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ABSTRACT

This report contends that the preliminary negative evaluation of the Rough Rock Demonstration School (RRDS) was due more to the investigators' culture shock than the actual situation. RRDS, an experimental school, is unusual in that is administered mainly by Navajos. Thus the appearance of this school, which offers a bilingual and bicultural educational program, reflects the attitudes and customs of its native administration. The problems of cross-cultural studies and evaluations are discussed along with specific instances of faulty assessments of the school. The problems encountered in finding a representative sampling of parents and students, translation, imposing Anglo middle class values on the Navajo way of life, payment of poor people for services, community relations, nepotism, teaching English as a second language, the deleterious effects of traditional dormitory life on Navajos, and parental involvement are presented. (KG)

PROBLEMS OF CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION: THE ROUGH ROCK DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL

by

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Preface

The significance of the Rough Rock program calls for nothing less than the fullest possible airing of all points of view surrounding a most visible experiment.

Accordingly, this statement has been reproduced with permission of the authors in order that more persons might become familiar with it. Nothing beyond slight general editing, shifting two paragraphs in the introduction, and adding the words "Rough Rock Demonstration School" to the title has been done to the original version.

We take no formal position with respect to the contents of the statement. Our hope is that it will be read, thought about and discussed by Indian and non-Indian, professional and non-professional.

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The authors benefited from suggestions and criticisms by professors David Aberle, University of British Columbia, and Alfonso Ortiz, Princeton. However, they are in no way responsible for the content of this paper.

Introduction

This report attempts to show how culture shock can affect the findings of an honest and well-meaning research team.

This report is written in response to the unfortunate situation which was created by a recent evaluation of the Rough Rock Demonstration School (henceforth referred to as RRDS). The unfortunate aspect of the situation is that the team conducting the research could not, as things now stand, return to RRDS for data-gathering purposes.

Our claim is that the Rough Rock evaluators, unknown to themselves, were overwhelmed by the impact of the new school culture and that their report was written under severe culture shock due to unfamiliarity with Navajo culture. The contents of this paper consist of a documentation of this thesis.

There is an unwritten law of anthropological (hence cross-cultural) fieldwork to which every anthropologist's honor and reputation are firmly bound: An anthropologist's field investigation should ideally be conducted in such a manner that the worker himself will be able to return for additional work and that other workers will be able to continue work in the area. Our ignorance of the human condition is profound, and we must view people in a light that will allow us to return to ask more questions. The field must remain "open" because social science research is never truly completed. One has only to consider the fact that the investigation itself is rarely, if ever, without impact on the field situation.

Unpleasant things often need to be said, but they can be said in such a way that is still acceptable to the local populations. This is not, however, easy. We are dealing with two cultures and hence with two different sets of sensitivities. Since an evaluation is always from the point of view of one culture, we can rightfully ask "Who is to benefit from the changes that an evaluation entails?" Ideally, of course, in a

cross-cultural situation both cultures need to change for the benefit of the larger whole. But this requires that the evaluators, the persons responsible for the evaluation and the evaluated accept the investigator's conclusions. How else can the evaluation be effective if the evaluated reject the investigator's conclusions?

The easy and uninteresting way out would be to react along one or more of the following lines to an extremely negative evaluation report:

1. the stupidity of OEO for providing funds for RRDS;
2. the incompetence of the BIA for providing a school plant or for allowing the experiment in the first place;
3. the obstinacy of RRDS for being less than enthusiastic about the evaluation and especially the evaluators;
4. the maliciousness of the evaluators for failing to see the "true" accomplishments of the school.

The adjectives describing the parties to this evaluation drama could have originated from a naive observer present at the "secret" meeting of evaluators and consultants at which some of the preliminary findings were first aired.

It needs to be emphasized in this context that our discussion is based entirely upon the "secret" preliminary findings. The outcome of the final report is irrelevant to the point of our argument which is presented in detail below. This preliminary report may give a clearer picture of the difficulties.

One could argue that the confrontation of RRDS and the evaluators is but another chapter in the power struggle between local people and professional educators. Were we to pursue this line of reasoning, we would need to state the implicit and explicit goals of the local Navajos of RRDS and the goals of Anglo professional educators. Because motives are often obscure we prefer to exclude such a discussion.

We think that a more interesting approach to the problem is to disregard personal motives entirely. In fact, we firmly believe that all parties concerned are honest and honorable human beings, who reacted predictably to a stressful situation which was compounded by the confrontation of two cultures, the Navajo and the Anglo.

The word "predictably" in the preceding paragraph needs qualification. It would be foolish to deny and would weaken our statement and obscure our object if we did not admit that we are being "wise after the fact." The very purpose of this report is to warn against what we now see so clearly: research across cultures is difficult. The entire education of anthropologists and other social scientists who plan research in another culture is directed toward the attenuation of their values and intercultural judgments. Even then, the best graduate training available is no absolute guarantee of success.

Evaluation is research combined with value judgments. Questions concerning which values are appropriate or the reconciliation of two sets of values are far from trivial or obvious. Therefore, if research across cultures is difficult, evaluation across cultures is still more so.

The Rough Rock Demonstration School

Rough Rock Demonstration School is an experimental school. As such, it has the obligation to depart from the ordinary and try extraordinary approaches. Years of Indian policy subscribed to a more or less well-developed assimilationist point of view. The Indian was to become a White Man.

Cultural blinders are not the exclusive birthright of the BIA, Congress, or individuals in Anglo or Navajo culture. It seems to be a pan-human frailty. Nothing was to be gained by RRDS remaining tied to the BIA model. A radical departure from the conventional approach was the only reasonable path open for the school. It was set up as an experimental demonstration in Navajo education. Some of the covert and

overt objectives of change have been accomplished to varying degrees. However, the changes were and are continuing to move in the direction of making RRDS more Navajo. For example: (1) the employees of the school are 85% Navajo: (2) the RRDS school board is all Navajo; (3) DINE Inc. is all Navajo; (4) the students are almost 100% Navajo. The ultimate responsibility for the school and its educational policy rests with Navajos who decided that a Navajo school must stress Navajo culture and language. It is therefore not surprising that the Navajo values and attitudes should be more in evidence in RRDS than in other schools on the Reservation.

The Navajoization of RRDS is further amplified by (1) the beginnings of experimentation with and commitment to a truly bilingual education (where both languages play a coordinate part from kindergarten to -- hypothetically -- junior college); (2) the integration of Navajo social living into the social studies curriculum; (3) the Navajo arts and crafts program; (4) the Navajo Curriculum Center; (5) the use of Navajo as the prime language in school board meetings; (6) the board's Navajo mental health project (a training program of mental health workers in Western and traditional Navajo methods of treatment in order to reach Navajos through a culturally familiar idiom); and (7) the immersion of the school into the center of the Rough Rock community. There is no other Indian school on the Navajo Reservation or on any other reservation that even approximates this image. There are, to be sure, planned and actual bilingual kindergartens and one first grade at Rock Point, but little exists beyond first grade even in the planning stages.

There has been a marked increase in the introduction of Navajo culture in reservation schoolrooms over the past few years. But it is amusing to see Navajo culture taught in English. It is like telling the American population that the beauty of Shakespeare, to be fully appreciated, should be taught and enjoyed in the truly civilized language of classical Latin.

In this situation RRDS has a difficult road ahead; (1) there are no role models to fall back on since there never was a

Navajo-controlled school before: (2) bilingual education was never before attempted in this fashion with an Indian language (we are well aware of the bilingual literacy programs of the late 1930's and early 1940's -- probably somewhat irrelevant today, but useful in creating a practical Navajo alphabet); and (3) the introduction of Navajo language as a medium for instruction has never before reached these proportions.

Any school attempting to fill the student's demands for a good education has a full-time job. A school pioneering in so many areas all at once may perhaps be rightly accused of over-ambition, or of making mistakes. But should we blame Navajos for their sense of urgency?

If perhaps half of RRDS's ideas came from Navajo culture and half from Anglo culture, the syncretism of the two will result in a new cultural form. It will be an adaptation of the two cultures rather than an assimilation of one by the other. Wherever RRDS stands today on its way to this adaptation of the two cultural streams to each other, it is well on its way to a new form of school culture.

We stress this point because we feel that it helps to identify the source of a curious onesidedness of the preliminary evaluation report, especially since the bias appears in the comparison of RRDS and Rock Point, both truly outstanding examples of the best in Navajo Indian education.

Culture Shock

Unfamiliarity with Navajo culture is not surprising. The principal investigator and his chief assistant have had no previous exposure to Navajo culture, nor are they particularly well-read on the subject, considering that the most up-to-date Navajo bibliography (Brugge et al., 1967) contains three hundred pages of well over three thousand entries. Even at that, the coverage is uneven. In other words, there is no substitute for direct, long-range experience.

Culture shock is a form of psychological trauma. It is caused by reaction to strong psychological stimuli of cross-cultural strangeness

and is usually accompanied by a violent, indiscriminate rejection of everything that is part of that other culture. Foster (1966) reports that USIA personnel often require a six-month adjustment period before they are able to overcome initial culture shock and manage to function productively in an unfamiliar cultural setting. Some never make it and return to the United States.

One feature of culture shock which seems particularly relevant to the RRDS evaluation is disappointment over the relations possible between the newcomer or visitor and the local people. Many workers go to another culture with enthusiastic expectations of being welcomed, and becoming close to their new acquaintances. Certainly this was true of the investigators. Though such hopes are often ultimately fulfilled, they rarely are at once, or in as short a time as the investigators spent at Rough Rock. Furthermore, RRDS has been visited so often by so many impressive people that many members of the community have become blasé about them. It is easy for mature and usually objective people to react with disapproval to those who have disappinted them by seeming to reject offered friendship.

It seems likely that the investigators had this experience, and that it unconsciously colored their judgment. This bias may have had its greatest effect in their evaluation of statements made by others suffering similar feelings, navely the non-Navajo teachers. Several of us have observed that many non-Navajo staff members at RRDS have become embittered by their lack of complete acceptance into the Navajo community. Such difficulties seem especially likely in any situation where local people are for the first time gaining control over institutions formerly controlled by outsiders. That is, under these conditions there is likely to be more than usual hostility and suspicion toward members of the former controlling group. Thus the lessons of the RRDS evaluation are especially applicable to evaluations of other new attempts at local control.

The suspicion of culture shock that seems to have afflicted the two principal investigators of the evaluation team aroused our interest during the presentation of the preliminary findings. In disbelief one of

us circulated the following note at the meeting: "Is there anything good about RRDS?"

We counted briefly twenty-five statements divided into thirteen paragraphs in the "Community Relations" section (Chapter Three of the report). Of the twenty-five, five are favorable to RRDS, but without exception they are retracted by juxtaposition with negative statements. Four statements are neutral, and sixteen are unfavorable. There were no unqualified favorable statements!! The rest of the sections presented at the meeting were similarly negative. Since many conclusions were based on parental interviews, we now turn to the problem of sampling interviewees of a culture different from that of the interviewer.

Sampling of Parents and Students

If samples are not representative, no valid conclusions may be drawn from them. If, on the other hand, the sample is random, then one can raise questions about sample size. Aside from the fact that we have grave doubts about the randomness of the parental or the student samples (e.g., there was a larger number of students interviewed at the smaller Rock Point School than at RRDS), we will especially try to highlight the difficulties related to lack of familiarity with Navajo culture.

Sampling a Navajo population is extremely difficult, since Navajos do not represent an homogeneous group. A random sample is often impractical because census data are inaccurate and there are great difficulties in finding the homes of the respondents. A stratified random sample creates the same problem in addition to the difficulties of determining the criteria for stratification in another culture. Navajo households seem to vary according to (1) the "ecological niche" they occupy (at RRDS this is within three sectors: traditional subsistense on the top of Black Mountain, traditional subsistence on the plain below Black Mountain, and subsistence by the scattered wage-worker[1]); (2) the standard of living of the family which may correlate with this "ecological niche"; (3) the acculturational status

[1] Additional correlates may be the preferance of very traditional Navajos for out-of-the-way places.

(measured perhaps by proficiency in English, though this may be misleading, for we know traditional Navajos who speak English well); and (4) religious and/or political affiliation.

Were any of these considerations taken into account in choosing the parental sample?

In addition, we do not know if the seventeen mothers and thirteen fathers at RRDS represent thirty families or less, and the ten mothers and seven fathers at Rock Point seventeen families or less. But even so, the statistical tables are open to interpretations which differ from the unmitigated, negative interpretive bias of the investigators (no tests of significance were given).

That eight out of eleven parents (73%) visited a child's classroom at Chinle Boarding School to seventeen out of thirty at RRDS (57%) and nine out of seventeen at Rock Point (53%), with all due respects to Chinle, is surely due to sampling bias. The "high mobility" of RRDS parents (ten out of thirty or 33%) who used to live elsewhere is equally suspect.

The few arithmetical mistakes we detect are all in the direction unfavorable to RRDS.

Although the investigators seem to feel that the treatment of the children is abominable, there is no consistent evidence for this. RRDS parents like the dormitory (twenty-three out of thirty, or 77%) whereas Rock Point parents like it less (seven out of seventeen, or 41%). Part of the favorable attitude at RRDS may be due to such reasons as: (1) employment possibilities as dormitory parents; (2) the Navajos' sophistication about the reservation situation -- Rock Point parents prefer the dormitory when the weather is bad (six out of seventeen, or 35%) and RRDS parents (seventeen out of thirty, or 57%) say that what is most needed in the community are paved roads (there are, of course, no paved roads at RRDS while Rock Point's main road is paved); (3) on the

other hand, more Rock Point parents complain about the behavior of children and loss of their property (six out of seventeen, or 35%), but only eight out of thirty parents at RRDS, or 27%).

What does it mean when twenty-five out of twenty-five parents claim that RRDS does what they want for their children, while figures at all other places are considerably lower?

What is the involvement and power of the Educational Committee (Rock Point's equivalent to a board corresponding to BIA rules) when 87% (twenty-six out of thirty) parents at RRDS know more than three board members by name, but only 18% (three out of seventeen) at Rock Point and none at Chinle Boarding School? Or the self-reliance of the Navajos --their claim that they can improve their lot themselves -- which is believed by 83% of the parents at RRDS (twenty-five out of thirty), but only fractions of this figure elsewhere (although Chinle public school parents responded with six out of nine, or 67%)?

It appears pathetic to us to see roughly 80% of the interviewed parents in all four schools (RRDS, Rock Point, Chinle Public, and Boarding) demanding instruction in the Navajo way of life, but only children at RRDS and to some extent at Rock Point getting it in any serious manner.

The so-called lack of academic emphasis at RRDS is a common Reservation rumor and a wide-spread belief of BIA and public school educators on the Reservation. We would like to know if the high percentage of RRDS parents believed this rumor (1) due to backlash propaganda; or (2) due to the relative de-emphasis of English and of a rigid approach to "English as a Second Language" at RRDS. "Academic standards" is one of the most desemanticised words in English. It follows closely the relative meaninglessness of terms like "democracy", "capitalism", and "socialism".

Why are RRDS and Rock Point results of achievement tests about equivalent but both higher than the achievement in BIA schools?

Problems of Translation

What is the meaning of some of the inconsistencies in the responses? While only 18% of the parents (three out of seventeen) could name more than three members of the school board at Rock Point, ten out of seventeen or 59% believe that this relatively anonymous board is interested in their ideas and opinions.

What measures have the investigators taken to assure proper translation of the questions into Navajo? Or did they operate on the assumption (excusable only because of their inexperience in cross-cultural, cross-language work) that good translation and interpretation is the automatic byproduct of hiring bilingual speakers? How much interpreter training did the native interviewers receive, and who coached them in the appropriate use of Navajo -- a use that most closely corresponds to the intentions of the English originals? Did the investigators check the sensibility of their questions in Navajo (some of the questions were translated by G. Witherspoon, who is not a native speaker of Navajo)? Did they revise any of their English questions after the sense of the Navajo translation came into question? Did they backtranslate the Navajo questions into English? If the reader is unfamiliar with problems of social science translation, we would like to refer him to the failure of backtranslation reported by Phillips (1959) and the critique of Phillips by Werner and Campbell (1969, in press). The latter source treats the problem of questionnaire translation extensively.

To illustrate, let us take an example. The question posed by the investigators, "Have you ever talked with a school board member (or school committee member) about education?", can be translated into Navajo in at least three ways: (1) backtranslatable as, "Have you ever talked with a school board member about traditional instruction (na'nitin)"; (2) "Have you ever talked with a school board member about school (olta')" or (3) "Have you ever talked with a school board member about learning (ihoo'aah)". There are possibly others. Which version did the interpreter use? Which version did the respondent answer?

Discussion of Community Relations

Perhaps the most negative aspect of the preliminary report dealt with community relations. In this report we are not concerned with the truth or falsity of the evaluator's report qua truth or falsity, nor with exactly where the "factual" truth or falsity lies. We are interested in demonstrating the extreme bias of the report as evidence of culture shock caused by dealing with an unfamiliar culture.

The principal example for the authority of the board being "violated" by DINE Inc. was the school board's decision to bar the principal investigator and his team from the premises of RRDS.

Apparently, a Navajo alleged that he overheard one of the collaborators giving out information that was damaging to RRDS to an AP reporter. Subsequently, the entire team was barred from further work at the school. According to the principal investigator, he was informed about his expulsion before the RRDS board meeting at which the decision was voted on.

Whether this instance represents "undue influence" on the board is not entirely clear, even if one should admit that the evidence is unambiguous. The alleged passing on of unfavorable information obviously threatened everybody at RRDS, including the school board. The negative attitudes of the investigators under culture shock raised suspicions about their motives long before the incident. It is difficult to see how any school board would have reacted otherwise, given the evidence they had at their disposal, and the reasons given for the extraordinary meeting of the board. The assumption that Navajos tend to jump to conclusions when they suspect duplicity is not totally unwaranted if judged by their past experiences and the history of the last eighteen months (the gradual drying up of government programs and resources).

We are unable to explain, except by some need of compulsive fault-finding under the influence of culture shock, why the principal investigator chose this incident, in which he was highly emotionally

involved, as a key case. RRDS is not an ideal democracy. Cases of manuevering the show behind the scenes occur in the best democratic institutions.

The current relative uninvolvement of the board in budgetary matters may be a limitation of the board's power, but those of us who know the former director of RRDS feel that he, too, left most budgetary decisions to his business manager. The Navajo lack of concern for money is well documented. Money is not valued as property nor as a precious thing. We do not know if it had occurred to the RRDS board that money is power, as it probably never occurred to them that money is time. We feel strongly that the involvement of the board in the budgetary problems of RRDS is inevitable and will come as part of the board's grappling with the use of its own power. That the present method of payment of the board for their services is inept need not concern us further here.

Payment of Poor People for Services

The investigators stressed the point that everybody at RRDS is so accustomed to being paid that no services are volunteered. But payment for services is an important part of Navajo culture.

The apprentice pays his instructor in the transmission of ceremonial lore and ritual. The decline of Navajo chanting practitioners has, at least in part, been attributed to the exorbitant expense for "tuition." Many of us who have been involved in Navajo research make payments for all and any services in preference to involvement in the more informal but complex system of obligations that are difficult to manage by those who come from outside the culture. At least one of us negotiates in advance the cost of every interview, every bit of extra-ordinary or esoteric information. Volunteer labor in our middle class sense is unknown in Navajo. It is a fundamental concept of Navajo culture that kinsmen share and cooperate. Those who are "different" relate to each other in terms of reciprocity.

The Navajo parent says "sha'alchini olta' baaishteeh" (I am giving my child to the school). The schools give education to the children in return, but Navajos will argue that education was promised by the United States government as part of its treaty obligations. If Uncle Sam is asking for volunteers, he is defaulting on his promises. We find the argument against payment for services performed to be spurious, and a case of misunderstanding of Navajo culture.

On the other hand, volunteer work is more demanding of poor people. The lower one's income, the less one can afford to divert effort from subsistence to freely contributed labor.

Nepotism at RRDS

Accusations of nepotism refute rather than support conclusions concerning the powerlessness of the RRDS board. Few Indian institutions wield much power, but those that do are invariably accused of nepotism. Given the complex, active kinship network in communities where rights and obligations are largely organized on the basis of kinship, and where resources are scarce, accusations of nepotism are inevitable.

Our view is supported by the fact that the Rough Rock Chapter has not been accused of nepotism. Having been established only a few months ago, it is an adjunct to the school and controls few resources. In sharp contrast, it would be difficult to find a chapter anywhere else on the Reservation where some faction of the population is not accusing another of nepotism. More often than not, the two factions may be related and represent branches of the same clan or lineage. If nepotism accusations of the RRDS board were lacking, we would be seriously concerned about the board's power. The absence of accusations of nepotism at Rock Point speaks for itself.

Effectiveness of the Board

Authority falls into three classes: (1) one has it: (2) one does not have it; or (3) one does not know whether one has it. DINE Inc. ultimately controls the school. However, regardless of where the ultimate

authority lies, the RRDS school board does in fact exercise local authority. Thus there can be local control and authority even though ultimate legal authority resides elsewhere, largely unexercised.

The claim that the board only maintains control over employment runs quite contrary to the nepotism argument. The Rough Rock area is an area of great employment scarcity. Whoever controls employment controls resources in the community. Since there is no other school on the reservation which employs 85% Navajos, we must conclude that the board has exercised this control effectively.

These employment figures are even more impressive if we consider Professor Theodore Graves' finding (personal communication) that the best-educated Navajos compete successfully for the low level jobs on the Reservation, whereas the young uneducated or poorly educated Navajos are forced into relocation.

We do not know what attracts the high percentage of Navajo teachers to a remote place like RRDS, unless there is some satisfaction in working for a Navajo-controlled school, some satisfaction in being Navajo at RRDS, and, perhaps, that RRDS certification requirements are relaxed because of its "private school" designation.

The effectiveness of the RRDS board is greatest in areas where it has some interest and understanding of the problems. Highest on the list are community programs, especially employment, and a just division of the resources of the school. The board was instrumentally involved and "invented" the dormitory parent program, a program which was successfully introduced at Rock Point on the RRDS model but which was unfortunately discontinued due to lack of funds. The board was vitally involved in numerous school proposals for attracting funds. The bilingual education program is a good example. Except at RRDS and Rock Point (to some extent) there is no rush for comprehensive bilingual education anywhere else on the Reservation. The exceptions are bilingual kindergartens.

The board also initiated the Navajo mental health program and organized it in opposition to some of the ideas of some RRDS staff members. Since traditional Navajos are helped by the traditional ceremonies, and since Western therapy is largely dependent on communication between patient and doctor through the medium of language, non-Navajo speaking psychiatrists are at a disadvantage. If we are interested in providing Navajos suffering from psychological problems with help in their distress, the education of Navajo practitioners who can help do the job is the only humane thing to do.

The board at RRDS set the direction of educational goals and special programs and hired professionals in whom they had confidence to administer them. In disputes with outsiders the board would automatically take the side of its professional staff -- part and parcel of their confidence in them. To take even a neutral point of view would be a declaration of lack of confidence.

Without the active participation and support of the board, the Navajo Curriculum Center could not have succeeded. Black Mountain Boy, Coyote Stories, and Grandfather Stories were collected and willingly given at the instigation of the board. Black Mountain Boy is now in preparation in a Navajo language edition.

The Dormitory Culture

The dormitory aides are the lost souls of the Indian education system. They bring with them the dormitory culture of their youth, which often cruelly controlled children and their affiliation with Navajo language and culture. All people who have gone through the dormitory experience in the past have horror stories to tell about the stupidity and callousness of some of the dormitory aides. They are lost souls because no one pays attention to them. They are (except for the children) on the bottom of the academic totem pole. Considering their role and importance as parent surrogates, they receive minimal training and instruction. It seems there is a belief operating that any able-bodied Navajo, by simply applying, becomes an ideal dormitory parent.

It is rather common knowledge on the reservation that many dormitory aides hold traditional Navajos in contempt. In a way, the aides have made it in the white man's world. They qualified for civil service with a limited education. Because of their low status, the only way they can feel their importance is to despise everybody and everything that is truly Navajo. They have passed the baptism by fire of the English language, and they can show the "primitive" children and their parents a thing or two. Dormitory parents have been known to deny knowledge of the Navajo language, in spite of the fact that their Navajo should be one of the key bridges to children and parents. Some who have tried to act in a more humane manner have often been severely reprimanded by an unfeeling administration (see for example Bergman, 1966).

At Rough Rock, dormitory aides are inevitably heading for trouble. At RRDS the despised traditional people from the community are invited to act as dormitory parents. It is disturbing for the aides to find that these non-speakers of English suddenly receive the same privileges although they have never plodded through the boarding school system and learned some English. Suddenly, their entire education and the suffering that has gone with it becomes meaningless or threatened. Some of the aides, in their refusal to speak English, may suddenly feel challenged to have to relearn their Navajo. Everything that their erstwhile education has told them was wrong, even savage and primitive -- the Navajo language and culture -- now becomes highly valued. Children refuse to speak English in the dormitories and punishment of this behavior is now out of the question. The monthly reports of RRDS amply testify to the disquieting effect that the dormitories have on the aides. Is it surprising that their morale is low?

Surely RRDS deserves some of the blame. It acted too much like the BIA schools by forgetting the dormitory aides. Whereas the teachers were gradually educated to accept bilingual education, the aides barely understand what has hit them. We think they desperately need help. The low morale of the aides is damaging for the children.

The evaluators spent a substantial amount of their time at RRDS living in the dormitories. The stresses and strains of two cultures in contact (conflict?) in the dormitory may have intensified the investigator's culture shock.

Navajo and English

No matter how much Navajo is encouraged in RRDS the impact of English on the child is overwhelming. It is in school, even at RRDS, that he first meets some Navajos who are unable to speak Navajo. There is sound argument for the fact that unless one provides remedial English classes for the dormitory aides, English should not be encouraged in the dormitories, since most of it is probably substandard by Anglo middle-class measures. We strongly believe that most school dormitory life after school hours is too rigidly structured, and children rarely have enough time by themselves. Similarly, whether they want to speak English or Navajo after hours should be left to their choice. Anyone who has lived through a period of total immersion in a foreign language will agree that what the children need most is a respite from relentless second language exposure. If freedom to be by oneself leads to autistic behavior (as the investigators claim), then all Navajo children ought to be autistic because of isolated individual activity. Few of our children[1] ever experience the isolation of a Navajo shepherd boy. Our preoccupation with activity may appear equally pathetic to a Navajo preoccupied with contemplation. "Good thinking is the good life," say the Navajo sages.

RRDS and Rock Point

We are particularly concerned with the investigator's insistence that all is well at Rock Point while there is nothing (or hardly anything) good about RRDS. We believe that both represent the best in the otherwise not too bright spectrum of Indian educational efforts. Yet, it is important to see the significant differences. A point-by-point

[1] After all, all of us are from the middle-class of America -- although we are aware of the fact that middle-class life is not the only way to live, nor necessarily the only desirable way.

comparison may be in place, to show that Rock Point is a school more closely patterned after American middle-class values, whereas RRDS has significantly departed from this mold.

First, the leadership at RRDS, as we have pointed out, is Navajo. There are Navajos in very high, important and responsible positions. It is therefore not surprising that Navajo cultural attitudes (for example, a casualness about time and about visitors) are prevalent. The chief problem seems to be the fact that RRDS outwardly maintains the "looks" of a regular United States institution. One has to go beyond the appearances to see the differences.

Rock Point has both the facade and the content. Casual visitors to the school are entertained in the director's home. That is the expectation of our middle-class culture. Some of us have visited Rough Rock on numerous occasions but have stepped inside the homes only of those whom we have known intimately for some time. (Professor Alfonso Ortiz brought to our attention that, for several days while he oriented volunteer tutors last summer at RRDS, he slept in the back seat of his car.)

The leadership pattern is similarly different. One can judge this simply by the fact that from the director of the school up to the Washington BIA the leadership is middle-class American. (We are aware of the Navajo wife of the Rock Point principal whom we greatly admire, and we are also aware of open hostility toward Navajo culture and language by some of his superiors.) We do not know how many Navajo teachers there are at Rock Point. The lower number in comparison to RRDS is not the principal's fault; he, too, inherits an old BIA school culture. In many other schools we know about, jobs that could potentially be filled by Navajos are occupied by Anglos.

Secondly, the leadership patterns lead to different styles of organization. Aside from the fact that RRDS operates like a private school and is solely responsible for all its purchases and dealings with the outside world, it is not given to a "tight ship" operation. Even by the

most stringent middle-class standards the director of Rock Point is an extraordinarily able administrator. At the same time his responsibilities are much more circumscribed by the BIA organization.

One of the best illustrations of the casual attitude to organization of Navajo life is the caricaturization of Navajo dance groups by the more compulsive Hopi. While the Hopi are more like we are, with Kachina costumes of subdued individuality and contrived elaborateness, their performances are marvels of stage management. Nothing could be further from the Navajo's casualness. The Hopis, masquerading as Navajos, have motley dress; there are stragglers who get into the danceline late and the singing is not closely rehearsed in Hopi fashion. The Hopi caricature is obviously equally exaggerated and as ethnocentric as the description of RRDS under the influence of culture shock. For the Hopi, the Navajo performance is "just bad"; for the Navajo, the school's rough edges are part of a life with rough edges. Somehow the jobs get done, and perhaps even get done well.

Third, the continuity of Rock Point helps to make it run smoothly. The program has been in operation for a number of years with little changeover in the top echelon. Rock Point has found its style -- Navajo education through an intensive program of well thought-out English as a second language, and a limited bilingual program. This, coupled with a high performance expectation placed on the children, makes them act and respond (at least with a strange Anglo) much more like middle-class children. The mainstay of the educational approach at Rock Point is through the teaching of English as a second language, or (largely) the audio-lingual method of language instruction. Rock Point has possibly the best such program on the Reservation.

Rough Rock's approach is comprehensive bilingual and bicultural education. The programs are experimental, and there is virtually no precedent for them in non-Indo-European languages; certainly, there are none for American Indian languages and cultures. (We are, however, aware of some Mexican and Peruvian experiments in bilingualism, but not in

biculturalism.) It will take a while before a stabilization of the curriculum can be achieved. The teaching of English as a second language will require extensive adaptation to the focal aims of RRDS. The audio-lingual method is insufficient, and must be augmented by bilingual translation and interpretation exercises to prepare bicultural people who are to be the leaders of the Navajo. Since not every child is equally suited for bilingual education, RRDS may fulfill the need to give Navajo education to those who cannot transcend their native language -- either by choice or capability. In this, we see the advantage of the RRDS approach, which on linguistic, anthropological and human grounds we find preferable.

Conclusions

We hope we were able to demonstrate why the severity of the evaluation team's unmitigated negative judgment in their preliminary report compelled us to postulate severe culture shock. We hope our incomplete evidence supports this claim.

We would like to empasize that the opposite view, namely, that all is right with RRDS is (at least) equally untenable. We have tried to show that the uniqueness of RRDS places it in an extremely difficult position. We would be the first to agree that, while it has no control over many of its problems (e g., the need to start from nothing in bilingual-bicultural education), some of the problems are self-generated (e. g., lack of involvement of the dormitory aides in the aims of RRDS).

A feeling for cross-cultural differences cannot be achieved without effort. Few of us were lucky enough to grow up in a multicultural, multilingual environment. Our experience with the RRDS evaluation indicates that much greater care must be taken in the selection of the personnel for cross-cultural evaluations. That is, the evaluators must be able to document experience with translation of one culture and one language into another.

We admit that although this conclusion is now "obvious" it did catch us by surprise. We can predict it now after the fact. Those of us who have had long exposure to Navajo culture simply overlooked the fact that our own acculturation to Navajo was gradual and over the years, not sudden like the exposure of the evaluating team. We knew the seriousness of cultural bias, but failed to recognize how far from Anglo middle-class RRDS has moved. The message of our conclusion for consulting, evaluation and research at home and abroad is that the need for cultural empathy is imperative and an inviolable prerequisite for success.

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