DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 762 RC 018 621

AUTHOR Reyhner, Jon
TITLE Plans for Dropout Prevention and Special School Support Services for American Indian and Alaska Native Students.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC. Indian Nations At Risk Task Force.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 19p.; In: Indian Nations At Risk Task Force Commissioned Papers. See RC 018 612.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Alaska Natives; *American Indian Education; American Indians; *Dropout Prevention; Dropout Programs; Dropouts; *Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; *High Risk Students; *School Holding Power

ABSTRACT

American Indian and Alaska Native students have the highest dropout rate among all ethnic or racial groups, about 30%. Many studies have focused on the supposed deficits of students who drop out, such as intelligence, school attendance, and parental income. Less attention has been given to the deficits of schools and teachers pushing out Native students. Research indicates several factors associated with higher dropout rates that are particularly critical for Native students: large factory-like schools, uncaring teachers, passive teaching methods, irrelevant curriculum, inappropriate testing, tracked classes, and lack of parent involvement. Beyond correcting these problems to prevent future dropouts, more must be done to help current dropouts. Such efforts include the General Educational Development (GED) program, community-based alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs, programs for teenage mothers, improving the image and content of vocational programs, and creating partnerships with business. Recommendations cover: teacher training in appropriate teaching methods; integrated culture-based curriculum; limiting school size; elimination of tracking; increasing science and mathematics classes; exploring alternatives to retention, suspension, and expulsion; providing K-12 day schools in Native communities that want them; promoting Native education departments; developing a Native teacher certification program acceptable in all Bureau of Indian Affairs schools; more funding for research in Native education; developing tribal curriculum and textbooks; and a national initiative to deglamorize alcohol and tobacco use. This paper contains 53 references. (SV)

Plans for Dropout Prevention and Special School Support Services for American Indian and Alaska Native Students

Jon Reyhner
Eastern Montana College

Abstract

American Indian and Alaska Native students have a dropout rate twice the national average; the highest dropout rate of any United States ethnic or racial group. About three out of every ten Native students drop out of school before graduating from high school both on reservations and in cities. Academically capable Native students often drop out of school because their needs are not being met while others are pushed out because they protest in a variety of ways how they are treated in school.

As the psychiatrist Erik Erikson has pointed out, positive identity formation is an ongoing, cumulative process that starts in the home with a trusting relationship established between mother and child and develops through the child's interaction with other children and adults. To build a strong positive identity, new adults that the child interacts with need to reinforce and build on the cultural messages that the child has previously received. However, too often in schools today teachers are not reinforcing what Native parents show and tell their children producing cultural discontinuity between home and school and forcing Native children to choose between their Native heritage and school success with disastrous results. Many of the problems faced by students such as drug and alcohol abuse are symptoms of the poor self concepts of Native students who ha unresolved internal conflicts resulting from educators asking students to give up their Native culture. Teaching methods and school curriculum need to be changed to reduce cultural conflict between home and school. In addition, the underlying causal factor of internal identity conflict in many Native teenagers needs to be treated at a community as well as an individual level through community-based counseling programs.

In order to help Native students form positive, mature identities and to reduce the number of Native dropouts, large schools need to be restructured to allow teachers to get to know and interact with their students. Caring teachers (especially Native teachers) need to be recruited who will spend the time and effort to learn from as well as teach their students. These caring teachers need to use active teaching strategies with their students to keep their students motivated and Native curriculum needs to be developed and used in Native schools to reduce cultural discontinuity. Testing needs to be used in schools to help students learn rather than to track them into non-academic programs. And parents need to have the power to demand that schools give their children an education that will strengthen Native families rather than separate Native children from their parents. Academic student advocacy programs such as the ones sponsored by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and by tribal colleges need to be encouraged.

Both on and off reservations many schools are not providing an appropriate education for Native students. They are denied teachers who have special training to teach Native students, they are denied a curriculum that includes their heritage, and culturally biased tests are used to push them out of academic programs. The supplemental add-on programs such as Indian Education Act, Johnson O'Malley (JOM), bilingual education, special education, and other federal programs of the last two decades have had a limited success in improving the education of Indian children. However, add-on programs are only a first step to making schooling appropriate for Native children. Native education must be viewed holistically rather than fragmented with basic skills, Native studies, and other classes taught in isolation from one another. In addition to treating the curriculum holistically, dropout prevention needs to be treated holistically. Students do not drop out of school just because of academic failure, drug and alcohol abuse, or any other single problem. Too often well meaning add-on remedial programs focus on finding the reason for failure in students and their homes, "blaming the victims." These programs treat the symptoms of the cultural conflict going on between students and teachers in school rather than the root problem. The idea that Native students are "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived" reflects an ethnocentric bias that should not continue. When schools

do not recognize, value, and build on what Native students learn at home, they are given a watered-down, spread out curriculum that is meant to guarantee student learning but which often results in their education being slowed and their being "bored out" of school. The "traditional school system" has failed dropouts rather than they having failed the system.

Beyond correcting these problems to prevent future dropouts, more needs to be done to help current dropouts through retrieval programs such as the General Educational Development (GED) program and community-based drug prevention programs. In addition, the negative tinge of vocational programs needs to be removed, and these programs opened to all students. In particular, vocational programs need to be tied to real jobs through partnerships with business, labor unions, and government.

Dropout prevention starts with caring teachers who give students every chance for success in the classroom through interactive and experiential teaching methodologies, and culturally-relevant appropriate curriculum. At risk students need peer support through cooperative instructional methodologies and peer counseling programs. Dropout prevention also includes support services outside of the classroom from school administrators and counselors who work closely with parents.

If teachers and school administrators continue to not get appropriate training in colleges of education, local training programs need to provide school staff with information both on what works in Native education and information about the language, history, and culture of their Native students. Parents and local school boards also need on-going training about what works in Native education and what schools can accomplish. Head Start, elementary, and secondary schools need the support of tribal education departments and tribal colleges to design and implement effective educational programs that support rather than ignore Native heritages.

Introduction

The National Center for Education Statistics (1989) reports that American Indian and Alaska Native students have a dropout rate twice the national average; the highest dropout rate of any United States ethnic or racial group reported. About three out of every ten Native students drop out of school before graduating from high school both on reservations and in cities (see Table 1). The research reported in this paper shows that academically capable Native students often drop out of school because their needs are not being met while others are pushed out because they protest in a variety of ways how they are treated in school. The studies reviewed in this paper show that both on and off reservations many schools are not providing an appropriate education for Native students. They are denied teachers with special training to teach Native students, they are denied a curriculum that includes their heritage, and culturally biased tests are used to label them failures and push them out of academic programs.

The Native student dropout problem is not of recent origin. Only a small percentage of students attending the famous Carlisle Indian School in the Nineteenth Century actually graduated (Eastman, 1935). The 1969 Senate report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy — A National Challenge*, also documented dropout rates for American Indians at twice the national average. That report led to the passage of the Indian Education Act. Many Native people testified in the Indian Nations at Risk (INAR) Task Force hearings to the success of Indian Education Act, Bilingual Education Act, Chapter 1, and other supplemental, add-on programs. However, ethnographic studies done of classrooms across the country since 1969 show that supplemental programs are not enough to solve the problem. The need for school-wide reforms is pointed out by the recent Department of Education (ED) sponsored study on dropout prevention (Sherman & Sherman, 1990).

As reported by Estelle Fuchs and Robert J. Havighurst from the National Study of Indian Education in the late 1960s, "Many Indian children live in homes and communities where the cultural expectations are different and discontinuous from the expectations held by schoolteachers and school authorities" (1972, p. 299). Many Native students are forced to choose between their Native heritage and schooling. If they choose their heritage, they can fall further and further behind and eventually be pushed out of school. If they choose school, they can suffer serious psychological problems resulting from the rejection of their homes and families which can lead to drug and alcohol abuse. In the INAR Task Force hearings, much testimony was given on the need for Native teachers and Native curriculum to reduce the cultural conflict between home and school.

Positive identity formation, as the psychiatrist Erik Erikson (1963) has pointed out, is an ongoing, cumulative process that starts in the home with a trusting relationship established between mother and child and develops through the child's interaction with other children and adults. To build a strong positive identity, new adults that the child interacts with need to reinforce and build on the

TABLE 1
Summary of Recent Dropout Studies

Study	Comparison Location	Grades	Dropout Rate	Native Dropout Rate [1]	Number of Native Dropouts
Deyhle (1989)	NE Utah	9-12		36.0%	181
Eberhard (1989)	10 Urban Schools	9-12	12.3% (State Average)	29.0%	106
National[3] (1989)[2]	National	10-12	14.8% (White) 17.3% (Total)	35.5%	1161
Office (1988)	Chinle Agency	10-12		30.0%	
Platero, et. al.[3] (1986)	Navajo Nation	7-12 [4]		31.0%	1000

1. Cohort Dropout Rates. Studies by school districts sometimes school only the dropout rate for one year which gives dropout rates almost two-thirds less than the above studies. One year studies such as reported by Borgrink (1987) ignore students who will drop out in subsequent years before graduating or who have dropped out in previous years. Longitudinal studies are those that follow students through high school or studies that go back to look at previous school records and then try to trace students forward through school The above studies ignore students who drop out before the first grade level inluded in the study.
2. Data from "High School and Beyond" survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics from 1980 to 1986.
3. Approximate figures
4. Twenty-five percent random sample from most reservation schools

cultural messages that the child has previously received. If teachers give growing Native children messages that conflict with what Native parents show and tell their children, the conflicting messages will confuse the children and hurt the formation of strong self-concepts.

A long-term study of Native Hawaiian students showed conventional schools force Native students to choose between their home culture and the culture of the school with disastrous results (Jordan, 1984; Tharp, 1982; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987). When teaching methodology was changed to reflect how students were taught in the home, students showed greater academic achievement. Cultural mismatch between home and school often starts a cycle of failure for Native students (Spindler, 1987).

Too often, well meaning remedial programs focus on finding the reason for failure in students and their homes, "blaming the victims." The idea that Native students are "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived" reflects an ethnocentric bias that should not continue. When schools do not recognize, value, and build on what Native students learn at home, they are given a watered-down, spread out curriculum that is meant to guarantee student learning but which often results in their education being slowed and their being "bored out" of school. As a Denver adult education teacher summed it up in the INAR/National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) Joint Issues Session in San Diego the "traditional school system" has failed dropouts rather than they having failed the system.

Two major studies (Deyhle, 1989; Platero, 1986) of Native dropouts found that a traditional Native orientation was not a handicap in regard to school success. In addition, the Navajo Dropout study found that "the most successful students were for the most part fluent Navajo/English bilin-

guals" (Platero, 1986, p. 6). Lin (1990) found Native college students who had traditional orientations outperformed those with modern orientations.

Dropout prevention

To prevent students from dropping out of school, it is necessary to know why they drop out. Many studies have focused on the supposed deficits of students who drop out, including their parents' income, their intelligence, and their school attendance. Less attention has been given to the deficits of the schools and teachers pushing Native students out, but this is an even more important topic for Native parents and educators.

TABLE 2
Distribution by Quartiles of Eighth Grade Native Student Achievement

Subject	Percent in Quartile
History	
Lower quartile	43.1%
Lower middle quartile	31.0%
Upper middle quartile	18.4%
Upper quartile	7.4%
Mathematics	
Lower quartile	46.3%
Lower middle quartile	29.1%
Upper middle quartile	16.3%
Upper quartile	8.3%
Reading	
Lower quartile	44.9%
Lower middle quartile	30.0%
Upper middle quartile	18.5%
Upper quartile	6.6%
Science	
Lower quartile	46.9%
Lower middle quartile	27.4%
Upper middle quartile	17.4%
Upper quartile	8.3%

SOURCE: Table 106, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1989, 25th Ed. (NCES 89-643). Washington, D.C: Office of Education Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education using data from "National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988" survey.

Recent studies (see Table 1) show that Native students continue to drop out of school at twice the national average. The National Center for Education Statistics reports dropout rates for American Indian students at 35.5 percent in 1989. The largest detailed recent study done in 1986 by the Navajo Division of Education reports a 31 percent dropout rate (Platero, Brandt, Witherspoon, & Wong, 1986). This rate is confirmed by a smaller detailed study done on the Utah portion of the Navajo Reservation (Deyhle, 1989). Other smaller studies give similar rates. The 1989 Northern Cheyenne educational census also shows 31 percent of Indian adults without either a high school education or a GED program (Ward & Wilson, p. 26).

All the above figures are only slightly higher than the 27.1 percent of Native teenagers between the ages of sixteen and nineteen living on reservations that were found in the 1980 census to be not enrolled in any school and who were not high school graduates. However the census figures also showed wide variation among reservations as to how many Native teenagers were not in school. One New Mexico Pueblo had only 5.2 percent of those teenagers not getting a high school education while several small Nevada, Arizona, Washington, and California sites had no students completing a high school education (Bureau, 1985).

Research indicates a number of factors associated with higher student dropout rates. Factors that are particularly critical for Native students include:

- Large schools
- Uncaring teachers
- Passive teaching methods
- Irrelevant curriculum
- Inappropriate testing
- Tracked classes
- Lack of parent involvement

Each of these factors is explained in detail below [see also Weis, Farrar, & Petrie (1989) for a general discussion on dropouts describing some of the factors discussed below].

Large schools help create dropouts

There is evidence that the increased size of American schools, especially the large comprehensive high schools with more than one thousand students, creates conditions for dropouts. Recently, the National Study of Schooling (Goodlad, 1984) criticized large schools for creating factory-like environments that prevent teachers and other school staff from forming personal relationships with stu-

dents. The recent ED sponsored study on dropout prevention (Sherman & Sherman, 1990) found small class and program size, low pupil-teacher ratios, program autonomy, and a supportive school environment associated with successful dropout prevention. It found that "many students who have not met with success in the regular school program have been alienated by a large, bureaucratic system that does not respond to their unique needs" (p. 49).

Smaller schools also allow a greater percentage of students to participation in extra-curricular activities. Students participating in these activities, especially sports when excessive travel is not required, drop out less frequently (Platero, et al., 1986). Many reservation schools do not have drama clubs, debate teams, and other non-sport extra-curricular activities which would help develop Native student leadership and language skills.

Another negative feature of large schools revealed in the Navajo Dropout Study (Platero, et al., 1986) is that in rural areas students are often required to take long bus rides to school. Students who miss the bus often cannot find alternative transportation, thus increasing their absenteeism. Long distances between homes and school also discourage parents from taking a more active role in school activities. Anita Tsinnajinnie, an educator from Cuba (NM) High School, in the INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions in San Diego testified on how some students had to get up at 5:00 am to catch the school bus at 6:30 am so they could start class at 8:50 am.

Unless large schools are restructured to create schools within schools and larger blocks of time that individual teachers can form human relationships with individual students, it is difficult for caring teachers to interact with any one student long enough to know a student personally and to form the kind of supportive relationship described in the section on teachers below which will help a student stay in school. Another approach to this problem has been the creation in large urban areas such as Buffalo, New York, of Native magnet schools to provide both the closeness and culturally appropriate curriculum that Native at risk students need to succeed.

Uncaring teachers

The importance of warm, supportive, and caring teachers is documented in the Native student dropout research (Coladarci, 1983; Deyhle, 1989; Platero, et al., 1986). Caring teachers are willing to learn about their students and their students' cultures as well as to teach students. From what they learn, caring teachers adjust their teaching to fit the cultural background of their students. Fewer Native students report that "discipline is fair," that "the teaching is good," that "teachers are interested in students," and that "teachers really listen to me" than other racial or ethnic group (National, 1990, p. 43). Two General Educational Development (GED) instructors note in supplemental testimony before the INAR Task Force hearings in Seattle that:

> Those students who study for the GED examination often are experiencing for the first time instructors who are Native American themselves, and who truly acknowledge that they are intelligent human beings who are capable of learning and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. For many, this is a new concept. (Document 191, p. 5)

In testimony at the INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions in San Diego, an educator testified,

> Students who have dropped out have indicated to us that their reasons include not being able to identify with what is going on in the classroom, teachers not really explaining what needed to be done, teachers going too fast, insufficient time to complete class assignments. They felt that they had been put on a schedule with no flexibility. If they needed more time on a test, it wasn't allowed. They also felt defeated because teachers and other school staff members didn't seem to understand them. The easy way out was just to leave school.

Ms. Michelle Credo who served as a duty aide at Juneau Middle School testified,

> I have seen discrimination in the treatment of students. There is too much emphasis on punishment, and the same kids are being punished over and over. My role in discipline was to supervise in-school suspension, and I was supposed to discourage them from any infraction. I was learning a lot from listening to them. Many came from dysfunctional families or families that feel powerless against the school system. Many were very bright, but teachers would tell me that I could get more work out of them because I had fewer to supervise. These young people had leadership capacity that was not being nurtured at all. I tried to suggest providing a counseling program rather than simply resorting to punishment (sit and do homework or nothing). I wanted the school to look at why these problems kept occurring. (INAR Alaska Regional Public Hearing, Juneau, AK, August 2, 1990)

Whenever possible students should be involved in making and enforcing school rules. The success of this approach was found by Albert Kneale in a Native school ninety years ago (1950) and were

described by William Glasser in his book *Schools Without Failure*, first published in 1968.

The most complete account of how caring individual attention to Native students leads to academic success is given in Kleinfeld's 1979 study of an Alaskan school, St. Mary's. St. Mary's, a Catholic boarding school, was successful despite what would be generally considered inadequate funding. Kleinfeld concluded from her study of the school that,

> The most important kind of education happening at the school is not happening through subject matter instruction or through teaching technical skills. It happened through the communication of values, of principles for organizing one's life despite the disorganizing pressures of cultural change. This system of values is communicated only in small part by direct teaching. Rather, it is lodged within the structure of student and staff relationships at the school. These standards are communicated above all through the intimate associations that develop at St. Mary's between teachers and their students. (1979, pp. 27-28)

St. Mary's volunteer teachers interacted with students both in and out of the classroom. The school was "a village society with a structure of social relationships similar to that of the students' own communities" (p. 32) and "most classes taught by the volunteers were a mixture of factual information, personal experiences of the teacher, references to Eskimo village life, delightful in-jokes, and broad humor" (p. 34). St. Mary's students did not score higher on standardized tests than graduates from other schools, but the experience and self-confidence gained from interacting with caring adults allowed them to master the college environment better.

Another successful Native school reinforces some of Kleinfeld's conclusions. Rock Point Community School in Arizona draws many of its non-Native teachers (about half the high school teaching staff) from returned Peace Corps volunteers. These teachers care about the community as well as their jobs and see education in a more holistic way. Teaching subject matter is only a part, and not necessarily the major part, of their jobs (Reyhner, 1990).

An ethnographic study done on Navajos and Utes, including both interviews with students and classroom observations, reports that students "complained bitterly that their teachers did not care about them or help them in school" (Deyhle, 1989, p. 39). This study also reports that "a little less than half of the Navajo and almost two-thirds of the Ute [students] felt school was not important for what they wanted to do in life" (p. 42). She also finds that "When youth experienced minimal individual attention or personal contact with their teachers, they translated this into an image of teacher dislike and rejection" (p. 39).

Time and again in the INAR Task Force hearings Native parents testified about the need for more Native teachers both to provide role models for their children and for the unique cultural knowledge they have to offer. Unfortunately, in an attempt to improve the quality of teaching in the United States, changes have been made in teacher preparation programs and certification standards that aggravate rather than solve problems for Native education. Increased certification standards are preventing Native students from entering the teaching profession because the National Teachers Examination and other tests used are culturally biased and fail to measure Native student strengths. The Winter 1989 issue of the *Fair Test Examiner* reported how nearly 38,000 Black, Latino, Native and other minority teacher candidates are being barred from classrooms by teacher competency tests. In addition, teacher preparation and certification programs are culturally and linguistically "one size fits all," and the size that is measured is a middle-class, Western-European cultural orientation. Recent research has identified a wide body of knowledge about bilingual education, Native learning styles, and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teaching techniques that teachers of Native students need to know. In addition teachers of Native students should have a Native cultural literacy specific to the tribal background of their students. But teachers often get just one generic multicultural course in accredited teacher education programs.

An additional key factor previously mentioned that is not evaluated by either tests or course grades is teacher personality. Studies (Kleinfeld, 1979; Coburn, 1989; Deyhle, 1989; Platero, Brandt, Witherspoon, & Wong, 1986) clearly show the Native student's need for warm, supportive teachers. These teachers need to use active teaching strategies, described by Cummins (1988) as experiential and interactive. Teachers of Native students cannot assume that their students will be automatically interested in academic subject matter. Teachers must constantly draw connections for their students between academic knowledge and its application to the real world. The Indian Education Act Applied Literacy Program at Rock Point Community School is an excellent example of academic instruction in a practical environment. As students develop their literacy skills, they get to use them on a low wattage television station and

in an award winning school newspaper (Reyhner, 1990). Basic skills must be taught in a context of meaningful student activity, and *meaningful* means meaningful for the student as well as the teacher.

The structure of secondary schools needs changing to allow for more teacher-student contact. The present reliance on the "Carnegie Unit" produces a fragmentation of the curriculum. Examples of Native schools that have worked to solve this program include Crazy Horse High School in Wanblee, South Dakota, and Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona. At Wanblee, English and social studies classes are integrated in the high school across grade levels. At Kayenta, subjects are blocked together so that students change class less and stay longer with each of their teachers. The recent ED sponsored study on preventing dropouts found block programming was successfully used "to create a 'family' environment for students" (Sherman & Sherman, 1990).

All students face difficult transitions as they enter and proceed through their school days. At fourth grade when teachers traditionally tend to move toward more formal textbook-oriented instruction and textbook descriptions change from what students hear daily to abstract narrative descriptions, too many Native student fail to bridge the gap, and it is only a matter of time before they drop out. Again, at either sixth or eighth grade, students often transfer from working most of the day with the same students and teacher to a working with many different teachers and students in a large factory-like secondary school. Dropout prevention must start in the home, continue in early childhood education programs, and continue into high school and beyond as a community-wide effort. Only caring teachers can help students successfully bridge the many transitions they face as they proceed through their schooling.

I do not mean to suggest that we have a lot of evil teachers who do not care about Native students. What I do suggest is that teacher training programs do not recruit and value caring individuals, teacher training programs do not particularly prepare teachers to teach Native students, and, once hired, teachers often get little in-service training on Native curriculum and teaching methods. If the educational system does not nurture and value caring teachers, it will not get them. Much of the emphasis in recent educational reform movements has been on the better academic preparation of teachers for students who for one reason or another are determined to learn in school. Many of the recent reforms point at getting rid of students who are bored and uninterested in school through tests and more rigorous discipline. Nationwide, our emphasis on more rigorous discipline rather than prevention has made our country first in number of prisoners. We have a greater percentage of our citizens in prisons than either the Soviet Union or the Union of South Africa. Teachers of Native students need greater access to specialized training and Native curriculum materials and support services. The Great Falls Public School System in Montana was commended in the INAR Task Force hearings for its "very diversified and comprehensive learning resource center that could serve as a model for other such centers."

One witness at the hearings suggested that non-Native teachers teaching in Native communities should be given Peace Corps type training before starting their jobs. The success that Rock Point Community School in Arizona has had with hiring returned Peace Corps volunteers to teach in their high school indicates the validity of that suggestion. However, the current emphasis on academic versus a holistic view of teacher training is leading our nation away from this type of training. More and more states are making tests such as the National Teachers Examination (NTE) the final requirement for a teaching certificate; however, the NTE cannot measure how much a teacher cares about students and does not measure whether the teacher knows anything about Native language, history, or culture. In addition, the timed nature of standardized tests hurt bilingual students who need to translate English questions into their Native language in order to understand them. States have even taken steps backward from the proper preparation of teachers of Native students. For example, in 1973 the Montana state legislature mandated Indian studies for teachers working on or near reservations, but this law was later repealed.

It seems insane, but it is true in this country that a Native person can successfully complete four or more years of college and receive a Bachelors Degree in education at an accredited college or university and be denied a license to teach Native students on the basis of one timed standardized examination that does not reflect Native education at all. At the same time, a non-Native who has never seen a Native student, never studied native history, language, or culture, and whose three credit class in multicultural education emphasized Blacks and Hispanics can legally teach the Native students that the Native graduate cannot.

Passive teaching methods

It is popularly assumed that students who drop out are already failing, but research on Native students shows that the academic performance of dropouts is not that different from students who remain in school. Navajo students gave boredom with school most frequently as their reason for planning to drop out or having dropped out. Forty-five percent of the Navajo dropouts were B or better students (Platero et al., 1986; Platero 1986). This lack of interest in education needs to be further examined, but other studies point to the fact that it is the way children are taught in school that produces this boredom (see Cummins, 1988).

This is not a new issue, The Meriam Report in 1928 reported that almost all schools had locked rooms or isolated buildings used as "jails" for unruly students and that in some schools Native children were forced to "maintain a pathetic degree of quietness" (pp. 329 & 332). McCarty and Schaffer (in press) advocate an "explorer" curriculum for Native students based on the work of Freeman and Freeman (1988). In such a classroom, students "interact with their environment, their peers, and their teachers as they learn about the world" (Freeman & Freeman, 1988, p. 4). Ovando (1988) describes a similar type of problem-solving curriculum for science, and gives an example of its successful application with Alaska Native students in Gambell, Alaska (see also Guthridge, 1986). These types of approaches fight the problems of boredom and lack of interest prevalent in classrooms that are focused on students listening to teachers lecture, reading textbooks, and memorizing information.

Cummins (1988) contrasts the traditional transmission method of teaching which focuses on students sitting passively in class and memorizing information with more experiential and interactive teaching methodologies which focus on actively involving students in learning. His review of the research indicated teachers who used transmission methods caused minority student failure while experiential and interactive methods created conditions for minority student success. Other studies of Native students show the same need for teachers to know more about the home culture of their students. Swisher and Deyhle (1989) have analyzed a number of these studies to show how teachers can improve the instruction of Native students, unfortunately most teachers are unlikely to receive this type of instruction in their teacher training programs unless certification requirements are changed.

Native and other minority students are least likely to receive active teaching strategies as they are shunted to low track classes as documented previously. High track students have more active learning activities and high prestige subject matter, for example, Shakespeare in English classes (Oakes, 1985). Low track English classes, where Native students are more likely to be found, had popular, rather than classic, literature and more "alienation, distance, and authority than" high track classes (p. 133). Savage (1987) gives a similar description of Chapter 1 classrooms, and Smith (1988) describes generally how instruction, especially in reading, is often segmented into a series of discrete "basic" skills which are taught mechanically with the results that students are often bored. In Deyhle's dropout study students "spoke of the boredom of remedial classes, the repetition of the same exercises and uninteresting subjects" (1989, p. 44). Testimony was also given at task force hearings for more cooperative learning activities in classrooms where students learn together rather than individually. Glasser (1986) sees cooperative education as the method to get potential dropouts to become interested again in what schools have to offer. In a study of Alaskan education, seniors included the following reasons for their classmates dropping out of school: not being good at memorizing facts, boredom, larger class sizes, and unsupportive teachers (Senate, 1989).

Teachers who are not trained to teach Native children, as most teachers are not with our present teacher training system, tend to experience failure when they start teaching Native children. While these teachers often become discouraged and find other jobs, the students are left to suffer from continued educational malpractice. Changes in certification requirements for teachers of Native students to require specialized training in Native education is supported by data from the *Report on BIA Education*. This data shows an extremely high turnover rate of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) professional staff, fifty percent in two years, in comparison with nationwide figures, and Native students thinking worse of their teachers than any other group (Office, 1988). Previously, the Kennedy Report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy — A National Challenge* (Special, 1969), found that one-fourth of the elementary and secondary teachers of Native children admitted not wanting to teach them. Proper training and screening of teachers could solve this problem, especially the training of Native teachers.

Inappropriate curriculum

In addition to poor teaching methods, Native schools are characterized by inappropriate curriculum (Coladarci, 1983; Reyhner, in press). The

vast majority of textbooks are not written for Native students. In the INAR Task Force hearings, many Native educators pointed out the need for teaching materials specially designed for Native students. Despite vast improvement in the past two decades, there are still reports that "too many textbooks are demeaning to minorities" (Senate, 1989, p. 28). Michelle Stock, education director of the Seneca Nation, in the INAR Task Force public hearings called for a "concerted effort ... to promote and provide accurate depictions of Indian people, past and present" and criticized the negative images of Native people given by textbooks and the media (INAR Eastern Regional Public Hearing, October 2, 1990, Cherokee, NC). At the INAR Task Force's Great Lakes Regional Hearing (St. Paul, MN, September 20, 1990), Cheryl Kulas of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction testified that of 1,369 teachers who took a North Dakota American Indian Studies course, ninety-nine percent of the teachers indicated they did not have books about Native Americans in their classroom and seventy-two percent had not developed or used methods that work successfully with Native American students.

Testimony from the INAR Task Force hearings indicates that too often superficial attempts are made in schools to provide Native curriculum through a Thanksgiving unit or a Native American Day rather than developing a culture-based, culture-embedded curriculum that permeates both the school day and the school year. Extensive material exists to produce elementary and secondary culturally appropriate curriculum for Native students, however, there is little incentive for publishers to produce material for the relatively small market that Native students represent. The wealth of information that could positively effect Native students understanding and self-concept is indicated by books such as Jack Weatherford's (1988) *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World*; however, this information does not seem to be reaching Native students at the elementary and secondary level.

Not only are American textbooks largely inappropriate in cultural content for Native students, they are also over-relied on in most classrooms. There is evidence that teaching methods that rely less on textbooks work better with Native students. In mathematics, this means more use of manipulatives, in science it means a laboratory approach including using the natural environment as a laboratory, and in reading it means Whole Language methods where students can read and study literature from both the mainstream American society and their Native culture (see also Chapter 14, this book). Deyhle (1989) in her dropout study notes how teachers too often tell their Native students to read the chapter and answer the questions at the end of the chapter. An uninteresting task even when students can read well, but an impossible one for many Native students who cannot read well.

Schools also need to develop curriculum that deals with racism in schools. At the INAR Task Force hearings there was repeated testimony about Native students facing racial prejudice in their schools. John Beaulieu, chairperson of the Minneapolis public schools Indian parent committee testified that,

> students felt threatened or ashamed to be identified as an Indian in schools with few Indians or supportive services for Indian students. Other students, who cannot hide the fact that they are Indians, often face merciless teasing and ridicule from others who openly make fun of their names and appearances. Too many Indian students are often forced to defend themselves from such racial and physical harassment and are suspended and expelled from school as a result. (INAR Great Lakes Regional Public Hearing, St. Paul, MN, September 20, 1990)

Inappropriate use of tests

The emphasis on standardized testing in this country produces built in failure from the way the tests are designed (Oakes, 1985, Chapter 2; Bloom, 1981). In addition to the built-in sorting function of standardized tests, they have a cultural bias that has yet to be overcome. Some of the changes made to improve education in American schools recommended in *A Nation at Risk* (National, 1983) and other studies have hurt rather than helped Native students. For example the academic emphasis that uses tests to measure school success has led to more Native students being retained in grade, and retention leads to dropping out as overage students reach high school. The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 reports that 28.8 percent of Native students have repeated at least one grade, the highest percentage of any racial or ethnic group reported (National, 1990, p. 9). The research on failing (retaining students in grade for another year) students indicates that it only creates more failure. Even retention in kindergarten does not help students who are having academic problems. Countries such as Japan do not practice grade retention (Shepard & Smith, 1989). With current practices, schools can even make themselves look better by pushing out Native students since they are evaluated on their average test scores. The more "at risk" students they push

out, the higher the schools' average scores (Bearden, Spencer, & Moracco, 1989).

Unthinking school administrators and teachers use the BIA mandated California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and other standardized test scores to show that their present curriculum is not working without realizing they are comparing bilingual and culturally different student test scores with monolingual English student norms. The result is that they keep changing the curriculum in a futile attempt to get Native language speaking students in the early grades to have English language test scores that match the test scores of students of the same age who have spoken English all their lives. They also are driven to "teach to the test" in order to show success with the result that the curriculum becomes based on whatever the standardized test covers rather than on the real needs of Native students. Research indicates that it takes about six years for non-English speaking students to get an academic proficiency in English which will give them a chance to match the English language test scores of students whose native language is English (Cummins, 1988).

It is also only fair that achievement tests given to Native students be aligned with what they are being taught in their schools (and not vice versa!). Testimony given at the INAR/NACIE Joint Issue Sessions in San Diego give instances of the use in BIA schools of tests designed for state mandated curriculums on students who were not taught using those curriculums. The report of the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, *From Gatekeeper to Gateway: Transforming Testing in America*, (1990) focuses on the issue of both too much standardized multiple choice testing in our nation's schools and on how the results of that testing are used inappropriately. As the title of the National Commission's report suggests and Cummins (1988) maintains, tests should be used to pinpoint student weaknesses in order to help them rather than being used to fail students, give them inferior high school "attendance" diplomas, or keep them out of the teaching profession as is done now.

Negative effects of tracking

"Tracking" is the common practice in secondary schools of dividing the student body into high achievers, average achievers, and low achievers and providing separate classes for each group. This tracking is often based on the questionable results of the standardized testing that is described above and by racist attitudes towards minorities. Oakes (1985) describes the negative effect that tracking has in our nation's high schools and how Black, Hispanic, and Native students are disproportionately represented in the lower tracks where they receive a substandard education. She documents how in tracked classrooms "lower-class students are expected to assume lower-class jobs and social positions as adults" (p. 117) and that "students, especially lower-class students, often actively resist what schools try to teach them" (p. 120). Statistics from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 reported in Table 2 show that less than ten percent of Native students are in the upper quartile of achievement test scores in history, mathematics, reading, and science while over forty percent are in the lowest quartile. The low expectations of teachers for low track students, already unsuccessful in school, make an already serious problem worse. The differential treatment high and low track students receive from teachers are described below under the heading of "teaching methods."

Useem (1990) describes how many students, including many Native students, get tracked out of advanced mathematics classes. However, she found some schools with more advanced mathematics classes and more flexibility in allowing students into these classes. She emphasizes the need for counselors and teachers to take an advocacy role in encouraging students to try advanced mathematics courses. The American Indian Science and Engineering Society located in Boulder, Colorado, does an excellent job of working with schools and colleges throughout the country to encourage Native students to pursue science careers. Their magazine *Winds of Change* contains excellent articles on Native education.

The experiences of Jaime Escalante, as portrayed in the movie "Stand and Deliver", illustrate how teachers who have high expectations for their students and who can bring their subjects alive for their students can produce high achievement in minority students who are normally written off in our schools. This supports the research of Bloom (1981) that, given proper teaching, ninety percent of students can master classroom subject matter. The film also portrays some of the negative aspects of standardized testing, as when Educational Testing Service officials assumed cheating when Hispanic students succeeded beyond the officials' expectations.

Lack of parent involvement

Last but not least of the changes that need to take place in schools to decrease dropouts is greater parent involvement. Often school staff say they want parent involvement, but what they really want is parents to get after their children to

attend school and study. In the words of one hearing witness in San Diego,

> They [school officials and teachers] really want parents as cake bakers and cops. That is their idea. They send home recipes and say "This is what we want your kid to look like. You feed him and clothe him, you bathe him — make sure he doesn't have any lice — send him to school on time, pick him up, come to back-to-school night and open house, and let us do our song and dance. We will send home the homework and you can sign off. You are the cop." So your kid is on probation at home. This sets up a very negative relationship.

While getting parents to get their children to school is important, parent involvement also means educating parents about the function of the school and allowing parents real decision-making power about what and how their children learn. The best way to get schools to reflect parent and community values and to reduce cultural discontinuity between home and school is to have real parent involvement in Native education. At many successful Native schools, the school board, administrators, and teachers are Native people. Parents need to have effective input as to how and what their children are taught. This is best achieved through Native control of schools. However, restrictions on curriculum placed by states on public schools, and even the BIA on BIA-funded schools, limit the effectiveness of Native parent involvement. State and BIA regulations force Native schools to use curriculum and textbocks not specifically designed for Native children and to employ teachers, who though certified, have no special training in Native education.

Native Student Retrieval and Re-entry Strategies

The few good studies of Native dropouts such as the Navajo Dropout Study (Platero, et al., 1986) point out the nationwide need to systematically keep track of the number of Native dropouts since retrieval programs can only be designed when the extent of the problem is known. The new Montana TRACKS program indicates how states can begin the process. Many studies seriously overestimate and other seriously underestimate the extent of the dropout problem because schools do not know how many children have never entered school or whether a student who appears to have dropped out has actually just transferred to another school without notice.

The importance of knowing the extent of the problem is indicated by the Navajo Dropout Study which found that.

> Fully 46% of all dropouts expect to return to school and graduate, while another 45.1% say "maybe" when they are asked if they expect to return to school and graduate. Only 8.8% have no hope or expectation of returning to school or graduating. (Platero, 1986, p. 33)

A regular school based retrieval program is most desirable, but alternative schools, and General Educational Development (GED) programs also provide effective means to further the education of "at risk" Native students.

Role of GED, Young Mothers, Tribal College, and Other Programs

The importance of GED programs in helping dropouts finish a high school level education can be seen in the 1989 educational census of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation where 19 percent of the Indian adults had GED certificates. Twenty-seven percent of Indian adults on the Northern Cheyenne reservation with a high school education had received GED certificates (Ward & Wilson, p. 26). Young Mother programs that allow students with babies to continue their high school education in school and at the same time teach parenting skills, allow both teenage mothers to complete their high school education and to better raise the next generation of Native students.

The Indian Self-Determination and Assistance Act of 1975 has allowed Native organizations to set up alternative schools for students that have been pushed out or who have dropped out of BIA and public schools. Sometimes, upon entering these alternative programs is the first time Native students experience Native teachers and a Native curriculum. BIA-funded Native-controlled alternative schools and urban magnet schools for Native Americans are uniquely able to provide an environment with all the things this paper has shown Native students need. Small untracked schools with Native teachers, culturally appropriate curriculum, and active parent involvement provide a haven for Native students who cannot or will not adapt to large impersonal education systems.

The Tribal community colleges also play an important role in sponsoring locally controlled GED programs for Native youth. Tribal community colleges actively recruit dropouts and work with local high schools. However, Native students

are often unprepared for college work and need to take developmental, non-credit classes. These extra classes use up government aid eligibility with the result that students who need the aid the most run out of eligibility before completing a bachelor's degree. This is especially true in teacher training programs as these programs often spell out every course the student must take and any deviation extends the students time in college. Tribal community colleges also play an additional important role in spearheading local dropout studies and other much needed Native educational research.

Nutrition, medical, and drug abuse problems

Reservation, rural, and inner-city poverty effect Native students disproportionately. In addition, the medical problems associated with alcohol abuse, most notably fetal alcohol syndrome, impact Native communities. The need for programs such as WIC, Head Start, and National School Lunch is great. In addition, there is a continued need for boarding schools to take in Native youth from dysfunctional homes. However, despite the bleak picture of reservation life sometimes portrayed by the media, recent Indian Health Service statistics indicate that Native people are winning the war on drugs, but they still have a long fight ahead of them.

The age-adjusted alcoholism death rate for Native people decreased 61 percent from 1973 to 1987, but it still remains 4.3 times the rate for all races in the United States (Indian, 1990). From the beginning of Native-white contact, Native people's lack of experience with alcohol has been taken advantage of. The United States Government was unable to consistently enforce laws against selling liquor to Natives, and, despite many reservations being legally "dry" today, bootlegging continues. In addition, bars are built as close as possible to dry reservations. Former Education Secretary Cavazos pointed out that alcohol is the "number one drug of choice for America's youth" (United States, 1989, p. v). The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 found that 16.4 percent of Native students reported that "someone offered to sell me drugs" in school, the highest percentage of any racial or ethnic group (National, 1990, p. 45).

In addition to the problems, possibly genetic, of inexperience with alcohol, the Native drug abuse problem is aggravated by the cultural conflict between Natives and the mainstream culture. Students do not drop out of school just because of academic failure, drug and alcohol abuse, or any other single problem. Many of the problems faced by Native students such as drug and alcohol abuse are symptoms of the poor self-concepts of Native students who have unresolved internal conflicts resulting from educators asking students to give up their Native culture. The underlying causal factor of internal identity conflicts resulting from cultural conflict between Native cultures and the mainstream American culture needs to be treated at a community as well as an individual level.

As Gerald Grey, principal of Chemewa Indian School, noted in his testimony at San Diego, getting students sober was just the start of treatment. Once the student returned from treatment, the underlying problems that led to drug abuse must be addressed. Much clinical drug abuse treatment is aimed at the individual and does not have a high success rate. Native drug abuse is a community problem needing community approaches to treatment. Treating the individual and sending him or her home or back to school usually leads to relapse. The community, especially the student's peer group, needs to be worked with. Based on their review of the research on Native alcoholism, Edwards and Edwards (1988) recommend a community approach for adolescent treatment and give seven recommendations:

- Utilize Native Elders to act as role models and to provide support services.
- Provide for alcohol education programs that include counseling.
- Have first offender programs that require attendance at group counseling sessions and teach problem-solving skills. Requiring attendance of parents at these sessions is also helpful.
- Provide early prevention programs focusing on improving parenting skills and child self-concept.
- Provide identification and intervention programs for "at risk" students.
- Train adolescent peer counselors.
- Provide employment opportunities for Native youth.

Professional school counseling too often is restricted to academic matters. Counselors, as certified teachers, are unlikely to have a real knowledge of the Native community and are unlikely to have the time to give in-depth help to troubled youth. This weakness of the professional counseling program can be overcome, at least in part, through the training of peer counselors. An excellent example of giving students a reason for learning is the peer counseling program at Chinle High School that two students described at the

INAR/NACIE Joint Issue Sessions in San Diego. These students volunteered for a class where they learned about the effects of drug and alcohol abuse and learned leadership and peer counseling skills. The students then applied what they learned by helping students with problems. Cheryl Kulas, assistant director for Indian education for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, also described a Peer Facilitator Training Program sponsored by her department that teaches peer support techniques, decision-making skills, and offers alternatives for substance abuse as part of a Youth Leadership Institute (INAR Great Lakes Regional Public Hearing, St. Paul, MN, September 20, 1990). The non-profit Native American Development Corporation has also published a number of booklets on how Native youth and communities can fight drug abuse.

In addition to Native efforts, the nation as a whole has to do more to control alcohol and other drug abuse among youth. The banning of advertisements of alcoholic beverages on commercial television would be a major step in deglamorizing alcohol. Also, the linkage of sporting events with the promotion of alcohol and tobacco products needs to be discouraged. For example, the linkage of smokeless tobacco products with both professional and amateur rodeo events aggravates a growing health problem among Native students.

One of the greatest tragedies of Native drug abuse was recently brought to the attention of America in Michael Dorris's book *The Broken Cord*. This book describes the tragedy of children born with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). If these students survive to school age, teachers can do little to help them become as academically successful as non-FAS students. The problem of FAS highlights the need for community prevention programs that discourage drug abuse for all Native people and which provide counseling and alternative recreational activities on a community-wide level.

Another major drug problem among Native children is inhalant abuse. With the current crisis over the use of "hard" drugs, not enough attention is given to how students, often in elementary schools, abuse common products such as Liquid Paper, rubber cement, and gasoline. Like the FAS child mentioned above, a child who abuses inhalants can suffer brain damage that the best intentioned and trained teacher cannot overcome.

Vocational programs

Historically, vocational programs for Native students have had a racist tinge. The Jesuit priest, Father Palladino, wrote that "a plain, common English education, embracing spelling, reading and writing, with the rudiments of arithmetic, is booklearning sufficient for our Indians" (1922, p. 113). Father Palladino and others felt Indians were lazy and an academic education would encourage their "natural indolence." The vocational education of students was also an excuse to employ Native children in the upkeep of their schools as a cost-cutting measure. Vocational education in government boarding schools even led to the possible violation of state child labor laws (Meriam, 1928). This trend continued after World War II when Native workers were considered as suitable for "close, tedious, repetitive work requiring great dexterity and fortitude" (Senese, 1985, p. 76). Gloria Kootswatewa, vice-chair of the Kickapoo Tribe, testified at the INAR Task Force hearings how,

> All Indians students are geared toward vocational education, they are never counseled for college-bound courses. I had a problem with my son and asked the school to change his courses. I was told all Indians go to vo-tech. (INAR Plains Regional Public Hearings, September 18, 1990, Oklahoma City, OK)

Oakes (1985) documents how vocational education for poor and minority students "*limits* their future opportunities and, in fact, relegates them to low-level occupations and social status" (1985, p. 150). Her review of the research "strongly suggests that participation in vocational programs has not enhanced the employment opportunities of participants," rather vocational education segregates Native and other minority students "in order to preserve the academic curriculum for middle- and upper-class students" (pp. 152-153). In addition, she found that schools in upper income neighborhoods had vocational programs that prepared students for higher income jobs than vocational programs in low income schools, for example, bookkeeping versus cosmetology. Rather than specific job training, employers want to know if potential employees are trainable. This is especially true in this era of rapidly changing technology. Students who are able to read, write, compute, and reason are trainable.

In addition to the inability of high school vocational programs to keep up with rapidly changing technology, there is a problem with the low status of vocational programs. The importance of Native student self-concept in school success was brought out again and again in the INAR Task Force hearings. Unless vocational education is something for all students and is part of a pervasive/integrated K-12 career education program, it is likely to remain a second class education for second class

citizens. The INAR Task Force hearings also brought out problems that Native students have had with vocational education provided by proprietary schools. Some of these schools are only interested in the financial aid Native students can qualify for, and students do not get the training they need for actual employment.

Partnerships with business

Whereas Native students can get the skills and confidence they need to be employment trainable in high school, there is still a need to encourage businesses to provide on-the-job training for Native students. But these job opportunities must not just be minimum wage, assembly-line type jobs. Too often in the past Indian reservations had been treated like third world countries, to have their natural resources and cheap labor exploited by both big and small businesses. Federal funding for partnership programs needs to fit in with tribally specific economic development plans which insure that Native communities and individual employees benefit from the partnerships as well as the employers. Partnerships with businesses are difficult to develop in reservation settings because few businesses exist. In urban settings more can be done. Individual schools need encouragement and guidance to seek out business partnerships even at a distance.

Partnerships with businesses, labor unions, universities, and government agencies such as the Indian Health Service need to:

- Provide mentors who act as role models, advisors, and paraprofessional counselors for at-risk students.
- Provide vocational experiences for at-risk students including field trips, short-term summer programs, and internships.
- Work with schools so that schools provide the academic preparation necessary for employment in the partnership organization.
- Develop a spirit of volunteerism and self-help within businesses and among students to provide community-wide development.
- Provide employment for graduates.

Conclusions

The supplemental add-on programs such as Indian Education Act, Johnson O'Malley (JOM), bilingual education, special education, and other federal programs have had a limited success in improving the education of Indian children. However, add-on programs are only a first step to making schooling appropriate for Native children. There is a need to view Native education holistically rather than fragmented with basic skills, Native heritage, and other classes taught in isolation from one another.

In addition to treating the curriculum holistically, dropout prevention needs to be treated holistically. As the research reported in this paper shows, students do not drop out of school just because of academic failure, drug and alcohol abuse, or any other single problem. Dropout prevention starts with caring teachers who give students every chance for success in the classroom through interactive and experiential teaching methodologies and relevant curriculum. In addition, at risk students need peer support through cooperative instructional methodologies and peer counseling programs. Dropout prevention also includes support services outside of the classroom from school administrators and counselors who work closely with parents.

If teachers and school administrators continue not to get appropriate training in colleges of education, local training programs need to provide school staff with information both on what works in Native education and information about the language, history, and culture of the Native students. Parents and local school boards also need on-going training about what works in Native education and what schools can accomplish. Head Start, elementary, and secondary schools need the support of tribal education departments and tribal colleges to design and implement effective educational programs that support rather than ignore Native cultures.

Much testimony was given in the INAR Task Force hearings on the importance of self-esteem for Native students. It is sometimes not made clear that self-esteem is not an independent variable, but is rather a reflection of how competent a Native child feels. Having students memorize material to show success on standardized tests is a poor way to develop self-esteem. However, if students interact with caring, supportive adults, if students are allowed to explore and learn about the world they live in, including learning about their rich Native heritage, if they are allowed to develop problem solving skills, if they are given frequent opportunities to read and write and to do mathematics and science in meaningful situations, and if they are encouraged to help improve the world they live in through community service, the consequence will be that Native students will feel good about themselves and will be successful in life.

While much of the attention given to dropouts focuses on high schools, students are deciding in the primary grades whether school is something for them. If they are failed, if they do not find school interesting, if their school is something alien and foreign to them, they are "at risk." Teachers need to build on the cultural values that Native parents give their children if teachers want to produce a strong positive sense of identity in their students. Attempts to replace students' Native identity with a mainstream American cultural identity confuse and repel Native students and force them make a choice to either reject their family's values or their teachers' values. Neither choice is desirable or necessary. Students can be academically successfully and learn about the larger non-Native world while at the same time retaining and developing their Native identity. The solution to the current problem Native students often face is to change schools with Native students so that the Native cultural values are reinforced rather than ignored or depreciated.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to implement effective dropout prevention programs:

1. Special programs for students such as provided by the Indian Education Act need to be continued. However, more needs to be done to integrate these special programs into a culture-based curriculum rather than as add-on curriculum. The new school-wide Chapter I programs are a step in the right direction.
2. Teachers of Native students should be provided with and required to have training in cooperative, holistic, experiential, interactive, bilingual, and ESL teaching methodologies that have shown to be effective with Native students. In other words, the suggestion of Fuchs and Havighurst "that teachers of Indian children should be systematically trained to take account of the sociocultural processes operating in the communities and classroom where they work," drawn from *The National Study of American Indian Education* completed in 1971, needs to be finally implemented (1972, p. 305).
3. School boards and administrators should be encouraged to limit the size of new schools. When this is not possible, or in existing schools, restructuring should be encouraged that produces schools within schools, magnet schools, and similar programs that reduce student anonymity and alienation.
4. School boards and administrators should be encouraged to decrease the negative effects of tracking on Native students through the use of heterogeneous grouping.
5. Advocacy programs such as carried on by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society should be encouraged to promote Native students taking more science and mathematics classes. Challenging students academically in classrooms alleviates student boredom, a major reason for students leaving school.
6. Schools should be encouraged to explore alternatives to failing students in grade, suspension, and expulsion.
7. Some Native students still must attend boarding schools far from their homes. All Native communities that want them should be provided with K-12 day schools. This applies mainly to the Havasupai and Navajo reservations. If the State of Alaska can provide village high schools, the BIA should be able to make an equal effort without requiring lawsuits.
8. The BIA and ED should do more to promote development of Native Education Departments to help them develop (1) site-based cooperative tribal teacher training programs operated by tribal community colleges and four year colleges, (2) tribal curriculum guidelines and materials, and (3) reservation-wide dropout prevention programs which track students and provide community based intervention, support, and treatment programs. The mandate of Public Law 100-297, Section 5106, for both Native curriculum development and developing and strengthening tribal education departments needs to be carried out. So far the BIA has refused to implement this act or its predecessor 25 CFR 32.4.
9. As the "fifty-first state," the BIA should provide a Native teacher certification and school accreditation program, and Native government education departments should provide specific language, history, and culture endorsements and standards. This certification and accreditation would then be acceptable in all BIA funded schools.

10. There is a need for more funding of educational research in conjunction with Native Education departments and tribal colleges on what works for Native education.
11. There needs to be a publication program for tribal curriculum and textbooks sponsored by ED and BIA in conjunction with Tribal Education Departments and in cooperation with Tribal Colleges and University Native American Studies Programs.
12. A national initiative needs to be made to deglamorize the use of alcohol and tobacco including the banning of beer and wine advertisements from television and a program to discourage the linkage of athletic events with advertisements for alcoholic beverages and tobacco products.

References

Bearden, L.J., Spencer, W.A., & Moracco, J.C. (1989). A study of high school dropouts. *The School Counselor, 27*, 113-120.

Bloom, B. S. (1981). *All our children learning*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Borgrink, H. (1987). *New Mexico dropout study*. Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico State Department of Education, Evaluation, Testing, and Data Management Unit. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 303 289)

Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce. (1985). *American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts on identified reservations and in historic areas of Oklahoma (excluding urbanized areas): 1980 census of population* (Volume 2, Subject Reports) (PC80-2-1D, Part 1). Washington, DC: Author.

Coburn, J., & Nelson, S. (1989). *Teachers do make a difference: What Indian graduates say about their school experience*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Coladarci, T. (1983). High-school dropouts among Native Americans. *Journal of American Indian Education, 23*(1), 15-22.

Cummins, J. (1988). *Empowering minority students*. Sacramento, CA: California Association for Bilingual education.

Deyhle, D. (1989). Pushouts and Pullouts: Navajo and Ute School Leavers. *Journal of Navajo Education, 6*(2), 36-51.

Eastman, E.G. (1935). *Pratt: The Red Man's Moses*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.

Eberhard, D.R. (1989). American Indian education: A study of dropouts, 1980-1987. *Journal of American Indian Education, 29*(1), 32-40.

Edwards, D.E., & Edwards, M.E. (1988). Alcoholism prevention/treatment and Native American youth: A community pproach. *The Journal of Drug Issues, 18*(1), 103-114.

Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and society* (2nd Ed.). New York: W.W. Norton.

Franks, E.M., Fortune, J.C., & Weaver, D. (1990). A profile of a dropout population in a Native American high school, a local perspective. A paper presented at the annual American Education Research Association meeting in Boston, MA, April 16-20, 1990.

Freeman, Y., & Freeman, D. (1988). Bilingual learners: How our assumptions limit their world. Occasional Papers No. 18, Program in Language and Literacy, College of Education, University of Arizona, Tucson, Edited by K. Goodman & Y.M. Goodman.

Fuchs, E., & Havighurst, R.J. (1972). *To live on this earth: American Indian Education*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Glasser, W. (1986). *Control theory in the classroom*. New York: Harper & Row.

Goodlad, J. (1984). *A place called school: Prospects for the future*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Guthridge, G. (1986, April). Eskimos solve the future. *Analog*, 67-72.

Indian Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1990). *Trends in Indian health 1990*. Washington, DC: Author.

Jordan, C. (1984). Cultural compatibility and the education of Hawaiian children: Implications for mainland educators. *Education Research Quarterly, 8*(4), 59-71.

Kleinfeld, J. S. (1979). *Eskimo school on the Andreafsky: A study of effective bicultural education*. New York: Praeger, 1979.

Kneale, A. (1950). *Indian agent*. Caldwell, ID: Caxton.

Lin, R-L. (1990). Perceptions of family background and personal characteristics among Indian college students. *Journal of American Indian Education, 29*(3), 19-28.

McCarty, T.L., & Schaffer, R. (in press). Language and literacy in Native American classrooms. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *American Indian education: History, research, theory, and practice*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.

Meriam, L. (Ed.). (1928). *The problem of Indian administration*. Baltimore: John Hopkins.

National Center for Education Statistics. (1989, September). *Analysis report: Dropout rates in the United States: 1988* (NCES 89-609). Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics. (1990, June). *National education longitudinal study of 1988: A profile of the American eighth grader* (NCES 90-458). Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven, CN: Yale University.

Office of Indian Education Programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior. (1988). *Report on BIA education: Excellence in Indian education through the effective school process*. Washington, DC: Author.

Ovando, C. J. (1988). Teaching science to the Native American student. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *Teaching the Indian child: A bilingual/multicultural approach* (pp. 227-245). Billings, MT: Eastern Montana College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 301-372)

Palladino, L. B. (1922). *Indian and White in the Northwest: A history of Catholicity in Montana*. Lancaster, PA: Wickersham.

Platero, P. R., Brandt, E. A., Witherspoon, G., & Wong, P. (1986, December). Navajo students at risk: Final Report for the Navajo Area student dropout study. Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Division of Education, Navajo Tribe.

Platero Paperwork, Inc. (1986). Executive summary: Navajo area student dropout study. Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Division of Education, The Navajo Nation.

Reyhner, J. (1990). A description of the Rock Point Community School bilingual program. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *Effective language education practices and native language survival* (pp. 95-106). Choctaw, OK: Native American Language Issues.

Reyhner, J. (In Press). The textbook dominated curriculum. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *Teaching American Indian students*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.

Sanders, D. (1987). Cultural conflicts: An important factor in the academic failures of American Indian students. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 15*(2), 81-90.

Savage, D.G. (1987). Why Chapter 1 hasn't made much difference. *Phi Delta Kappan, 68*, 581-584.

Senate Special Committee on School Performance, Fifteenth Alaska Legislature. (1989). Helping schools succeed at helping all children learn. Fairbanks, AK: Author.

Senese, G. B. (1985). The irony of self-determination: Community and economic development, self-help, and the social education of Native America 1940 to 1975. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. (University Microfilms International # 8600306)

Shepard, L.A., & Smith, M.L. (Eds.). (1989). *Flunking grades: Research and policies on retention*. New York: Falmer.

Sherman, R.Z., & Sherman, J.D. (1990, October). Dropout prevention strategies for the 1990s (Draft Copy). Washington, DC: Pelavin Associates, Inc.

Smith, F. (1988). *Joining the literacy club: Further essays into literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate. (1969). *Indian education: A national tragedy — A national challenge*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Spindler, G.D. (1987). Why have minority groups in North America been disadvantage in their schools? In G.D. Spindler (Ed.). *Education and cultural process: Anthropological Approaches* (pp. 160-172). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Stuhr, C. (1987). Fear and guilt in adult education: A personal account of investigations into students dropping out. Swift Current, Saskatchewan: Cypress Hills Community College. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 285 038)

Swisher, K., & Deyhle, D. (1989, August). The styles of learning are different, but the teaching is just the same: Suggestions for teachers of American Indian youth. *Journal of Navajo Education*, Special Issue, 1-14.

Tharp, R. G. (1982). The effective instruction of comprehension: Results and description of the Kamehameha Early Education Program. *Reading Research Quarterly, 17*(4), 503-527.

United States Department of Education. *What works: Schools without drugs*. Washington, DC: Author.

Useem, E.L. (1990). 'You're good, but you're not good enough:' Tracking students out of advanced mathematics. *American Educator, 14*(3), 24-27 & 43-48.

Vogt, L.A., Jordan, C., & Tharp, R.G. (1987). Explaining school failure, producing school success: Two cases. *Anthropology & Education, 18*, 276-286.

Ward, C.J., & Wilson, D.R. (1989). 1989 Educational census of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Unpublished paper.

Weatherford, J. (1988). *Indian givers: How the Indians of the Americas transformed the world.* New York: Fawcett Columbine.

Weis, L., Farrar, E., & Petrie, H. G. (Eds.) (1989). *Dropouts from school: Issues, dilemmas, and solution.* Albany: State University of New York.

About the Author

Dr. Jon Reyhner is Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Native American Studies at Eastern Montana College (EMC) in Billings, Montana. Since 1986 he has taught courses for EMC's Indian Bilingual Teacher Training Program. He worked from 1971 to 1985, first as a teacher and then as a school administrator, with Native students in tribally controlled and public schools on seven different reservations in Arizona, New Mexico, and Montana. He has given numerous professional presentations on the subject of Native education and written articles on Native education for *Reading Research and Instruction* and the *Journal of American Indian Education* and book reviews for the *American Indian Quarterly*, *Studies in American Indian Literature (SAIL)*, and the *Journal of Navajo Education.*

Dr. Reyhner edited editions of *Teaching the Indian Child: A Bilingual/Multicultural Approach* for EMC in 1986 and 1988, edited the proceedings of the 1989 Native American Language Issues Institute titled *Effective Language Education Practices and Native Language Survival*, co-edited *Teaching the Native American* for Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company in 1988, and co-authored *A History of Indian Education* for EMC in 1989. He is currently editing a book, *Teaching American Indian Students*, for the University of Oklahoma Press which is scheduled to appear in the Spring of 1992. He is also editing a regular column on Native bilingual education for the newsletter of the National Association for Bilingual Education and is serving on the editorial board of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Educational
Research and Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed
August 8, 1992