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EDUCATING NATIVE AMERICANS

K. Tsianina Lomawaima
University of Arizona, Tucson

Educating Native Americans. These words still encapsulate a battle for power: the power to define what education is—the power to set its goals, define its policies, and enforce its practices—and the power to define who Native people are and who they are not. (In this chapter, I use the terms Native American, Native, and Indian education to refer to all Indian people in the lower 48 states and to Alaska Natives. The federal government maintains two separate listings of American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages.) European and American colonial governments, operating through denominations of the Christian church, first defined Indian education as the cleansing, uplifting, thoroughly aggressive and penetrating force that would Christianize, civilize, and individualize a heathen, barbaric, and tribal world (Axtell, 1981; Hoxie, 1984; Prucha, 1979, 1984; Szasz, 1988; Szasz & Ryan, 1988).

Over two centuries, the U.S. colonial administration of Indian affairs has diligently built a bureaucracy dedicated to controlling every aspect of Native lives (Castile & Bee, 1992; Fixico, 1998). Rules and regulations have authorized mineral extraction, controlled individual bank accounts, directed land use, homogenized housing, and mandated schooling—in short, created an edifice of federal surveillance that might astonish the average U.S. citizen secure in the image of a democratic nation. The “Indian education” devised to transform and assimilate Native people has been at loggerheads with the education of Native children by their parents and communities within indigenous systems of knowledge and practice. The tensions between the two systems have not relaxed much in the years since the first edition of this volume, but the political relations among tribal sovereigns, the federal sovereign, and the states continue to shift and evolve, and developments in education have always been deeply implicated in that process.

A discussion of tribal sovereignty, federal policy, and the singular government-to-government relationship that exists between tribes and the United States must begin this story. Native nations are distinct from other ethnic or linguistic “minority groups.” As indigenous nations with an inherent sovereignty that predates the constitutionally based sovereignty of the United States, American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages retain a status recognized by the Constitution and the legal supremacy of treaty law. They have agreed to a protectorate relationship under federal authority, above the jurisdiction of the states, unless Congress explicitly and appropriately authorizes state jurisdiction.

Second, a brief overview of the demographic history and characteristics of the U.S. Native population includes statistics on educational participation, achievement, and degrees earned. The historical narrative of federal Indian education began with colonial efforts to Christianize and civilize indigenous people, and it continued through the establishment of mission and federal boarding schools. Boarding schools shaped thousands of Native American people; their attitudes and responses to those institutions are discussed briefly.

A review of contemporary issues includes research on dropouts, learning styles, and interactional styles in classrooms; theories of cultural congruence or discontinuity and their shortcomings; self-determination; the development of Native leadership and control in Indian education; and curriculum development, school reform, and

The author is indebted to Teresa L. McCarty, at the University of Arizona, and to the reviewers of this manuscript for their generous and thoughtful contributions.
language policy. After a discussion of current trends, the chapter concludes with an assessment of the past and implications for the future of Native American education.

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY AND FEDERAL INDIAN POLICY

Federal powers have devised an educational system wedding ideology and practice in order to reshape Native American people (Adams, 1995; V. Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Lomawaima, 2002). Other arms of the federal bureaucracy have manufactured definitions of Indianness, tribal rolls, lists of recognized tribes, and certificates of degree of Indian blood—all to control who has American Indian or Alaska Native status and who does not (National Archives, 1988a, 1988b; Pascal, 1991). Native nations have creatively resisted federal powers even as they have had to adapt to them (Nabokov, 1991; Olson & Wilson, 1984). The assertion of tribal power is and has always been the assertion of inherent sovereignty: to retain or reclaim rights to self-government, self-definition, and self-education (Wilkins & Lomawaima, 2001). Indian education can only be understood against this historical, political, economic, legal, and social battleground.

In approximately the last half century, the balance of power has shifted as tribes struggle with changing definitions of self-government and work to strengthen and expand tribal sovereignty (V. Deloria & Lytle, 1984; V. Deloria & Wilkins, 1999; Pommersheim, 1995). The shift in power toward tribal self-determination in education has not been uniform, or rapid, or uncontested; it has grown slowly from deep roots. It has significantly changed educational practice and policy but has by no means reformed schools to satisfy all the needs of Native American children, parents, and communities (Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999). It is the aim of this chapter to delineate the course of research on Native education without losing sight of the larger political context, where Native people patiently labor to check the erosion of their sovereign rights. We need the vantage point of sovereignty in order to imagine what Native education should be and might become (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002).

Since the federal government turned its attention to the "problem" of civilizing Indians, its overt goal has been their complete transformation (Adams, 1995; Szasz & Ryan, 1988). Since the late 1800s, most federal policy has not equated the civilizing process with simple assimilation into U.S. society. Educational policies have been designed to prepare Indians as a subservient working class, amenable to federal control, to provide domestic and manual labor to the U.S. economy (Adams, 1988; Littlefield, 1993; Lomawaima, 1993; Trennert, 1988). Native Americans have challenged that model of Indian education by seeking access to Euro-American schools, and to academic and professional training. In the twentieth century, tribes and the courts refined a theory of political rights that defines educational opportunity as a treaty right promised in partial exchange for the cession of huge tracts of land (V. Deloria & Lytle, 1984; V. Deloria & Wilkins, 1999; Wilkinson, 1987). As indigenous nations exercising internal sovereignty, tribes occupy a unique legal and political space within the United States. American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages are federally acknowledged as political entities with a government-to-government relationship with the United States; that status distinguishes them from all other ethnic or racial minorities and places them above state jurisdiction (Wilkins & Lomawaima, 2001).

Most Native Americans believe their right to education should not necessitate eradication of heritage languages, cultures, religions, or identities (Cajete, 1994; V. Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; McCarty, 2002). As Native American parents and communities have challenged and changed the working definition of Indian education and created education for and by Native people, the questions and solutions proposed by Native and non-native educational researchers have also evolved.

One of the great challenges to research on Native Americans is the exhilarating range of diversity among our cultures. The federal government currently recognizes more than 550 tribes, including 223 Alaska Native villages. Federal officials have estimated there are as many as 250 indigenous groups who are not recognized by the United States (Prucha, 1984). Each Native community is distinguished by its own language, customs, religion, economy, historical circumstances, and environment. Native people are not all the same. A fluent member of a Cherokee Baptist congregation living in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is different from an English-speaking, powwowing Lakota born and raised in Oakland, California, who is different from a Hopi fluent in Hopi, English, Navajo, and Spanish who lives on the reservation and supports her family by selling "traditional" pottery in New York, Santa Fe, and Scottsdale galleries. The idea of being generically "Indian" really was a figment of Columbus's imagination.

It is a cornerstone of tribal sovereignty today that tribal governments set the criteria for their tribal membership; the criteria vary widely across the nations. Some tribes specify a "blood quantum" of ancestry within that specific tribe, typically ranging between one-eighth and one-half, for membership; others do not. Some tribes specify Native language fluency as a condition for service in the tribal government; others do not. Despite tribal control of tribal membership, certain federal criteria for Native American
identity still carry weight. The federal government, for instance, requires one-quarter blood quantum as recorded in a federal "certificate of degree of Indian blood," which is based on agency records, in order to qualify for Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) college scholarships. Other federal programs—such as the census, or educational opportunity entitlement funds—rely on self-identification, where an American Indian or Alaskan Native is someone who checks the right box on the right form.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The scholarly effort to piece together a demographic history of indigenous American populations has proved a difficult and depressing chore. There is no consensus on how many people lived on the North American continent prior to 1492 (see Ramenofsky, 1987, and Ubelaker, 1992, for an overview of the debate). We do know indigenous Americans were devastated by European expansion and newly introduced epidemic diseases, smallpox foremost among them. Although scholars do not agree on absolute Native population numbers, they have slowly but surely revised numbers upward, to current estimates for precontact Native North America ranging from more than 5 million in the present United States (Thornton, 1987) to the highest estimate, 18 million north of Mexico (Dobyns, 1983).

Native populations plummeted as much as 90% to 95% to their nadir of less than 250,000 in the early 1900s. The U.S. Census Bureau first attempted a complete census of American Indians in 1890, when they counted 248,000. By 1900 that number had shrunk to 237,000. The numbers have been climbing ever since 1920, as populations recovered, health care improved, and census methods changed: 357,000 in 1950, 524,000 in 1960 (Shoemaker, 1999; U.S. Census Bureau, 1988).

The numbers shot upward as the census allowed more citizens to self-identify and in 1960 began to alter the questions on race and ethnicity: 793,000 Native Americans in 1970, 1.42 million in 1980, 2.06 million in 1990, 2.48 million in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1988, 1992, 2001). Self-identification has influenced the count, as "only about 40% of the difference between the 1970 and 1980 census counts of American Indians can be accounted for by natural increase" (Thornton, Sandefur, & Snipp, 1991, p. 365). Of the 1.37 million (excluding Alaska Natives) enumerated in the 1980 census, "fewer than 900,000 were enrolled as members in federally recognized" tribes (Thornton, Sandefur, & Snipp, p. 365).

By 1980, the total Native American population was split roughly evenly between those who lived on or near reservations and those who lived in or near urban areas. By 2000, the percentage living in or near urban areas had climbed to 63%. In 1980, the 1.42 million American Indians and Alaska Natives enumerated by the census constituted 0.6% of the total U.S. population; by 1990 the percentage rose slightly to 0.85%; and in 2000, 2.47 million Natives composed 0.66% of the national population (U.S. Census Bureau, 1984, 1992, 2001).

Since the early 1970s, Native American students have constituted 0.7% to 0.9% of the enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools; the Native population has consistently been statistically younger than the U.S. norm (Pavel, Curtin, & Whitten, 1998; U.S. Census Bureau, 1992). Roughly 76% of Native students in 1980 attended public or private schools, and the remaining 24% attended schools operated by the BIA or by tribes (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988). By 1993–94, 91% of American Indian students (K-12) were enrolled in public schools, a total of more than 447,600 students (Pavel, Curtin, & Whitten). As of 2000, approximately 500,000 Native students were in school, and the approximate percentages of their distribution across schools has held steady since the early 1990s: about 90% in public schools, about 10% in BIA or tribal schools. See Table 22.1 for numbers of schools operated and/or funded by BIA or other federal agencies or funds. As Pavel points out, a relatively small number of schools enroll "a relatively large number of Native students"; "BIA/tribal schools and HIE [high Indian enrollment: 25% or more] schools represent approximately 1.7% of the total number of publicly funded schools but enroll 47% of the total Native student population" (Pavel, 1999, p. 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>School Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990–91</td>
<td>2000–01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIA-operated schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day schools and on-reservation boarding schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-reservation boarding schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dormitories attached to public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribally operated schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day schools and on-reservation boarding schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In 1990–91, federal funds supported about 225,870 Indian students enrolled in public schools (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991). In 2000, approximately 440,000 Native students were enrolled in public schools, and approximately 60,800 were enrolled in BIA/tribal schools (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2000). Sources: Office of Indian Education Programs (2001); U.S. Department of the Interior (1991).
In the mid-1990s, at least one-third of students enrolled in BIA or tribal schools spoke a language other than English in the home (Pavel, Curtin, & Whitener, 1998); in public schools with 25% or more Indian enrollment, 16% of the Native students spoke a language other than English in their homes (Pavel, 1999b). There are striking disparities in the percentages of Native teachers in the public versus tribal/BIA schools: less than 1% of all public school teachers were identified as American Indian or Alaska Native in 1993–94, while 38% of the teachers in BIA/tribal schools were of Native descent (Pavel, Curtin, & Whitener). Compared to BIA schools, however, public high schools in the 1990s graduated a higher percentage of their Indian students (91% versus 86%), and a higher percentage of their Indian graduates applied to colleges—58% from the public schools versus 47% from the BIA schools (Pavel, Curtin, & Whitener).

Across all school types, overall high school graduation rates for Native students increased from 56% in 1980 to 66% in 1990, while national rates climbed from 67% to 75%. Similarly, completion of college preparatory curricula by Native high school graduates jumped from 6% in 1982 to 31% in 1992, while national averages also showed significant increases, 13% to 47% (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Although Natives were making gains, they were not catching up to national numbers, which also increased during these years: "In 1992, most Native American college-bound high school graduates failed to meet all five criteria used to assess student competitiveness in the college admissions process" (U.S. Department of Education, p. 2–2). We can see the low numbers of Native Americans relative to the total national population earning higher degrees in Tables 22.2 and 22.3, but it is important to note that within the Native population the percentage of people earning higher degrees climbed significantly from 1977 to 1994, compared to national norms; see Table 22.4 (U.S. Department of Education).

In 1980, Native American students made up 0.7% of the total enrollment in institutions of higher education, earning 0.4% of the bachelor's degrees, 0.3% to 0.4% of the master's degrees, and 0.3% to 0.4% of the doctoral degrees throughout the decade of the 1980s (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1981, 1985–86, 1990a). In 1980, Indian children and young adults were not completing higher education at rates close to national norms: 8% of the Native population completed four years of college, half the national rate of 16% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988). By 1996, the numbers improved for Native students but still did not match national norms: at NCAA Division I institutions, public and private, a six-year graduation rate of 36% for Native students compared to 56% for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Closer examination of degrees awarded, especially graduate degrees, reveals that Native Americans have concentrated their studies in a few fields and disciplines, particularly education. In 1989–90, for example, 14% (598) of the bachelor's degrees, 37% (405) of the master's degrees, and 37% (38) of the doctoral degrees earned by Native people were in education. In that same academic year, Native Americans earned only 5 Ph.D.s in the physical sciences and 4 Ph.D.s in the life sciences (NCES, 1992). In 1996, the National Research Council (1998) reported 187 doctorates earned by American Indians; of those, 60 (32%) were earned in education. It should be noted that disturbing disparities in number of degrees reported as earned have existed over the years among various statistical sources (see Table 22.3).


One of the most encouraging trends in higher education for American Indians/Alaska Natives is the continued development of tribally controlled community colleges and universities, a trend that began with the establishment in 1968 of Navajo Community College, now called Diné College (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989; Tippecanoe, 1999). Native participation in higher education promises to grow with the tribal college system; in the nontribal higher education institutions, however, it appears that "the academic

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degrees</td>
<td>Percentage of total, all races</td>
<td>3.326</td>
<td>4.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degrees</td>
<td>Percentage of total, all races</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>1,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degrees</td>
<td>Percentage of total, all races</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>N.A.</th>
<th>N.A.</th>
<th>DES Data</th>
<th>MSGE Data</th>
<th>USDOE Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>27,009x</td>
<td>143 (34% of N.A. doctorates earned in education)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>27,195x</td>
<td>148 (35%)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>26,007x; 33,126y</td>
<td>220 (31%)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>25,186x</td>
<td>174 (32%)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>25,369x; 32,675y</td>
<td>165 (39%)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td>104 (41%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>25,108x</td>
<td>106 (50%)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>24,090x; 32,839y</td>
<td>89 (47%)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>24,309x</td>
<td>77 (38%)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>24,292x</td>
<td>81 (54%)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>23,951x</td>
<td>74 (43%)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>23,241x; 32,307y</td>
<td>93 (42%)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>22,984x</td>
<td>100 (26%)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>22,863x; 34,041y</td>
<td>116 (35%)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>23,172x</td>
<td>93 (38%)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>23,172x; 38,113x; 35,659y</td>
<td>93 (26%)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>24,721x</td>
<td>130 (41%)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td>102 (37%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993–94</td>
<td>43,149z</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994–95</td>
<td>44,427y</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: U.S. = total doctorates earned by citizens in United States, although these numbers also vary among sources; see notes on x, y, and z.

N.A. = Native American doctorates.

Where statistics were unavailable, the table was left blank.

Sources:  
8 National Research Council summary reports (see References).

Thurgood (1991). Despite its similarity to the NRC reports cited in this table, this summary report has a different Library of Congress catalogue number, and the figures Thurgood cites vary drastically from statistics reported in other NRC summary reports.


National Research Council summary reports (see References).

National Center for Education Statistics (1997), Table 271.


pipeline for the American Indian people is leaking badly (Dingman, Mrocza, & Brady, 1995, p. 17).

Dedicated to community, cultural continuity, local control, and economic development, as well as the professional development of teachers and curriculum materials for elementary and secondary education, the colleges strengthened their position when Congress passed the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act (PL. 95–471) in 1978, even though federal support has never met the full level of authorized appropriations (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989, Stein, 1992). In 1994, Congress “designated Tribal Colleges as land-grant institutions, in recognition of the essential ties between the colleges, tribal lands, and local economic development” (American Indian Higher

### TABLE 22.4. Increases from 1977 to 1994, by Percentage, in Number of Higher Education Degrees Earned by American Indians/Alaska Natives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>Percentage Increase in Number of Degrees Earned from 1976–77 to 1993–94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indians/Alaska Natives</td>
<td>Total population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degrees</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degrees</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degrees</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First professional degrees</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degrees</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN INDIAN EDUCATION

If history is the bequest of meaning from the past to the present, then Indian education has had a remarkably constant inheritance until recent times. Unfortunately, school-based education has not often included the education of Indian children by their parents or by other tribal adults. Native American autobiographies (Braunlie, 1981) are excellent sources of information on tribally specific education in the 1800s and 1900s, but the lessons of home and heritage language were under direct attack in those centuries and beyond.

Euro-American nations and churches have consistently sought to replace the profound lessons of indigenous instruction with a new language, Christianity, patriarchal family structure, subordinate political status, and capitalist economy—all part of a conscious agenda to disenfranchise Native Americans from their land (Adams, 1988). Four principal methods have been harnessed toward these goals: (1) the relocation of Native Americans into newly created, closely controlled communities separate from European settlements, such as Spanish missions and Puritan praying towns; (2) instruction in the language of civilized society, be it French, Spanish, English, or some other (training in literacy varied considerably); (3) conversion to Christianity; and (4) the restructuring of Native economies to fit European-style practices of sedentary agriculture, small-scale craft industry, and gendered labor (Lomawaima, 1999). The hopes of colonial educators were epitomized by Eleazar Wheelock, founder of Moor's Charity School for Indians as well as Dartmouth College, who sought "to save the Indians from themselves and to save the English from the Indians" (Axten, 1981, p. 97).

American Indian parents and children have resisted colonial programs of total assimilation in many ways. From armed revolts in the Southwest to epidemic-induced conversions in the Northeast, the course of proselytization was never smooth (Bowden, 1981). Reprisals for resistance could be harsh. The Spanish flogged, amputated the hands and feet of, or set fire to Pueblo "heretics" in the 17th century (Simmons, 1979), and in 1895 the United States sent Hopi men who resisted federal agents to Alcatraz (James, 1974). More recent assimilatory practices, such as mandatory school enrollment, may seem humane compared to earlier horrors, yet they have also provoked resistance. Indian children, for example, have devised ingenious ways to subvert or escape the disciplines and expand the possibilities of boarding school life (Archeleta, Child, & Lomawaima, 2000).

Through the 18th and 19th centuries, the United States left Indian education largely in the hands of the clergy, subsidizing the work of mission boards in agricultural, domestic, manual labor, and academic instruction (Prucha, 1979). Diverse Native nations met diverse denominations—Quakers, Moravians, Catholics, Presbyterians, Mennonites—some of whom were dedicated to high academic standards, the development of writing systems, and literacy instruction in both English and Native languages (Neely, 1975). Bilingual/bicultural education developed in the early 1800s at mission stations serving the Choctaw and other Eastern tribes (Noley, 1979).

Tribal governments continued this educational tradition as Eastern tribes were relocated to Indian Territory (eventually to become the state of Oklahoma) by the middle of the 19th century. The Creek, Choctaw, and Cherokee nations, among others, built their own academies and seminaries in Indian Territory, such as the Cherokee Female Seminary, established in 1851 (Mihesuah, 1993).

By the late 1800s, the federal government began to displace missions as the primary educator of Native Americans (Prucha, 1979). In 1875 Colonel Richard Henry Pratt began a federal experiment in education among Kiowa and Cheyenne prisoners of war incarcerated at Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida. After three years of imprisonment, a number of the young Kiowa and Cheyenne requested further schooling. Convinced that equal educational opportunity was all that separated Native people from the advantages of civilization, Pratt tried in vain to locate an agricultural college that would accept his students. Samuel Armstrong accepted them into Hampton Institute, a school for African Americans, but the Indian college at Hampton was short-lived. Armstrong, staunchly committed to a racially determined hierarchy of human achievement, and Pratt, with his progressive notions of racial equality, respected one another, but their views were too divergent to easily coexist (Adams, 1977; Utley, 1964).

Pratt successfully lobbied Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz and the Congress to establish the first federal off-reservation boarding school for American Indian youth at unused military barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1879 (Ryan, 1962; Utley, 1964). Within five years, similar schools were established: Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma; Genoa Indian School in Nebraska; and Haskell Institute at Lawrence, Kansas. By the turn of the century, the federal government ended its subsidies of mission schools and operated 25 off-reservation boarding schools and dozens of local day schools and on-reservation boarding schools.

Federal policy of total assimilation of Indian people and educational practices of military regimentation, strict
discipline, and intensive manual labor clearly reveal the government's intent to train young Indians in subservience to federal authority (Adams, 1988; Littlefield, 1993; Lomawaima, 1993). Nonnative and Native reformers have objected to the principles and/or the practices of assimilatory education since its inception. Religious and political groups have, at various times, fought corruption and graft in the federal administration of Indian affairs and advocated more humane treatment of Indian students. Perhaps the best-known and most effective critique of federal Indian administration was the 1928 report *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Meriam et al., 1928). The Meriam Report's chapter on Indian education targeted boarding schools as inappropriate places to raise children; it recommended public and on-reservation day schools as alternatives.

Under the leadership of John Collier, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's commissioner of Indian affairs, the education division of the BIA began to shift support from boarding to day schools, from federal to public schools, from assimilatory to respectful attitudes toward Native cultures (Szasz, 1999). Critical legislation, the Johnson-O'Malley Act (49 Stat. 1458)—known as J-O'M—was passed on April 16, 1934, to fund the enrollment of Native students in public schools. Federal subsidies to public schools for Indian student enrollment are necessary because federal trust lands (such as Indian and military reservations) are exempt from the local property taxes that support public school education in most states (children of military personnel are subsidized through similar arrangements).

Johnson-O'Malley replaced a complex system of contracting between BIA and literally thousands of individual school districts (Szasz, 1999). J-O'M gave the bureau "the authority to centralize its contracting on a federal-state basis" (Szasz, p. 92). J-O'M injected significant levels of federal funds into public schools, but the relationship between the BIA and the states has often been strained, and concerns over public school unwillingness to meet the needs of Indian students have never been fully resolved (Szasz).

The decades after Collier's tenure witnessed a shift back toward repressive political and educational treatment of Native nations, as the American nation continued to struggle with the linked issues of its national self-identity, the appropriate place of American Indians in the nation, and the difficult distinction between cultural differences believed to be innocuous and those considered so different as to be dangerous (Lomawaima, 2002; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002). The windows of opportunity for bilingual instruction, locally relevant schooling, and respect for Native values that Collier and his staff opened in the 1930s were firmly shut in the post–World War II nationalism and intolerance of cultural pluralism characteristic of the Cold War decades. Assimilation policies once more deemed Native cultural values, practices, and languages too dangerous to warrant federal encouragement. By the late 1950s, civil rights and social justice movements reasserted themselves, but the assimilatory view has certainly not disappeared from the scene, as recent movements advocating an "English only" language policy clearly reveal.

**RESEARCH ON INDIAN EDUCATION**

Professional discussion of Indian education began as early as 1884, when the Indian Service, later called the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), began an annual tradition of teachers' summer institutes. By 1903, Superintendent of Indian Schools Estelle Reel had organized 10 such institutes (Reel, 1903). As part of her plan to professionalize her teacher corps, Reel applied to the National Education Association (NEA) for recognition. In 1899 the Indian education group met for the first time at the NEA annual meeting to present papers and exchange ideas.

In 1936, the Education Division of the Indian Service began to publish the field letter *Indian Education* to present "concise and clear-cut statements of the philosophy, policy and preferred procedures of Indian education" (Beatty, 1953, p. 10). During the administrations of Directors of Education Willard W. Beatty (1936–1952) and Hildegarad Thompson (1952–1965), the newsletter provided a forum for communication among teachers and administrators within the federal system for Indian education. Beatty was not ultimately successful in developing "an education relevant to Indian life" (Szasz, 1999, p. 49), but community schooling, reservation day schools, and bilingual education programs did flourish for a short time. Thompson faced the more difficult Cold War era. Congressional legislation to terminate tribes' distinctive government-to-government relationship with the federal government and mandates to relocate Indians to urban areas (Lobo & Peters, 2001) threatened tribal sovereignty during her tenure (Szasz).

**Research on the Boarding School Experience**

Indian resistance to assimilation within boarding schools has proved rich ground for research. Early research on boarding schools tended to focus on the social, cultural, psychological, or intellectual pathologies of Indian students or the pathologies of the environment (Birchard, 1970; Krush, Bjork, Sindell, & Nelle, 1966). Alternatively, authors investigating the history of particular schools focused on federal policy and documentary evidence (Ryan, 1962; Trennert, 1988). In 1983, McBeth introduced the voices of Native alumni of boarding schools,

Basil Johnston’s (1988) memoir of his education at “Spanish,” a Jesuit boarding school in northern Ontario in the 1930s, is the 20th-century counterpart to Francis LaFlesche’s (1900/1978) moving account of Presbyterian mission education of young Omaha children in the 1880s. Boarding-school attendance has left a range of legacies, from family enrollment at an “alma mater” over generations (McBeth, 1983; Lomawaima, 1994) to very negative attitudes toward all schools (Butterfield & Pepper, 1991). Recent publications and a growing number of museum exhibits explore boarding school legacies nationally and locally, expanding the scope of inquiry into the transformation of Native homes and domestic spaces; the meaning of school sports and teams; and the exploration and creation of new forms of music, dance, and pageantry among alumni (Archuleta, Child, & Lomawaima, 2000).

Some ethnographic study of contemporary boarding schools was undertaken in the 1970s in Alaska (Kleinfield, 1973b). In 1985, the governors of the 19 pueblos of New Mexico sponsored an oral history of the Santa Fe Indian School (Hyer, 1990), eloquently conveying Native voices, lives, and educational self-determination. Meanwhile, a few offreservation boarding schools survive as an educational option for Native students: Chemawa Indian High School in Salem, Oregon; Flandreau Indian School north of Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Sherman Indian High School in Riverside, California; Santa Fe Indian School in northern New Mexico; and Haskell Institute, established in 1884 in Lawrence, Kansas, continuing today as Haskell Indian Nations University.

**Self-Determination: Rhetoric or Reality?**


The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (P.L. 93–638) exemplifies how rhetoric—what sounds good on paper—collided with administrative reality in American Indian education. P.L. 93–638 regulated the existing practice of contracting federal monies to Indian communities to run local programs (Senese, 1986). The practice of “638 contracting” has been praised by some as the greatest opportunity in history for Indian people to control their own destiny (Szasz, 1999), while others have condemned it as yet another link in the chain of BIA bureaucratic oppression (Grell, 1983; Senese).

Senese (1986) argued that 638 contracting offered Indian communities only an “illusion of control” (p. 154), while the law’s language, implementation, and flawed disbursement of funds crippled community-based education. McCarty (1987, 1989) detailed similar obstacles—program instability, student transfers, staff turnover, and unpredictable funding—on the Navajo reservation. In a case study of the Kickapoo National School, Grell (1983) concluded that “control of the school is not a panacea” for Indian education because “the incompatibility of externally imposed restrictions and tribally-oriented values in education remains” (p. 9).

McCarty’s (2002) more recent work on the history and development of Rough Rock, the first Indian community-controlled school, established in 1966 (with funding from the BIA and the Office of Economic Opportunity), details the frustrations and accomplishments of Navajo people who persevered to create a school environment where it is healthy, safe, and productive to simply “be Navajo.” As Goddard and Shields (1997) remind us in their comparison of two school districts in the United States and Canada, there is “no automatic link between local control and more empowering educational practices” (p. 19).

Effective local control of schools requires both effective structures of governance and effective educational strategies. Today, most Indian-controlled schools take advantage of the congressional option to receive grants rather than contracts: grants afford less federal micromanagement, more flexibility, and more local control. Despite the obstacles that remain, it is undeniable that Indian parents, communities, and professional educators have made tremendous gains in the last 30 years, largely as a result of determined Native leadership at all levels (Tippecconnic, 1999, 2000).
The Disadvantaged Child
Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, educational and social scientists began to study the school experiences of minority children (including at times American Indian students) and document their achievement levels on standardized tests. Some researchers focused on the validity of testing instruments, others on the inadequacies of minority children—asserting, for example, that Nez Perce kindergartners had “less developed” visual perception than White students (Lowry, 1970, p. 303) or that Native students possessed severely inadequate linguistic skills (Ramstad & Potter, 1974).

A “culture of poverty” model labeled children, their families, and communities as “disadvantaged”—culturally, socially, linguistically, and/or economically unprepared to melt into the American pot (Crow, Murray, & Smythe, 1966; Webster, 1966). Salisbury’s research (1974) in Alaska blamed cultural disadvantage for the maladjustment of Native students to college life. Salisbury hoped to teach the students to “verbalize problems freely” in order to make the “transition toward a culture in which [they] must find a place” (p. 199). Disadvantage models continued the assimilationist thrust of two centuries of Indian education by assuming that Indian children must “find their place” by giving up their Indianess.

Other scholars removed the onus of disadvantage from Indian students and placed responsibility elsewhere for minority student “failure.” Bryde’s (1970) classic study of scholastic failure and personality conflict examined the “cross-over phenomenon” (Brown, 1979) among Sioux students. These students achieved at or above national norms in their first few school years but then crossed over and “reverse[d] their performance by underachieving for the rest of their scholastic lives” (Bryde, 1970, p. i). By the seventh or eighth grade, students sensed “themselves caught by forces beyond their command” and responded with rejection, depression, alienation, and anxiety (Bryde, p. 67). Bryde and others recognized that systematic social inequities were being played out in the schools as well as in the larger society (Ogbu, 1983, 1987, 1989; Parmelee, 1968).

The Dropout Rate: Problems of Comparability
Disproportionately high Native dropout rates and low graduation and retention rates at all educational levels have motivated statistical inquiry and policy concern for decades. The NCES sponsored three longitudinal studies of dropout rates during the 1970s and 1980s (NCES, 1988, 1989, 1990b). The studies were hampered by very small sample sizes of American Indian/Alaska Native students, making statistical analysis impossible (but see descriptive reports for some of the data sets; Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1988). The 1980 survey of 30,000 sophomores and 28,000 seniors across the country found a 31.8% dropout rate for American Indian females, 27.2% for American Indian males, 18% for Hispanics, 14.1% for Blacks, 11.5% for Whites, and 2.7% for Asian Americans (Peng & Takai, 1983). The National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 tracked 24,599 eighth graders (including 307 students coded as Native) and reported dropout rates of American Indian/Alaska Native 9.2%; Black, non-Hispanic, 10.2%; Hispanic 9.6%; White, non-Hispanic, 5.2%; and Asian/Pacific Islander 4% (NCES, 1990b).

In 1992 the Journal of American Indian Education (Swisher, 1992a, 1992b) devoted two special issues to dropout research, as “the statistics regarding these rates among Indian/Native students have been highly speculative, inaccurate, and/or embedded in the innocuous category of ‘other’ when reported . . . there is not a clear picture of the reasons that Indian/Native students are leaving school” (Swisher, 1992c, p. 1).

Swisher and Hoisch (1992) reviewed dropout studies from the 1960s through the 1980s, revealing disparities from study to study among measurement techniques, sample sizes and compositions, and data sets that made it very difficult to obtain nationally comparable or meaningful figures.

In an effort to calculate Indian dropout rates more accurately, Swisher, Hoisch, and Pavel (1991) drew data from 26 state and national educational agencies, BIA offices, and tribal entities in the 20 states identified by the census with the largest Indian/Native populations. Although state data response was timely and complete, data were difficult to obtain and/or compare across BIA and tribal sources. A subsequent follow-up study focusing on BIA schools found a 25% dropout rate in grades 9 through 12, compounded by a transfer rate that ranged from 10% in BIA elementary schools to 30% in BIA high schools and 50% at Chenawa, a BIA boarding school in Oregon (Swisher & Hoisch, 1992). Student transfers at such high rates can confound dropout statistics.

Researchers have explored students’ school experiences and reasons for dropping out, identifying a variety of social, cultural, economic, and academic factors. Studies tend to focus on “school-based” reasons for dropping out, such as uncaring teachers or inappropriate curriculum (Reyhrner, 1992); on “home-based” reasons, such as lack of parental support or first language other than English (Platero, Brandt, Witherspoon, & Wong, 1986); or on “student-based” reasons, such as life goals unrelated to school instruction, pregnancy, or substance abuse (Bowker, 1992). In a two-year study of 991 Indian females of diverse backgrounds from seven northern Plains groups, Bowker found no strong correlates for school failure, “no formula for success or dropping out” (p. 17). The
The strongest indicator Bowker found for school success was “the support of . . . families,” especially mothers and grandmothers (p. 16).

Brandt (1992) reported the findings of the Navajo Area Student Dropout Study, or NASDS (Platero et al., 1986). Prior to NASDS, reported dropout rates across the reservation ranged from 30% to 95% (Brandt). NASDS tracked students through their Navajo census numbers and interviewed 889 students—670 stayers and 219 leavers. The investigators found that “over 50% of the students that the schools identified as ‘dropouts’ had in fact either transferred to another school or had graduated” (p. 32). NASDS estimated a transfer rate for the study area of 30% and a dropout rate of 31%. Academic factors were minimally involved for school leavers, strong Navajo cultural ties were found among stayers and leavers, and bilingual proficiency in Navajo and English was positively linked to persistence in school. Brandt concluded that for both stayers and leavers, schools were not “challenging or engaging Navajo students socially or intellectually” (p. 61).

Deyhle’s (1992) seven-year ethnographic study of Navajo and Ute “school leavers” provides a rich source of evidence. Deyhle found that Native students and nonnative teachers and administrators neither trusted nor cared for one another. Students were not blind to the institutional racism of the schools or to their limited opportunities outside schools. Deyhle calls their decision to leave school “a rational response” to racism (p. 25), and established an overall dropout rate of 21.3%. Deyhle used Ogbugu’s (1987) concept of castes to explain failure among the Native students attending a border town high school and attributed school success among the students attending the on-reservation school to the cultural integrity between school and community.

**Learning and Interational Styles**

As educators have struggled to develop culturally relevant classroom materials and pedagogic methods (Lipka, 1991), researchers have addressed the issue of how children might learn and exhibit knowledge in culturally specific ways. In their review of this literature, Swisher and Deyhle (1987) defined learning style as “the way in which knowledge is acquired,” and interational style as “the way in which knowledge is demonstrated” (p. 345). The cultural discontinuity/congruence hypothesis predicts that cultural discontinuities between teachers and students (King, 1967; Sindell, 1974; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987), between Indian and non-Indian learning styles (Cazden & John, 1971; John, 1972), or between teacher-imposed and community-sanctioned interational styles (Philips, 1972, 1983) will hinder children’s achievement as measured by standardized tests. Deyhle (1983) raises provocative questions about standardized tests. She posits that a culture that values process over product, coupled with students’ realization of the personal judgment entailed in passing or failing, conspire to create students who reject testing itself.

Researchers have focused on a range of critical parameters defining how children learn and how they display what they learn, including (a) linguistic performance (Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Phoenix, 1972, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981) and linguistic nonperformance, or silence, in the classroom (Dumont, 1972; Wax, Wax, & Dumont, 1964/1989); (b) observational or “private” versus trial-by-error learning (John, 1972; Wolcott, 1967); (c) cooperative versus competitive learning strategies (Brown, 1980; Miller & Thomas, 1972); (d) field-dependent versus field-independent perceptual and personality organization (Dinges & Hollebeck, 1978); (e) cultural congruence; and (f) brain hemispheric dominance (not discussed further here; see Chrisjohn & Peters, 1989; and Rhodes, 1990, for rebuttals to this theory).

**Linguistic Performance/Silence.** Phoenix’s (1972, 1983) seminal study of Warm Springs, Oregon, reservation education outlined different standards of linguistic performance—called “communicative competencies”—in the community and in the school. Communicative competency means knowing the cultural standards for who speaks when, for how long, in what order, and in what context. Phoenix called the framework of rules that govern speech “participant structures.” She concluded that Indian children at Warm Springs resisted school-defined, teacher-dominated participant structures that required students to recite publicly as a sign of mastering knowledge. One of the most cited studies of Indian education, her 1972 work laid the groundwork for subsequent decades of research on linguistic performance and classroom interaction.

The classroom interaction model has been productively applied to studies of reading instruction developed for Native Hawaiian children (Au & Jordan, 1981) and for Athabascan children in Alaska (Van Ness, 1981). Greenbaum and Greenbaum (1983) reviewed the literature on cultural differences in classroom interaction, and the possible negative effects when teachers and students nonverbally regulate conversation in conflicting ways. Although concluding that Indian and non-Indian classroom interactions differ in the frequency or duration of utterances, voice loudness, and degree of visual attention, they caution that “it has yet to be shown empirically that such differences obstruct the students’ comprehension of what they are being taught” (Greenbaum & Greenbaum, p. 28).

Studies have attempted to demonstrate empirically what teachers report anecdotally: that Indian children are much quieter than other children in the classroom.
(Guilmet, 1978, 1981). In their study of Oklahoma Cherokee children's behavior in classrooms, Dumont and Wax (1969) posit a “Cherokee school society” created by students to resist an imposed, alien institution. Students surrounded themselves with a wall of silence impenetrable by the outsider, while sheltering a rich emotional communion among themselves. The silence is positive, not negative or withdrawing, and it shelters them so that . . . they can pursue their scholastic interests in their own style and pace. By their silence they exercise control over the teacher (Dumont & Wax, p. 222).

Private Learners? Philips (1972, 1983) also discussed how Warm Springs adults taught children to pay attention, to observe, to practice on their own, and only then to undertake public performance or demonstration of a new skill or knowledge. This notion of “private learning” (Swisher & Deyhle, 1989, p. 4) has been attested as well for Navajo children (Longstreet, 1978), Oglala Sioux children (Brewer, 1977), and Yacqui children (Appleton, 1983).

Cooperation or Competition? It is commonly asserted that Indian children are raised to be more “cooperative” than White children, and that competition is expressed by Indian children only in group contexts such as team sports. Miller and Thomas (1972) compared 48 Blood children from a reserve school in Alberta, Canada, with 48 non-Indian children in an urban school. The children, between the ages of 7 and 10, were tested with the Madsen Cooperation Board under two experimental reward conditions. Both Indian and non-Indian groups cooperatively achieve a group reward. Under an individual reward system, however, the “performance level of Indian children continued to increase while that of the non-Indian children deteriorated” (Miller & Thomas, p. 1109). Miller and Thomas note “it is tempting to relate these differences to differences in the cultural background of the groups . . . but the specific ways that these . . . cultural factors find expression in cooperative behaviors . . . are not known in detail at the present time” (p. 1110).

Field-Dependent or Field-Independent? Swisher and Deyhle (1989) note that the little research on Indian students' degree of field dependence or field independence contradicts the model Ramírez and Castañeda (1974) developed on the basis of their study of Mexican American children. This cognitive model proposes that formally organized families who promote strong individual identity (i.e., Anglos) produce field-independent children, and that shared-function families who promote group identity—especially groups isolated from the U.S. mainstream, such as Mexican Americans—produce field-dependent children (Ramírez & Castañeda). The Ramírez and Castañeda model predicts that Navajo children would be more field dependent than White children. The 1978 study by Dinges and Hollenbeck demonstrates exactly the opposite. Dinges and Hollenbeck propose genetic, environmental, experiential, and linguistic factors to account for this unexpected result. Their recognition of cultural and grammatical imperatives that privilege “perceptual-cognitive abilities” is noteworthy, but their devaluation of Navajo creativity is not. Dinges and Hollenbeck claimed that Navajo women do not create rug patterns according to a cultural aesthetic, but that they merely “duplicate” them “from memory” (p. 218).

Cultural Congruence. The theory of cultural discontinuity/cultural congruence predicts that cultural/linguistic difference among teacher, school, and student can result in student underachievement or failure; and that cultural/linguistic congruence among teacher, school, and student leads to student success. The theory, however, has been tested for more often than it has been empirically tested. Mohatt and Erickson (1981) described the teaching styles of two “effective and experienced” teachers, one an Indian female, the other a non-Indian male, in a study that resulted only in a recommendation to conduct more research to “see whether more culturally congruent participant structures will increase achievement among native students” (p. 119). Kleinfield (1974) examined whether altering nonverbal cues that communicate “warmth” in teaching styles would stimulate learning, question answering, and question asking among 20 White and 20 Eskimo students. The cues were ethnothematically defined according to Eskimo values. She found that “warm” college guidance sessions did increase learning for both groups, but that “ethnic group differences were few and not altogether consistent” (p. 3).

Ledlow (1992) tackled the whole question of cultural discontinuity as an adequate explanation for dropping out. Her critical review of earlier research found “little or no explicit research to prove the hypothesis” (p. 21). Ledlow supported the cultural congruence hypothesis as a research question but objected to unquestioned assumption of its validity. She proposed that macrostructural explanations of minority schooling, rooted in a Marxist perspective, might more productively focus on “economic and social issues”—pregnancy, drugs, boredom, institutional racism, poverty—“which are not culturally specific to being Indian” (p. 29). Brady (1996) echoed her approach in a Canadian study that found wide diversity in dropping-out factors within and among Native communities, and a core constellation of similar economic and social influences operating among Native and non-Native dropouts. Some studies (Coggins, Williams &
Radin, 1997; Deyhle, 1992) indicate that "a strong sense of traditional cultural identity...provides students with an advantage in school. The idea that traditional Indian students may have an academic advantage over more 'acculturated' students is an important issue" (Ledlow, 1992, p. 34).

Ogbu (1989), in his differentiation of voluntary and involuntary minorities, has pointed out that some minority groups who do well in school are more culturally different from mainstream school culture than groups who do poorly. A simple model of cultural congruence does not account for their school success. In Indian education, Osborne (1989) questioned the entire rationale of the cultural congruence hypothesis by pointing out that complete cultural congruence between Indian (specifically Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico) and U.S. values is not possible—or, perhaps, even desirable—in the classroom. Osborne proposed a conceptual framework of "fused biculturalism" to describe the juxtaposition of irreconcilable but coexisting cultural traditions.

Yet another critique of research in Indian education zeroes in on the lack of evidence supporting the abundant literature suggesting that Indian children have "special strengths" in spatial abilities and visual memory, so-called "visual learning styles" (Kleinfeld & Nelson, 1988, p. 1–2). Kleinfeld and Nelson searched the psychological, ethnographic, and educational research for studies that empirically tested the claim that "instruction adapted to Native American learning styles increases achievement" (p. 8). They found three: two studies did not show that Native American students learn more with visually based instruction; the third had conflicting results but found that visually based instruction was more effective for White than for Indian children. Kleinfeld and Nelson concluded that the lack of evidence notwithstanding, the "learning-style" construct remains popular because educators want to avoid "deficit" language and because the terminology is useful in grant proposals and to describe the many adjustments teachers make when dealing with specific Native American groups. Similarly, Irvine and York (1995) propose that "widespread conclusions in the [learning style] literature...are premature and conjectural" (p. 484). Their critical review of the literature leads them to the conclusion that "research on learning styles using culturally diverse students fails to support the premise that members of a given cultural group exhibit a distinctive style" (p. 494).

Indigenous Languages and Epistemologies, Educational Theories, and Reforms

The debates over learning and teaching styles and cultural congruence raise profound questions for American Indian education. How we teach children, and how they learn, are critically important issues, but they should not obscure the critical nature of what is being taught. Anyone who has suffered through a television miniseries on "How the West Was Won," or a high school history lecture lauding Columbus's bold, adventurous spirit of "discovery," or an elementary classroom reenactment of the first Thanksgiving knows this lesson. What if teachers scrupulously develop culturally/linguistically sensitive pedagogical methods but never alter the content of what they teach?

Can we expect Indian children to "succeed" in school when Indian history, cultures, and peoples are systematically excluded from, marginalized within, or brutalized by curricular content? Perhaps classrooms that value Native cultures and use local knowledge as bridges to "mainstream" curricular content in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect—Osborne's (1989) notion of fused biculturalism—might foster Native academic achievement (Demmert, 2001). Research findings from the Rough Rock Demonstration School on the Navajo reservation describe the introduction of an experimental social studies curriculum based on local values, which began locally but expanded to global content. Children blossomed from silent "concrete" learners into talkative, analytical students who responded to questions with as much enthusiasm as any interlocutor of Socrates (McCarty, Wallace, Lynch, & Benally, 1991).

Projects in curriculum development have achieved positive results in some Indian-controlled schools. The Kickapoo Nation School introduced new curriculum in 1985 and reversed declining performance on test scores (Dupuis & Walker, 1989); Okakok (1989) stressed the benefits of integrating Inupiat and Western Alaskan cultural values into the administration and curriculum of the North Slope Borough School District. What goes on within schools is only part, of course, of the influences to which children are exposed. DeMarrais, Nelson, and Baker's (1997) delightful description of the cognitive skills reinforced by "storyknifing," the storytelling activity of young Alaska Native girls along the muddy banks of the Kuskokwim River, concluded with the discouraging observation that this childhood pastime has been supplanted by hours in front of the TV. The overwhelming onslaught of contemporary American culture, ruled by music, media, and the mall, threatens to overwhelm more than indigenous childhood games. Native languages, the very fabric of cultural expression and cultural production, are critically endangered.

Language Policy and Language Renewal. Native American language use, maintenance, and renewal are tremendously important influences on educational experiences and policies, but it would require another chapter to
review them adequately. At one end of the continuum, groups such as the Navajo nation try to maintain a language still spoken by a majority of members (Rosier & Holm, 1980). Along the middle, the Tachi-Yokuts in central California struggle to revive interest in a language spoken only by an elderly few (Britsch-Denavy, 1988). At the other end of the continuum, heritage languages have virtually disappeared, leaving their traces in a locally specific version of "Indian English" (Leap, 1977).

Long-standing federal policy to eradicate Native languages has only recently been revised to provide grudging support for bilingual education (McCarty, 1992; Zepeda, 1990). Since the passage of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 (other federal titles also supply monies to support bilingual/bicultural education), at least 70 Native communities have developed language education projects (McCarty; St. Clair & Leap, 1982). Federal bilingual policies have supported "transitional" bilingual programs, to move children from fluency in a Native language to English (Grant & Goldsmith, 1979; Spolsky, 1972, 1978). Most Native people, however, are committed to maintaining Native languages, in programs ranging from Makah on the northwest tip of Washington state (Renker & Arnold, 1988) to Passamaquoddy in Maine (Spolsky, 1978).

Tribes have turned to professionally and academically trained linguists to help develop educational programs in spoken and written language (Hale, 1973; Leap, 1988; Watahomie & Yamamoto, 1987; Young, 1972). Fluent Native speakers of Hopi, Navajo, Tohono O'odham, and other languages have earned graduate degrees in linguistics and applied their training to educational development. Native Americans may not willingly surrender their languages, but many communities are deeply troubled that fluent speakers grow fewer and older, and younger generations grow up inundated by the constant English chatter transmitted via cable, satellite dish, and digital media.

**Bilingual/Bicultural Education and Language Development.** According to recent estimates, only 16% of the remaining 210 indigenous languages spoken in the United States and Canada have new speakers to ensure their survival into the next generations (Krauss, 1998). Native communities across the continent teeter on the brink of language extinction, while dedicated speakers of these precious, irreplaceable heritage languages fight to preserve their future (McCarty, Watahomie, & Yamamoto, 1999; McCarty & Zepeda, 1995). The challenge in reversing "language shift"—that is, the shift from indigenous heritage languages to English—is not only "to bring the language back, but . . . [to move] it forward into new social contexts" (McCarty & Watahomie, 1999, p. 6).

Immersion programs based on models developed by Maori speakers in New Zealand, Native Hawaiians, and First Nations in Canada have proven attractive (Yamauchi & Ceppi, 1998), although they may prove more difficult to implement in mixed urban settings where Native families are scattered and are from diverse tribal homelands. The goal of creating "new habitats where the language can be reconstructed and used" has been successfully accomplished, notably by the master-apprentice program in Native California communities (Aporada, 2000), and in yearly gatherings such as the American Indian Language Development Institute at the University of Arizona and the Oklahoma Native American Language Development Institute (McCarty & Watahomie, 1999). Congress has articulated its support through the 1990/1992 Native American Languages Act, "the only federal legislation which explicitly vows to protect and provides some financial support for indigenous languages" (McCarty & Watahomie, 1999, p. 11).

**Indigenous Literacies.** Some Native communities have used orthographic systems developed by Christian missionaries from colonial languages for a century or more, while in other communities literacy practices are new. Across the spectrum, communities are producing published and online materials such as dictionaries, grammars, and school curricula (Hopi Dictionary Project, 1998; Lipka & Ilustik, 1997). The comprehensive, thought-provoking anthology edited by Nancy Hornberger (1997) presents a diversity of indigenous literacy projects across North, Central, and South America, illustrating the modern tensions within multilingual nations, and the potential of literacy to act simultaneously as "liberator and a weapon of oppression" (p. 4). "For literacy developers in multilingual contexts, then, the question is not so much: how to develop literacy? But, which literacies to develop for what purposes?" (Hornberger, p. 4).

**Native Epistemologies.** Acknowledging Native ways of knowing requires more than language reclamation. Teacher training, school reform, curricular renovation, secure and predictable funding bases, community participation, the integration of Native and Western educational goals and practices—all must go hand in hand to achieve progress (Demmert, 2001; Lipka, 2002). The transformation of school culture in a Yup'ik (Eskimo) community in Alaska (Lipka et al., 1998) is a model for the committed, courageous intercultural dialogue and willingness to change that is also being developed through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (www.ankn.uaf.edu) and the Creating Sacred Places for Children initiative of the National Indian School Board Association (Fox, 2000). School reform of this kind depends on a kind of scholarship that has not been widely available to most educators. An indigenous scholarship that plumbs the depths of Native epistemologies.
Like Basil Johnston (1976), the noted scholar of education and Anishinaabe language and philosophy, Yup'ik scholar A. O. Kawagley (1995, 1999) presents an intellectually engaged, analytic view of his own culture: a specific indigenous system of thought that is profoundly complex and demanding, deeply imaginative, and respectful of "the mysteries of the world" (Kawagley, 1999, p. 31). Scholars such as these, who recognize the multiple levels of understanding within each Native system of "ancient knowledge" (Lang, 1989), offer a welcome counterpoint to the genericized, pan-Indian, never-well-defined notions of "holistic" or "ecological" education proposed by some (Cajete, 1994; van Hamme, 1996).

Kawagley eloquently distills the real-world sovereign demands of indigenous education: "If the Yupiaq people are to really exercise the option of educational control it will require that the schools become Yupiaq controlled, Yupiaq administered, and Yupiaq in practice" (1999, p. 45). Dalton and Youpa (1998) describe a similar program of reform at Zuni, New Mexico, that integrates Zuni values of fortitude, stoicism, responsibility, and initiative into a system of standards that extends an invitation to students to join a community of learners. As laudable and difficult as these goals are for small, self-contained communities, what are the options in highly diverse urban and semтурban environments, where more than half of all Native Americans now live?

Surely it does not well serve any students to isolate Native curricular content in some unit focused on Thanksgiving (Huff, 1997; Rains & Swisher, 1999). Multicultural education needs to achieve more than that, but meaningful integration of profoundly different cultural philosophies, pedagogies, and curricula is a daunting task. Realistically, most teachers of Native children are not Native themselves: in 1993-94, even in HIE [high Indian enrollment, 25% or more] public schools "only 15% of the teachers . . . were American Indian or Alaska Native" (Pavel, 1999, p. 2). Non-Native teachers are often as sincerely interested in serving Native students better as they are sincerely frustrated by the lack of materials, training, and institutional support available to them. Cleary and Peacock's (1998) collection of teachers' testimonials is eloquent and compelling reading, even as it demonstrates how difficult it is to remember the diversity of indigenous lives and guard against the tendency to stereotype and overgeneralize.

**Trends**

Research on Indian education has tended to move away from models that propose deficiencies—in the students' language abilities (Phillion & Galloway, 1969; Salisbury, 1974) or neural organization (Ross, 1989) or cultural background—to theories of social and economic discrimination (Ogbu, 1983, 1987, 1989) that contextualize schools within the larger society. Current research trends define Native cognitive skills as strengths, not weaknesses (Macias, 1989), and try to discover the characteristics of successful students, successful programs, successful teachers, and successful schools (Benjamin, Chambers, & Reiterman, 1993; Demmert, 2001; Shutiva, 1991; Swisher & Tippennic, 1999).

As researchers turn their attention toward student success, gifted programs become a topic of interest, especially since it seems clear that "the patterning tests for giftedness and other standardized tests do not, as presently constructed, allow for cultural differences" (Gamati & Weiland, 1997, p. 47). DeMarrais et al. (1992) focus on storytelling skills of Alaska Native girls; Kleinfield (1973a) studies Eskimos' visual skills; Nelson and Lalami (1991) discuss Tohono O'odham children's "visual-spatial, pattern-symbol and kinesthetic" skills for the creative process. Romero (1994) reports on a two-year survey designed to develop a culturally coherent definition of "giftedness"—specifically among New Mexico communities who speak the Keres language—another example of Native educators articulating indigenous philosophy and leading schools to value and incorporate community values. Native educational leaders also played key roles in formulating a recent federal policy statement on Indian education.

On August 6, 1998, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13096, calling for the development and implementation of a comprehensive, federally funded research agenda in American Indian education. Federal officials convened meetings of academics, educators, and tribal representatives to draft research initiatives, and in November 2001 the American Indian and Alaska Native Education Research Agenda (which includes the text of Executive Order 13096) was published on the Web (Research Agenda Working Group, 2001). In the fall of 2001, the first grants were funded under the Office of Educational Research and Innovation (OERI).

The Research Agenda details its assumptions about how research in Indian education should be approached—it should focus on success as well as deficits, respect tribal sovereignty, and recognize tribal difference—and what research methods should be used, including the need for detailed national data, generalizable research findings, and an independent clearinghouse focused on Native education. The Agenda repeatedly emphasizes the critical need for Native participation in, if not control of, research efforts. The call for Native researchers, tribal oversight of research protocols, and strict adherence to the ethical and methodological demands of tribal sovereigns permeates recent literature on Indian education (Lomawaima, 2000;
Nason, 1996; Swisher, 1996; Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999).

Meanwhile, at Sinte Gleske College in Sioux country, Native scholars map the constellations and their earthly correlates among the geographic features of the Black Hills (P. Deloria, 1984); Native scholars gather at the Institute for Native Knowledge at Humboldt State University in Northern California to exchange ideas. Finally, Native scholarship is being shaped by Native people. Scholars continue to identify and battle against the legacies of institutional racism in the American public school system (Huff, 1997), but they also nurture a spirit of optimism: "As we close out another decade and another century, the state of Indigenous education is in better shape than ever before in history" (Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999, p. vii).

ASSESSMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Native Americans face multiple challenges in the coming century as they work to maintain sovereignty, build economies, preserve or regain language, and ensure educational access and achievement for their young people. Significant obstacles to these goals exist within U.S. society, as the same struggles over sovereignty, reserved rights, and self-determination that began the 20th century also usher in the 21st century.

It is perhaps ironic that a pan-tribal identity has become more real over time, but that pan-tribal linkage today complicates educational policy making and educational research. Too much policy has been predicated on creating viable solutions to "Indian" problems, generically defined. Too often, provocative but slender evidence from a tribally specific research site has been generalized to all "Indian" children. Educators need to understand the diversity of Native cultures and experiences and work locally to develop relevant content and methods. It may be that their achievements will never be generalizable. We need a wider range of research in the increasingly multicultural, increasingly poor urban schools where more and more children are being educated, far from traditional tribal homes.

Diversity in the classroom means we must attend to the skills, strengths, and needs of each child as an individual, building on Native values (Fiordio, 1988) without romanticizing them or stereotyping an "Indian learning style." Well-meaning educators and policy makers may long for a simple answer, be it whole-language instruction (Kasten, 1992) or generic spirituality (Locust, 1988), but the search for a single best way to educate any human population is like the search for the Holy Grail. It risks becoming a sacred calling that consumes resources in the search for an illusory panacea for complex social and educational ills.

History, politics, and education have always been and will forever be inextricably bound up with one another in Indian America. Activism for educational change and empowerment has served as a political proving ground for Native American leadership. In the wake of the 1960s civil rights movement, the birth of the National Indian Education Association offered a forum for nationwide communication and organization. The Indian Historian Press, Wasseja, Akwesasne Notes, Indian Country Today, and other Native presses have linked tribal communities and provided unprecedented opportunity to disseminate information and exchange ideas. The Chicago Indian Conference in 1961, the formation of the National Indian Youth Council in the early 1960s, and the first Convocation of American Indian scholars at Princeton in 1970 brought people together and developed new levels of political consciousness and cooperation (Indian Historian Press, 1970; Lynch & Charleston, 1990).

Their legacy has been inherited and enriched by the National Indian Education Association, the National Indian School Board Association, the scholars and community members who contributed to the 2001 Research Agenda, and the many dedicated individuals working tirelessly across Indian country to improve educational methods and opportunities. Schools have frequently been the flash point for political organization in Indian communities. When Native Americans occupied Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay on November 20, 1969, they resolved to "plan our own futures and educate our own children" (blue cloud, 1972, p. 21). Their plan for Alcatraz included a Center for Native American Studies with "traveling colleges" to visit reservations, a training school, and a museum. Education was foremost in their minds; their vision was realized in part when D-Q University was established at Davis, California (blue cloud, 1972; Lutz, 1980). The vision flourishes today on the 32 campuses of the tribal community college system. Education, politics, and history still walk hand in hand across Indian country.

Native American communities know their own history well, and that highly developed historical consciousness tends to make them skeptical of federal promises of change or educators' promises of improvement. The special legal and political status of tribes and the implications of sovereignty may mitigate against a wholehearted acceptance of multicultural education if "multicultural concepts seem to promote the assimilative trend by standardization at the expense of self-determination in Indian education" (Jaimes, 1983, p. 17). If self-determination means a tribal community college, or an all-Indian urban school (Butterfield & Pepper, 1991), it runs the risk of alienating those who believe in U.S.
The ideals of desegregation and cultural sharing. Self-determination must be understood as expressing a possibility of cultural pluralism, and the rights of Native communities to claim certain places, practices, and beliefs as their own (Tippeconnic, 2000).

Native America has insisted for 500 years on the right to exist; Native America has hoped for 500 years for the right to prosper and thrive. If Native people make educational decisions according to their own ideals of cultural survival and sovereign status, they must be respected. Their rights to self-determination are rooted in the mature inherent sovereignty that predates the U.S. Constitution; in the constitutional recognition of Native peoples as distinctive peoples with distinctive political identities; in the constitutionally based recognition of the relationship between tribal governments and the federal government accomplished through the negotiation of treaties and the articulation of a trust relationship; and the principle of constrained, just government that lies at the heart of the American democratic ideal.

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