular basis. She believed that they came to understand that the newly

implemented process of analyzing academic spreadsheets doing was not about assigning blame, rather the focus was awareness and improvement. And that recently she received requests to chart the data in different ways.

Her leadership in trying to provide better educational services to students, whom historically have not been well served, did not end with viewing data for the sake of discussion. The discussion was just the starting point. She also researched scholarly journals for articles and studies that address the needs of students that are most at risk. Examples of articles that have been shared with the faculty were provided to the researcher. Some sources of articles shared are peer-reviewed academic journals, while others come from professional teaching magazines and websites. The researcher's review of these articles revealed that topics included classroom management strategies, parental views about schools, and gender- and cultural-specific teaching theory. Research based teaching methods and practices were shared with faculty by distributing articles to them directly. The article reviews seemed to serve as a type of informal, but continuous professional development as article topics become discussion topics in faculty meetings. Her willingness to continue reviewing literature for the periodical discussions was motivated by the hope that teacher practices might be influenced ultimately for the benefit of students.

As the instructional leader, the principal brought issues of teaching diverse learners to the consciousness of the faculty by the placement of large poster boards on the walls of the teacher's lounge, where faculty spent a lot of non-instructional

time. A list of topics observed and recorded by the researcher from the displayed posters showed that effective teaching strategies for particular subgroups (e.g. by gender or cultural groups) were among highlighted topics at the time of observation. Some posters displayed examples of teaching techniques that are effective for different kinds of learners. In this way research-based strategies have been compiled and simplified so teachers can easily reference them. As pointed out by Dunn (1983, as cited in Walker, Dodd & Bigelow, 1989), individual differences in preferences for learning have been identified. Walker, Dodd, and Bigelow (1989) assert that educational procedures and programs should be revised when cultural differences have unique affects on behavior. The principal promoted ongoing teaching reflection by, (1) the identification of effective strategies for culturally diverse learners, and (2) finding new and creative ways to share strategies with teachers so that information is convenient and easy to understand.

Cultural Responsive Approaches

Regarding cultural responsive approaches, one teacher demonstrated a level of cultural responsiveness via class reading selections. The intentional incorporation of multicultural content into class lessons demonstrated concern for culturally diverse students and multicultural learning for all. By doing so, this teacher made sure that all students, including American Indian students, had opportunities to read culturally relevant texts and to relate to the characters and cultural context in the stories presented in the classroom. A list of selections

available in the class library confirmed that multicultural selections were available to students. This teacher also promoted authors of diverse backgrounds stating that:

> When we read stories too, I try to pull that out too, a Hispanic writer, a Native American poem, things like that.

In addition to utilizing cultural content this same teacher encourages students to incorporate aspects of their own cultures in meeting the reading and language arts academic objectives of the class. In viewing examples of her students work, it supported that the teacher encouraged the incorporation of students' cultures in assignments. In giving them these kinds of opportunities, it appeared that students were eager and motivated by the opportunity to share aspects of their home life with others. She said,

> I've had Native American students who have, when we've done projects, brought in their costumes [regalia] and explained them. Like some of the demonstration speeches, things like that…the cooking…the frybread…just different parts of their culture.

A review of the teacher's past lesson plan confirmed that outside visitors came to her class to speak to students about aspects of American Indian culture. Banks' (1994) framework of *Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform* provides a tiered system of levels in which multicultural practices can be gauged for depth and effectiveness. The framework ranges from (level one) *Contributions Approach* to level four, *Social Action Approach*, the highest level. Although the teacher's multicultural curricular approach might surpass Banks (1994) *Contributions Approach*, her practice might best be described as *The Additive Approach*, (level two) meaning that content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are

added to the existing curriculum without changing its basic structure. Her approach was not limited to holidays, celebrations, and discrete cultural elements, but her attempts to meet the cultural needs of American Indian students was limited to the addition of projects or demonstration speeches. Level three, *Transformation Approach*, "changes the canon, paradigms, and basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from different perspectives and points of view" (Banks, 1994). An example of utilizing this approach to transform an existing lesson will be presented in Chapter Five.

Other aspects of this teacher's pedagogy (e.g. small group activities, cooperative learning, discussions to bridge personal associations to content) similarly were conducive to Patterned-Symbols learning preference in reading comprehension, which has been shown to be a predominant learning preference for American Indian male students (Walker, Dodd & Bigelow, 1989). When students are prompted by teachers to relate new information to personal experiences and ideas, learning is enhanced for all students, not only for patterned-symbols learners (Pearson & Johnson, 1978, as cited in Walker, Dodd & Bigelow, 1989).

A list of names provided to the researcher supported that representatives of the local American Indian community had been utilized as resources by serving as class guest speakers. A teacher told me,

> I've had a Native American speaker. He came into my classroom and did some speaking and we read a story.

The African American teacher expressed her sense of connectedness to minority students, she stated,

> I definitely try to reach out to minorities and students who would get lost in the cracks…I think that it's different when you are a minority because you are *there* (smile). You have experienced some of the prejudices and I would say that I have. So maybe that's why I try so hard with our minority kids. I want them to be successful.

She exemplified a concern for equity. For example, she especially clued into indications of students who had little parental support. In voicing her concern about reaching out to kids who have less parental support than others, she added,

> …then there's those students who don't have that [parental support] so I try to reach out to those kids-all of them of course-but so much more so because I think they need that extra hand.

Her concerns drove her decisions to adapt instruction for the needs of her students. O'Hair, McLaughlin, and Reitzug (2000) declare that it is an educator's responsibility to attend to the needs of poor students and those living in rural areas. Noted in field notes, the teacher expressed how she extended extra academic support to the students most in need. She was encouraging to all of her students; however, she was perceptive to students who needed extra attention to foster bolster self-confidence. She always reiterated that she valued and cared for all of her students equally, however she understood that equity constitutes doing things more, less, or differently for students as determined by their needs.

Although the teachers found ways to connect students' culture to the curriculum in their classes, a non-academic advisory period (i.e. class) also provided a means to facilitate culturally authentic school experiences. The advisory period was the first class period of each day designed to facilitate close personal relationships between teachers and their assigned advisory student groups. The

advisory period primarily provided mentorship; however teachers had substantial freedom and leverage in terms of the class content. According to field notes, typically, the classes reflected the teachers' personal interests, talents, skills, or hobbies. Some teachers encouraged student input.

During regular instructional times teachers were limited by mandated curricular requirements and standardized assessments; however the advisory period was a venue where cultural diversity was sometimes celebrated. One teacher said she utilized the advisory period to include an American Indian component, which was indicative of her responsiveness to American Indian student needs. She said, "I had a mom who did beadwork and so I brought her in to show the kids how."

This same person believed that American Indian students should have the opportunity to incorporate their culture while meeting class objectives. To ensure the availability of American Indian cultural aspects, she spent time at local tribal functions to observe and record video footage for student use in her classes. She emphasized that when American Indian students were given liberty, they overwhelmingly chose to incorporate cultural aspects in their assignments and utilize the resources that she makes available to them. Review of student artifacts supported these statements.

Utilizing Student Voice

Some of the efforts made by participants were initiated because they listened to student voice. Field notes described scenarios of American Indian students voicing their concerns and teachers responding to their concerns. The principal also

responded to student voice, especially in planning school-wide activities. She recalled,

> Some of the Native American girls came and asked, "Could we have a cultural day?" They wanted to share their heritage with the rest of the school.

Another teacher participant's practices were the direct result of listening to students. The openness and willingness to acknowledge student voice helped create a class climate where students felt comfortable pitching their ideas to her without reluctance or fear of rejection. As part of her class preparation, she went to local powwows to film video footage for the purpose of making it available to American Indian students and other interested students. She stated,

> Native American kids, almost seven out of ten times, will pick a cultural film over any other choice. When given a choice, they want to talk about their heritage. They want to talk about their dance. They want to talk about their dress…their language. They want to talk about their customs. They want other people to see those customs…Every year that I've been here, I go and film different powwows because different kids want to tell the story.

Field notes also described another teacher participant who spoke about the willingness to go into the local American Indian community to attend events in order to show some involvement and interest in the culture. In this way, the teacher showed genuine concern for students, not only in the academic realm, but also regarding their general health and well-being. When one student lost a family member to suicide, the teacher's presence at the tribal memorial held in the tribal community was requested.

> She asked me to go along out at the tribal grounds. I said, "Yeah. I'll be there." Everybody turned out and it was a great experience. I didn't get

> socialized with everybody or anything like that because it was a different situation. People wondered why I was there. I had to explain to someone why I came. I wanted to be there for the commemoration and she showed me, even brought me over to the food and fixed me a plate.

Per field notes, this teacher exhibited a lot of sincerity when speaking about students. His interactions with American Indian students at EJMS included providing academic support, but he also tried to get to know the students and was aware of their home situations. Relationships and building trust were essential to his approach; he wanted the students to know that he cared about them.

Value of Culture/Modeling Cultural Pride

Some participants' placed a personal importance on valuing one's own culture and heritage. One teacher expressed her personal value of learning about one's cultural heritage. On the subject of her personal philosophy about the value of culture and how she instills this not only in students, but in her own children, she said,

> That's what I tried to teach my kids. I wanted to take them back to (name of country omitted) and to (name of country omitted). I wanted them to see where they came from. We all kind of need to know where we came from to know where we're going.

Another teacher desired for her students to become comfortable in the knowledge their culture to help students develop self-confidence. She spoke about how she encouraged her students to be proud of their cultural backgrounds. She said,

> It's so interesting to know everyone's backgrounds and from where they come. And also to remind them, especially this age group, to be proud of who they are and be proud of where they come from.

The value of self-cultural awareness translated into behaviors that modeled a sense of cultural pride for students. One teacher transmitted the value of culture and ethnic heritage by incorporating her personal cultural aspects into the physical setting. She illustrated this by pointing to items on her classroom wall, which was adorned with artifacts representing her cultural heritage. She pointed out to children that those artifacts represent her pride in her cultural background and encouraged them to foster the same kind of pride in theirs.

A sense of cultural pride was modeled in order to show students how to find pride within themselves and view culture as a positive trait. This teacher demonstrated a sense of cultural pride to help students embrace their own cultural backgrounds. This approach differs from teachers coping with cultural differences by devising strategies to work around them (Houser, 1991, as cited in Coggins, Williams, & Radin, 1997).

Through these efforts participants helped foster a learning environment where the American Indian students often utilized aspects of their culture in their school assignments. Students displayed their cultural knowledge through written, visual, and other kinds of media. A view of culture as an asset helped foster a learning environment where, (1) students became teachers of cultural knowledge, and (2) students had opportunities to feel culturally validated at school.

Case Study Report Summary

This case study report provided the results of data collected from five participants in one public school where the school leader aimed to achieve equity in

academic achievement among all subgroups of students, including American Indian students. Data collected from the principal and faculty at Elva John Middle School supported that they had a level of awareness of the products of cultural mismatch and acknowledged that cultural misunderstandings do sometimes occur between teachers and American Indian students. As Gordon asserts, "Good teachers must develop an awareness of their perspectives and how these can be enlarged to avoid a "communicentric bias" (Gordon, 1990 as cited in Darling-Hammond, 2000). Their level of awareness, which may or may not be shared among all staff at EJMS, did, in fact, impact the pedagogical and curricular decisions of the participants under study.

Participants regarded culture as valuable, which was made apparent through modeling cultural pride for students to emulate. Cross-cultural experiences of the participants influenced their perspectives and practices. Others related to and empathized with American Indian students because of their own personal experiences with discrimination and prejudice. Cultural appreciation, awareness, responsiveness, and empathy contributed to creating a school climate of belonging and connectedness.

The research question that guided this study was, "How do educators address the culturally related academic needs of American Indian students?" The results of this case study determined that culturally responsive educational practices were, in fact, implemented. The types of practices can best be categorized as administrative and teaching practices. Issues were addressed on the administration level:

1. Data-driven instructional leadership with the goal of equitable academic achievement among all groups of students,
2. Responsiveness to student voice, and
3. Promoting pedagogical practices designed for diverse learning styles.

Cultural issues were addressed through the following teaching practices:

1. Cultural responsiveness (e.g. adaptations towards "culturally" authentic curriculum; incorporation of students' cultures), and
2. Modeling cultural pride.

The principal facilitated the incorporation of the cultures of students in school-wide events and with the visibility of some cultural representation apparent in the physical surroundings (e.g. displays, bulletin boards). By doing so she progressed towards creating a more "culturally relevant school climate". Student voice was highly valued by the administrator and in many cases, was the driving force behind initiating changes to school-wide events. The goal of equity in academic achievement influenced school-wide activities and ongoing professional development (e.g. article reviews and faculty meetings). Ongoing professional development that promoted authenticity, cultural relevance, learning style theory takes various forms including:

1. Faculty-wide reviews of current school achievement data, followed by focused discussions and strategic planning
2. Faculty-wide review and study of scholarly literature

3. The provision of visible and accessible data-based strategies directed at meeting the academic needs of every subgroup of the student population

Teachers provided culturally relevant resources for the students to choose from. They also invited tribal community members into their classrooms for cultural demonstrations and as special speakers. They also utilized a variety of texts and resources to make learning culturally relevant to all of their students. All of the practices that the participants employed may help address cultural hegemonic impact and support the cultural integrity among students.

Participants shared their practices that employed aspects of multiculturalism, cultural congruency, and authentic pedagogy. As asserted by Newmann, Bryk, and Nagaoka (2001) the criterion that student work has value or meaning beyond school, are intellectual accomplishments that have utilitarian, aesthetic, or personal value. Participants provided ways for students to learn and demonstrate learning of required content, but in a way that also had personal (cultural) value, as teachers incorporated cultural topics.

This case study report provided examples of practices identified in Elva John Middle School. The conclusions and further discussion of these findings will be provided in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter five provides a summary and discussion of findings, as well as recommendations for further study. The patterns and themes that emerged from this study were utilized to create the case study report (Chapter Four) and to draw conclusions about these findings. The results are most suitable as representing the perspectives and lived experiences of the teacher participants, and like all case study research does not seek to be generalizable. Findings have been organized into two categories, (1) existing issues in American Indian (AI) student experiences, and (2) implemented practices that aim to address existing cultural issues. Lastly, conclusions from this case study will be provided.

Note About the Researcher

Reflexivity is "the constant awareness, assessment, and reassessment by the researcher of the researcher's own contribution/influence/shaping of intersubjective research and the consequent research findings" (Salzman, 2002, p. 86). As the primary researcher in this study and an identifiable Native American woman it is important to disclose that my very presence in the school had an impact. Certainly, the subject matter of educating American Indian students in public schools is personally significant to me. As an educator by profession, I am a proponent of public education. And as product of the public school system, I am familiar with the difficult, awkward, and sometimes outright alienating situations that American

Indian children experience when cultural knowledge among teachers and students is lacking. Naturally, it is my position that public school educators should be aware of the challenges faced by American Indian students and that expanding knowledge about how to advance improvement is inherently valuable to me. These views helped shape the research question and certainly drove my motivations to conduct this study.

It is difficult to speculate as to how the dynamics of political correctness and racialized and cultural positionality might have affected the information that was given to me as the researcher, however it is it is assumed that answers given were truthful and accurate.

Summary and Discussion of Existing Issues in AI Student Experiences

Findings related to existing issues in common American Indian school experiences were identified from data analysis. Teachers at EJMS functioned within a normative environment, which encompassed visible American Indian stereotypes exemplified by the maintenance of the school's mascot. Images of the American Indian mascot were visible throughout the school. These images represent how the majority culture determines what is socially acceptable and controls the portrayals of "minority" cultures, which are uncontested even when they are stereotypical.

The school's curriculum, which was state mandated included minimal coverage of American Indian related topics. The curriculum taught according to the state's PASS objectives was presented primarily from a Euro-American view. More

culturally relevant themes were taught only if teachers supplement the curriculum with additional resources. In the past the school had course offerings in American Indian topics and languages, but no longer does. American Indian students did not have the option of taking classes in topics that were culturally relevant to them. The school facilitated many student organizations and extracurricular activities, but did not have an American Indian student organization. The school recognized various holidays and observances, but did not have official provisions for the cultural inclusion of American Indians and specifically the nearby tribal nation that had a strong representation among EJMS students. This was one particular issue that was raised by students who advocated for a cultural perspective to be included in the statehood celebrations that are held annually at the school.

Cultural mismatch existed between the student population and the highly homogeneous make-up (i.e. White, female, middle-class) of the faculty. Further complicating the cultural mismatch between faculty and students was the lack of formal multicultural education among teachers. The absence of required multicultural education for all pre-service teachers demonstrates cultural hegemonic impact on a larger scale. Course offerings are often elective courses and because they are not required or part of a mandated college curriculum, it further demonstrates that multicultural competence is not deemed as important as other subject matters.

Indeed, a cultural/racial mismatch existed between Elva John Middle School (EJMS) faculty and students. American Indians made up approximately twenty

percent of the student population; however there was not any American Indian representation among faculty. Teachers also discussed their perceptions of expectation differences based on students' membership in particular cultural/ethnic groups. The potential harm in these conditions is the inability of teachers from the majority culture to relate to students from diverse upbringings which can result in teacher responses to student behavior that inadvertently create conditions that spurs problematic student behavior (Berger, 2006), but more importantly changes in teacher attitude and pedagogy can make a difference in student achievement among students of different cultures (Bailey & Monroe, 2002). The imposition of the majority culture permeates the expectations of student behaviors that are highly prized by teachers. For example, teachers expressed that American Indian students were not as outgoing or "verbal" as they would like them to be.

As Delpit notes behaviors, information, and situations are interpreted through our own cultural lenses; these lenses operate involuntarily, below the level of conscious awareness, making it seem that our own view is simply 'the way it is' (Delpit, 1995, as cited in Darling-Hammond, 2000). As educators it is important to acknowledge our cultural lens and how it affects our expectations of students, which are highly subjective.

The overall level of sensitivity to existing hegemonic issues probably is affected by the teacher/participants' lack of formal preparation in multicultural education. Professional staff shared information about their formal educational experiences including their (teaching and administration) college programs. All

graduated from teacher preparation programs that did not require multicultural courses and in some cases, these courses were not offered. Colleges of education accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) must meet Educational Leadership Constituency Council (ELCC) standards, which include those dealing with diversity, equity, or social justice (Hawley & James, 2010). However, although these standards do exist, they tend to be vague, and preparation programs frequently respond to them through a single courses which focus on broad topics (e.g. societal sources of inequity) rather than a specific emphasis on teaching diverse students or dealing with real issues that are confronted in schools (Hawley & James, 2010). The institutions that the teacher/participants attended were characterized as programs without multicultural emphases.

The absence of multicultural education raises more questions regarding how well oriented pre-service teachers are to the educational issues of culturally diverse children, and specifically, American Indian children. The possibility that the current pool of teachers and administrators working in schools with American Indian populations is lacking *any* multicultural education during pre-service years begs many questions. What are the reasons for this? One can assume that educators may have attended programs that (a) did not require multicultural courses, or (b) offered multicultural topics as elective courses, but did not require them. If future educators opt out of taking non-required courses, what are their reasons for doing so? Finally, when teachers have not benefited from learning opportunities and critical reflection

during formal multicultural education, how do they attempt to accomplish meeting culturally diverse needs once in the profession? These questions lead to considering how can professional staff increase understanding and sensitivity of cultural diversity issues? One possible means might be professional development.

Studies have pointed to pre-service teachers' resistance to multicultural education as a major challenge in which pre-service teachers perceive the subject as irrelevant or unimportant (Phillion, Malewski & Richardson, 2006).

Interviewees could only recall one mandatory district-wide professional development workshop previous to this case study on the subject of teaching culturally diverse students. They indicated that it was a "top down" district initiative and that since then the topic had not been covered through professional development. In conclusion professional development pertaining to cultural issues was addressed sporadically.

Perceptions of Cultural Issues

At the inception of the study, participants did not have a clear understanding of the theory of cultural hegemony thus were not keenly cognizant of the unequal power relationship between the majority cultural group and American Indians. Through informal conversations during my time spent at the school I believe that they developed a better sense of awareness. Participants were unfamiliar with research related terms (e.g. hegemony, cultural mismatch) prior to becoming more acquainted with these terms during their study participation. Initially these concepts were difficult to discuss because the interviewees were somewhat preoccupied with

deflecting blame from themselves for lack of understanding cultural hegemony and related topics. Participants wanted to maintain a positive view of their school and discussing cultural hegemonic impact in schools was often reduced to acknowledging that indeed teachers have different expectations for American Indian students. Awareness of cultural conflicts seems to center on teacher expectations and misunderstanding of culturally motivated student behaviors. As Freire (1993) states, sometimes teachers can unknowingly, stereotype or judge students based on appearance, family background, and personal experience resulting in an opinion of that student and an expectation of their capabilities to fit the societal mold of success. This perception aligns with previous studies and discussions (Kohn, 2005; Smith &Smith; 2009; Ferguson, 2003; Rist, 2000) that teachers often create caring and welcoming environments for students whom they perceive will fit the criteria for academic success, where as a relationship barrier exists between themselves and minority or students from a low social economic status (SES).

Some teachers felt that behavioral expectations were unfairly imposed on American Indian students and represented specific social norms highly valued in the majority culture. Generally the preferred modes of classroom behavior that were discussed included; being highly vocal in class; volunteering for tasks; taking initiative in class activities; and demonstrating higher level of motivation.

For example, one teacher expressed her belief that American Indian students are regularly misunderstood by teachers; she believed that learning more about the culture helped her to better understand American Indian students. She did not

express taking issue with wanting American Indian students to be more verbal in her class, but conveyed her willingness to be versatile in accommodating students' preferred communication styles and demonstration of learning. As a result, class objectives were highly personalized and self-paced, so students worked independently and she functioned more as a facilitator.

While certainly sensitivity to behavioral expectations is desired, my concern is that some teachers might inadvertently lower expectations for students in their attempt to be empathic and accepting of behavioral differences in whole group activities.

Some participants also seemed to struggle with being perceived as providing an unfair advantage to minority groups or bestowing an unequal balance of privilege to one student group over the others. In one classroom the teacher's concern was providing instruction that was too individualized or had too much cultural emphasis on any particular cultural group. In this example, the teacher's apprehension for overemphasizing a cultural emphasis in the curriculum when "minority" cultures were concern provides a prime example of the operation of cultural hegemony, whereas actors are not even aware of the unbalance of cultural influence. In this case the teacher never expressed her consideration that the curriculum had an inherent European cultural emphasis. This conflict was apparent when participants who shared their culturally relevant practices, often overemphasized and restated their level of care and commitment for all children.

Cross Cultural Experiences

Most of the participants spoke of personal cultural experiences that they perceived as having a strong impact on them. Meaningful cross-cultural experiences and interactions may have filled the void of pre-service multicultural education for the participants. Opportunities to experience diversity first-hand is a recommended approach to multicultural education through field experiences. As Phillion, Malewski, and Richardson (2006) point out the single most response to multicultural issues in schools has been a required multicultural course in teacher education programs. While scholarship and literature are focused upon in these courses, this approach fails to provide opportunities for teachers to build personal relationships with others representing various kinds of diversity (e.g. race, nationality) (Lowenstein, 2003; Malewski, Phillion, & Lehman, 2005, as cited in Phillion, Malewski & Richardson, 2006). Participants had cross-cultural experiences in their personal lives that constructively influenced their approaches with American Indian students, however these experiences greatly varied from professional experiences (e.g. teaching on American Indian reservations; experiences in *Indian* boarding schools) to personal experiences (e.g. powwows; cultural gatherings; personal friendships). Most of the participants reside in the town and surrounding area, but none of them mentioned having any involvement (e.g. attending public cultural fairs and events; visiting historic sites, museums, or gift shops) in the neighboring tribal community. Perhaps bridging interaction between the two communities would be beneficial for American Indian students in

the district. Two participants did have experiences, however, attending events in the community (e.g. memorial service; powwow) for student-related reasons.

Broadened Repertoire of Teaching and Leadership Practices

The most promising findings resulted from participants who intuitively understood that adaptations to existing practices were in the best interests of American Indian students. The school principal promoted culture responsiveness among teachers by facilitating several reviews of research-based literature among the all of the teachers. She also created easy references to classroom strategies for teachers to use as a guide. These kinds of efforts made by the principal reflected that cultural responsiveness was fundamental to her approach to the overall school climate, in addition to classroom pedagogy. A key aspect of this process was her utilization of *student voice* as a resource, which informed more culturally relevant practices. Willing teachers adapted instruction to include more culturally varied and inclusive content. Teachers also demonstrated their appreciation and value of culture through modeling (e.g. sharing personal cultural knowledge; demonstrating cultural knowledge through classroom artifacts).

Influence of Student Voice in the School Climate

Whether or not educators can draw from their own personal cross-cultural experiences or have taken some form of formal multicultural education as a component of administration/teaching preparation programs, they can utilize their students' input to create support mechanisms for students from cultural minority groups. A growing body of literature emphasizes the value of extending the notion

of distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000; Lashway, 2003) to include students in the process (Mitra, 2006).

In this case study *student voice* influenced school activities, which resulted in addressing culturally related academic needs of American Indian students represented in this particular school. Open communication, comfort, and trust established between the school leader and students fostered an environment where students felt at liberty to exercise their right to convey their concerns.

The principal recognized opportunities for increased cultural validation, which had an effect the school climate and specifically the nature of school-wide activities. For example, the principal changed the scope of a school-endorsed celebratory event that commemorated statehood. Prior to this change, the annual event exclusively presented a Eurocentric perspective, which by "excluding alternative visions and discourse" (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2005) served as a manifestation of cultural hegemony. By changing the event to include the local tribal history, American Indian students were empowered to share and represent another perspective of historical events. The ultimate result enabled all EJMS students to be exposed to another view of Oklahoma statehood and the land run era. The American Indian students and the community members that were invited to the event explained how statehood and the land run era had devastating effects on their community. A state history inclusive of American Indian perspectives allow students and faculty alike, to learn of the influence and contributions of local tribal nations to the formation of their towns and state. In this case study the school leader

responded to *student voice,* which resulted in restructuring a school-wide activity to ensure inclusiveness of multiple perspectives of history. This scenario is an example of Banks' (1994) Social Action Approach, the highest level of Multicultural Curriculum Reform. The school leader listened to the voices of students and honored those voices by heeding student concerns and applying their feedback resulting in student projects and activities that impelled them to take personal actions related to the subject matter.

In another example, one teacher demonstrated her receptivity to include cultural components. She incorporated teaching American Indian beadwork in her advisory class schedule when requested by students. When schools include student voice in decision-making and give some choice over the learning process, students learn how to practice and live democracy (Prieto, 2001), achieve at higher levels and are more engaged (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Fletcher, 2007), and develop a democratic sense of responsibility, connection, caring, and competence (Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001).

Student voice can be useful in raising awareness of issues faced by cultural minorities to educators who are out of touch with these issues; however the burden should not rest with the students. Further, culturally marginalized students are products of the very educational system in which their perspectives are silenced. Often they themselves are unaware of the effect of oppression on their realities and accept their roles as members of the cultural minority.

Teachers benefited from exposure to multiple research-based instructional methods, and specifically methods proved to be effective with children from ethnic-minority groups and those who are linguistically diverse. The principal provided scholarly literature regularly and the instructional methods were visible in the physical setting of the teacher's lounge. The advantage of being exposed to different instructional strategies reinforces the idea that students have culturally-related academic needs as well as the importance of varying instruction for diverse classrooms. These practices also convey that certain instructional strategies work better for certain kinds of learners.

In the same way that Mitra (2006) speaks about the politics of having to justify "student voice" as a way to increase student outcomes, particularly test scores, justification of other concepts (e.g. cultural relevance) is often necessary in order to establish worth. As Mitra (2006) states, legitimacy of *student voice* is gained by developing the argument that it can be an avenue toward improving student outcomes.

Role of Principal and School Climate

In the case of Elva John Middle School the principal played a pivotal role a true instructional leader who exhibited sensitivity toward the cultural issues of American Indian students (e.g. increasing representation in curriculum; consideration of minority cultural groups in decision-making). As Hawley and James (2010) assert *diversity-responsive leadership* involves the ability to identify and act on issues related to ensuring that all students have equitable and effective

opportunities to learn and consider diversity –related issues in all of their decisions. The principal related her own personal experiences to those of American Indian students, which made her sensitive to their perspectives. The advocacy role assumed by the principal helped support a school climate that was in continuous transition of becoming more *culturally inclusive*. I define *culturally inclusive school climate* as one that "promotes the cultural validation, inclusiveness, and full participation of all students. With the school leader's support and expectation of teachers to provide all students the opportunity for cultural validation, faculty planned and implemented authentic approaches that included culturally responsive instructional methods and subject matter. Her instructional leadership style supported teachers in making pedagogical and curricular choices that effectively addressed diverse learning styles and supplement the mandated curriculum to make learning culturally relevant to all students.

The culturally inclusive school climate is evident through school-wide activities that value cultural diversity, instead of activities that only value the mainstream culture. When the concept of authenticity in teaching (i.e. authentic pedagogy) was applied, both school-wide activities and classroom activities lent opportunities for student work to have meaning and value beyond school by considering the cultural identity of students. This approach would be in opposition to activities that only reflect the values and norms of the majority culture.

Recommendations

The role of the school leader is critical in the application of cultural responsiveness to the overall school climate. "Climate" and "atmosphere" are summary concepts dealing with the total environmental quality within an organization (Tagiuri, 1968). Tagiuri's taxonomy (1968) classifies the dimensions of a school:

1. Ecology (the physical and material external aspects of the school)
2. Milieu (the dimension concerned with the characteristics and presence of persons and groups in the school)
3. Social system (the dimension concerned with the patterns and rules of relationships, interactions, and operations of persons and groups in the school)
4. Culture (the dimension concerned with values, belief systems, norms, cognitive structures, and meaning of persons in the school).

As Anderson (1982) points out, early definitions of "climate" in the literature tend to be intuitive rather than empirical. For example, Halpin and Croft (1963) used the analogy, "Personality is to the individual what 'climate' is to the organization". Nwankwo (1979) referred to climate as the general 'we-feeling' in a group or sub-culture.

If school principals are the keystones of good schools, and if student achievement is linked to their leadership, then it is critical that departments of educational administration teach future school principals how to facilitate school

climates in which all students, including students of color, are successful (McCarthy, 1999; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

The school leader is instrumental in approaching school climate with the lens of cultural responsiveness. This table illustrates suggestions for school leaders to advance the promotion of cultural responsiveness and multiculturalism in each of the four dimensions of school climate:

Table 5.1

Tagiuri's taxonomy (1968) of the dimensions of schools and Recommendations on Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Ecology	Diversifying and updating multicultural textbooks and library resources; cultural representation through temporary (e.g. bulletin boards, posters) and permanent (e.g. architectural elements, murals, exhibition of art, monuments) visual elements
Mileau	Recruiting culturally diverse faculty, special speakers; promoting representation in the realms of student leadership and governance (e.g. parent committees, school board, textbook review boards)
Social System	Promoting various types of pedagogy and assessment; sharing effective practices; creating outlet for student voice; making cultural competency a measurable standard in evaluating performance
Culture	Diversifying curriculum to include critical discourse on multiple perspectives on existing content; offering coursework with cultural emphasis; making cultural issues a priority by utilizing professional development funding to build understanding

Tagiuri (1968)

In Mitra's (2006) examination of students and adults in a *youth-adult partnership,* issues of equity and injustice (i.e. matters of social justice) that they experienced in their lives, schools, communities, and in broader society were examined. This focus on social justice was addressed on three levels:

Level:	Method:
System level	Focus on issues of injustice/intolerance
Organization level	Advocating for school change
Individual level	Fostering young leadership/peer help

Using Mitra's (2006) three-tiered examination (i.e. system, organizational, and individual levels), this case study findings and the existing literature support that a broad and overarching theme of *Cultural Responsiveness* as a comprehensive school-wide approach can minimize cultural hegemonic impact on culturally marginalized students by creating an inclusive multicultural school climate.

Level:	Method:
System level	Focus and awareness of issues of cultural pluralism
Organization level	Advocate for supporting cultural integrity through cultural responsiveness
Individual level	Utilization of student voice; support for cultural emphasis in learning

For Teachers

Teachers can adapt their pedagogies and make curricular choices that simultaneously serve the academic and cultural needs of American Indian students. Authentic Pedagogy is one teaching approach that can provide a vehicle for students to incorporate culturally relevant subject matter while meeting curricular objectives. Awareness of cultural hegemonic impact also can inform and challenge teachers to select topics culturally relevant to American Indian students. Banks (1994) uses the

example of teaching the subject of Westward Movement. The transformation approach would enable the teacher to pose questions about the topic, including those as fundamental as the name of the unit and critically examining the Eurocentric terminology and undertones in textbooks. Examples of probing questions might be:

What do you think the Westward Movement means?

Who was moving West (e.g. the Whites or [American] Indians)?

What were the boundaries that constituted the region called the West? Why? Viewing the content from different perspectives helps students understand why terminology (e.g. Westward Movement; The New World) utilized in school curriculum is Eurocentric and influences that are accepted and thought of as "normal".

Implications for Future Research

Analysis

One consideration for future case study research is the potential usefulness of qualitative data software during data analysis. A major potential advantage of using Computer-Assisted Analysis of Qualitative Interview Data (or CAQDAS) is that although the approach cannot guarantee rigor, it does encourage it (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). Agar (1983) as quoted in Gubrium and Holstein (2001), concluded that "it" [computer software] doesn't get tired or miss sections of data. Finally, a multiple case study analysis would extend itself to further understanding cultural hegemonic impact and effective counter strategies in different school contexts and settings.

Data Sets

Further study might include American Indian student perspectives of cultural issues and how they perceive their culturally related academic issues and how they perceive that school leaders and teachers address them. The student perspective would also be useful in examining which strategies that they perceive as most helpful in coping with issues.

Although it was not within the scope of the study, during the time spent with participants, it was determined that school personnel lacked knowledge about the political bi-citizenship status of American Indians, and the basis for federal programs and funding for schools serving American Indians. Further examination of this lack of awareness and how to best educate school personnel about the political status of American Indians and federal funding of American Indian education is worthy interest of future study.

Conclusions

This case study was conducted to accomplish something other than understanding a particular case (i.e. understanding how educators address cultural diversity needs in their respective schools) thus qualifying as instrumental case study research (Stake, 1995). Understanding effective educational practices that address issues of marginalized and disenfranchised groups of students, and improving the academic performance of all students are strongly sought-after goals. This case study report aimed to inform teachers and school leaders about how one can recognize and address cultural hegemonic impact in their own schools. By learning how others address similar issues and recognizing how cultural hegemony

manifests itself in schools, educators can engage in more informed planning and decision-making. The impact of cultural hegemony is not exclusive to any one public school; however the degree to which it is recognized varies between schools.

Currently, school leaders and teachers in the field may not have adequate education in multicultural education, including addressing the needs of culturally diverse children. This problem should be addressed during pre-service education, and also for those already in the field, through professional development opportunities. Courses meeting multicultural and cultural diversity issues may not be a substitute for authentic experiential interactions, however without required multicultural education aspiring teachers and school administrators may never have the opportunity to engage in dialogue on cultural diversity and hegemonic issues before prior to being immersed in these issues on the job. Educators (in both school leadership and teaching roles) should show a level of competence to serve culturally diverse children, including American Indians through their teaching, co-curricular, evaluative methods.

This case study demonstrated that although Elva John Middle School is a public school with socioeconomic challenges faced by many public schools in America, practices can be implemented to address cultural hegemony and its impact on American Indian and other culturally marginalized students. The degree to which issues, created by cultural hegemony, are addressed may vary between personnel, but a presence of personnel who are aware of and empathetic to these issues can make a difference in the lives of students.

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APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 12071
Approval Date: March 28, 2008

March 28, 2008

Toni Tsatoke
Dept. Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
2365 Heatherfield Lane
Norman, OK 73071

RE: Facilitating Academic Achievement and Cultural Integrity Among Students: A Case Stufy of a Public School Serving Native American Students

Dear Ms. Tsatoke:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. This study meets the criteria for expedited approval category 6,7. It is my judgment as Chairperson of the IRB that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 as amended; and that the research involves no more than minimal risk to participants.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described:

Consent form - Other Dated: March 20, 2008 Information Sheet
Other Dated: March 14, 2008 Site Permission Ltr - K20 Center
Survey Instrument Dated: March 11, 2008 Interview Questions
Survey Instrument Dated: March 11, 2008 DFO - School Climate Activity
Survey Instrument Dated: March 11, 2008 DFO - Classroom Activity
Consent form - Subject Dated: March 11, 2008
Other Dated: March 11, 2008 Recruitment Letter
Protocol Dated: March 11, 2008
IRB Application Dated: March 11, 2008
Other Dated: February 25, 2008 Site Permission Ltr - Roblyer Middle School

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form. All study records, including copies of signed consent forms, must be retained for three (3) years after termination of the study.

The approval granted expires on March 27, 2009. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request an IRB Application for Continuing Review from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Lynn Devenport, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B: Information Sheet for Consent to Participate in a Research Study

INFORMATION SHEET FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Toni Tsatoke. I am a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus, College of Education. I am requesting your participation in a research study titled, "Facilitating Academic Achievement and Cultural Integrity among Public School Students: A Case Study of One Public School Serving Native American Students". You have been selected as a possible participant because of your employment and experience at the school (case study site). Please read this information sheet and contact me with any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to determine how your school, recognized as a professional learning community, facilitates academic achievement and cultural integrity among its students, including Native American students despite socioeconomic, cultural, and other barriers. The overall school climate, curriculum, and pedagogy will be explored.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following: be observed by the researcher in your regular work setting (e.g. classroom, office), provide occasional access to teaching/school documents (e.g. lesson plans, activity calendars, etc.), and participate in a 60 minute interview to talk about your professional practices and perceptions.

Length of Participation: The observation times will be conducted bi-weekly in 15-30 minute intervals over a period of 6-8 weeks. Length of observations and times will be based on the activity being observed and the participants' needs. Researcher's access and review of school documents will take place only during non-instructional times and at times convenient for participants (e.g. planning periods, while school isn't in session). Participants may be asked to participate in one 60 minute interview to be scheduled at convenient times for participants. Most interviews will take place at the school site, but the researcher will accommodate requests to interview at different locations if needed. All data collection from participants will be completed before July 31, 2008. Participation may be terminated by you or the researcher at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in this Study: Potential risks of participating in this study include intrusion in your work setting and into your perceptions about professional school practices. The researcher will exercise sensitivity in all situations and will conduct observations in the least intrusive manner possible. The researcher will work at the convenience and with the consideration of the participants' needs at all times. The benefits of participating in this study include contributing to the knowledge base about professional learning communities, inclusive multicultural school climates, and culturally-responsive practices, all of which can contribute to higher student academic achievement.

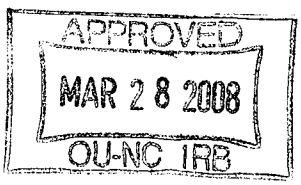
Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept confidential and in the researcher's possession at all times. Your supervisor will not have access to your responses. Data will be stored in a secure, locked file cabinet for the duration of the study. Only the researcher, researcher's advisor, and the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) will have access to data. The OU-NC IRB may inspect and/or copy the research records for quality assurance and data analysis. In published reports, findings will be presented without identifying information and pseudonyms will be used. At the end of the study's reporting phase all electronic, paper, and audio participant data will be deleted, shredded, and destroyed.

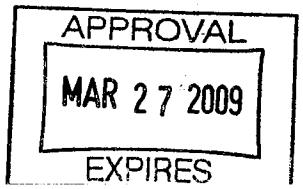
Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and choose to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions: If you have concerns or complaints about the research, contact the researcher's advisor Dr. Grayson Noley via email at gnoley@ou.edu or phone at (405) 325-4202. In the event of a research-related injury, contact the researcher's advisor. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or questions, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Please keep this information sheet for your records. Only by completing and returning the "Informed Consent to Participate" form are you agreeing to participate in this study.





APPENDIX C: Informed Consent to Participate Form

"INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE" FORM
For Research Being Conducted Under the Auspices of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus

Introduction: This study is entitled, "Facilitating Academic Achievement and Cultural Integrity among Public School Students: A Case Study of One Public School Serving Native American Students." The person directing this project is Toni Tsatoke as a requirement for coursework through the University of Oklahoma's College of Education. This form defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

Purpose of Study: This case study will determine how one public school, recognized as a professional learning community, facilitates academic achievement and cultural integrity among its students, including Native American students despite socioeconomic, cultural, and other barriers. The overall school climate, curriculum, and pedagogy will be explored.

Number of Participants: About 15-30 people will take part in this study.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
- Be observed by the researcher in your regular work setting
- Share access to teaching/school documents (e.g. lesson plans, activity calendars, etc)
- Be interviewed regarding your professional practices and perceptions.

Length of Participation: The observation times will take place in 15-30 minute intervals, based on the activity being observed and the needs of the participant. Each participant will be observed 1-2 times per week over a period of 6-8 weeks. Access and review of school documents will take place at times of convenience and during non-instructional times for each participant. Times may be during planning periods or when school is not in session. Participants asked to be interviewed will participate in one sixty minute interview to be scheduled at a convenient time for each participant. Most interviews will take place at the school site, but the researcher will accommodate the participant's request to interview at a different location if it is more suitable. All data collection from participants will be completed by or before July 31, 2008.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in this Study: Potential risks of participating in this study include possible intrusion in your work setting and into your perceptions about professional school practices. The researcher will exercise sensitivity in all situations and will conduct observations in the least intrusive manner possible. The researcher will work at the convenience and with the consideration of the participants' needs at all times. The benefits of participating in this study include contributing to the knowledge base about professional learning communities, inclusive multicultural school climates, and culturally-responsive practices, all of which can contribute to higher student academic achievement.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept confidential and in the possession of the researcher at all times. Your supervisor will not have access to your responses. Data will be stored in a secure, locked file cabinet for the duration of the study. Only the researcher, researcher's advisor, and the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) will have access. The OU-

APPROVED
MAR 28 2008
OU-NC IRB

APPROVAL
MAR 27 2009

NC IRB may inspect and/or copy the research records for quality assurance and data analysis. In published reports, findings will be presented without identifying information and pseudonyms will be used.

Compensation: You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and choose to discontinue participation at any time.

Audio Recording of Study Activities: To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to audio recording. ___ Yes ___ No.

Contacts and Questions: If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher's advisor is Dr. Grayson Noley and can be contacted via email at gnoley@ou.edu or phone at (405) 325-4202. In the event of a research-related injury, contact the researcher's advisor. You are encouraged to contact the researcher's advisor if you have any questions. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or questions, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature Date

