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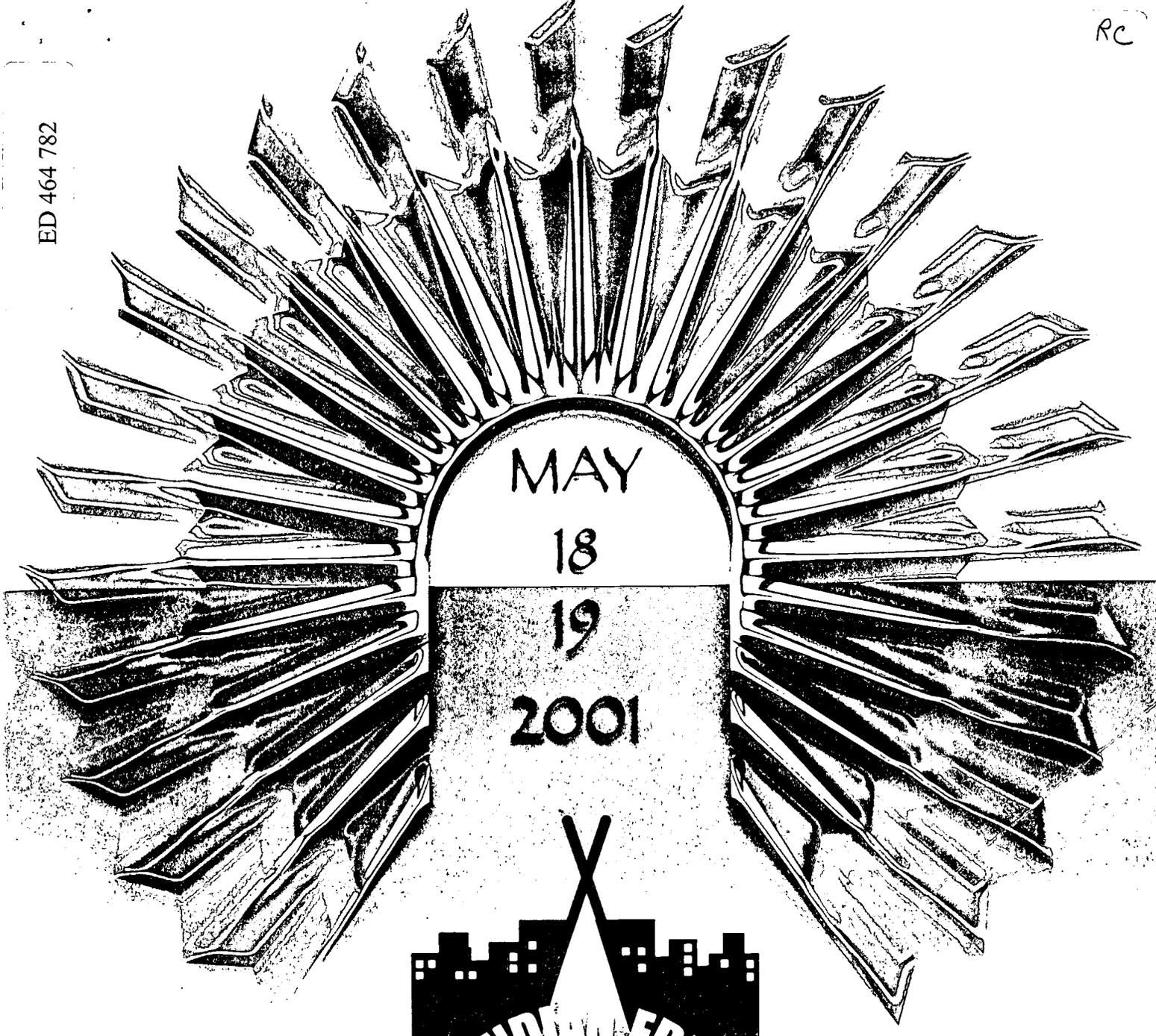
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## ABSTRACT

A second annual education summit examined research issues and research needs in urban American Indian education. This report summarizes three panel discussions and lists relevant articles, Web sites, and participants. An introduction by Linda Sue Warner discusses the Indian Community School of Milwaukee and its goals of preparing Indian students for lifelong learning in the context of traditional values; the need for better statistics on urban American Indians; and thoughts on developing a culturally relevant institutional review board for American Indian research. In the first panel session, Gerald Gipp, David Beaulieu, Carol Anne Hart, and Ernie Stevens, Jr., discussed research needs in Indian education, focusing on the role of tribal colleges, the Executive Order for a research agenda on American Indian educational research, and the economic and social well-being of urban Indian communities. The second panel session provided examples of current research in curriculum, policy, and leadership: "The Role of Language and Culture in the Education of Indian Children" (Tarajeen Yazzi); "Exceptional Education" (Susan Faircloth); "Infusing Culture and Standards into the Curriculum" (Sandra Fox); and "Teacher - Research Project in the Fairbanks School District" (Alison Meadow). In the third session, small groups of participants proposed 14 themes for Indian educational research, including suggestions for variables and populations to be studied. The fourth session is "Incorporating Academics into American Indian Culture." (Katrina Coker, Amy Trom, and Carson Singer). (SV)



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# **URBAN INDIAN EDUCATION RESEARCH SUMMIT**

**MAY 18-19, 2001**

Indian Community School of Milwaukee, Inc.  
3121 West State Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

414-345-3570

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The second annual Urban Indian Education Summit was held on May 18-19, 2001, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, hosted by the Indian Community School of Milwaukee (ICS) and its CEO, Dr. Linda Sue Warner, and the Board of Directors.

The purpose of this Summit, as articulated by Dr. Michael Wilson, Chair of the ICS Board of Directors, was to bring together the discussions and agenda from last year's summit with the results of research and projects that may have been finished in the time since. Participants would be asked to consider the issues and research and bring together their expertises to formulate a list of hypotheses for future research.

The panel discussion topics were:

- Research Needs in Indian Education
- Examples of Current Research in Curriculum, Policy, and Leadership
- Incorporating Academics into American Indian Culture

This summary report contains a synopsis of the panels, a listing of relevant articles and web sites, and lists of speakers and participants.



## **AGENDA:**

### **CALL TO CONFERENCE**

Michael Wilson, Chair, ICS Board of Directors

### **INVOCATION**

Richard Awonohopay

### **HONOR SONG**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Linda Sue Warner, CEO, ICS

### **SESSION I: RESEARCH NEEDS IN INDIAN EDUCATION**

Gerald Gipp

Executive Director, American Indian Higher Education Consortium

David Beaulieu

Director, Office of Indian Education, Department of Education

Carol Anne Hart

President, National Indian Education Association

Ernie Stevens, Jr.

Chair, National Indian Gaming Association

### **SESSION II: EXAMPLES OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN CURRICULUM, POLICY, AND LEADERSHIP**

Tarajeen Yazzi

Graduate Student, Harvard University

The Role of Language and Culture in the Education of Indian Children

Susan Faircloth

Graduate Student, Penn State University

Exceptional Education

Sandra Fox

National Indian School Board Association

Infusing Culture and Standards into Curriculum

Alison Meadow

Teacher - Research Project in the Fairbanks School District

### **SESSION III: DEFINING AN AGENDA**

### **SESSION IV: INCORPORATING ACADEMICS INTO AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURE**

Katrina Coker

ICS Director of Technology

Amy Tromp

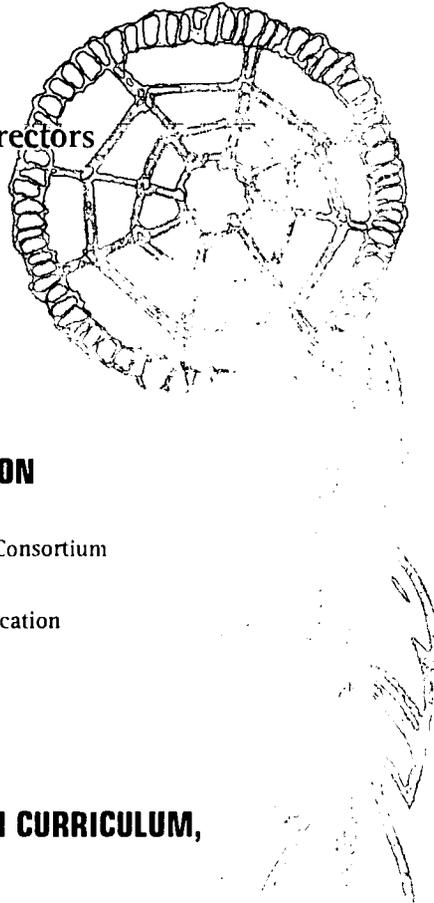
ICS Teacher

Carson Singer

ICS Teacher

### **SESSION V: REVIEW OF THE HYPOTHESES SUBMITTED**

### **OVERVIEW/REVIEW**



## **HONOR SONG**

## **INVOCATION**

Richard Awonohopay

## **CALL TO CONFERENCE:**

Michael Wilson

Chair, ICS Board of Directors

When we began this Summit, we thought of it as an Urban Indian Education Summit. As a result of discussions from last year's Summit, however, we began to realize that when we talk about education, it's more than just educating. It also involves other fields such as health and social welfare. This conference, therefore, will take a more holistic approach to educating children and their families.

Our purpose in coming together last year was to try to examine why there is not much research being done in urban Indian education and to see if we could identify some issues that could be addressed. Urban Indian Studies has been a field since the relocation of the 40s and 50s, but not much has been done until recently. There are a number of excellent volumes about the urban Indian experience, but I believe we are on the edge of an important field. We know that so many Indian people live in urban areas, and we are trying to understand how to educate their children so that culture and academics are equally important.

In most instances, the urban Indian experience is portrayed as something to be avoided – it's a horrible experience with poverty and substance abuse and violence. I'm sure there is some of that, but I also know there's joy and triumph. It can be a beautiful experience and when one looks at ICS, they see that. Just in the Milwaukee area alone, there are a number of festivals and pow wows and more than twenty agencies devoted to the welfare of Indian people. Just last evening, there was an all-city Indian graduation here at the school. Students who graduated from 8th grade, high school, college, and master's degrees brought their families and celebrated their moment of triumph. This is what we want to build on and that's what we hope this conference will do. We want to take research and blend it with best practice to create outstanding ideas to help our kids.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFERENCE:**

Linda Sue Warner

CEO, ICS

When we began talking about having a Summit, not only among my staff but also among a lot of the dedicated participants in this room, we realized that we need to be more of a "think tank" – that is, we need to brainstorm, search for ideas, and try to understand what the questions are.

### **The ICS Experience**

In the 1960s, three mothers established ICS because of the belief that the public schools of that time were not educating their children in the way they wished. Their little home school grew and in 1970, the school was chartered. In the past thirty years, enrollment has fluctuated, funding has come and gone, and more than eight locations have served as home for the school.

Currently, as a result of a successful partnership with the Forest County Potawatomie tribe, the school is financially sound with an established endowment and a plan for a new campus.

When one talks about Indians, one talks about communities, not only on reservations but also in urban areas. We are a community school and we feel it is important not only to teach our children



academics, but also to infuse academics into American Indian culture.

ICS has a four-year strategic plan, and we have seven outcome goals that align with that plan. Every outcome goal is linked with a traditional value, so that all the decisions made at the school revolve around sustaining American Indian culture.

Our values are love, respect, wisdom, truth, humility, bravery, and loyalty. Each of these values has a particular strategic outcome goal. If there are items presented in the budget that do not align with one of these values, and ultimately our strategic goals, we then consider carefully whether we should be spending money on those items. We must communicate the culture to students, and we try to do that through our relationship-based curriculum. If we are successful, our children will grow to be the adults we want them to be.

When we realized that we were going to be fortunate enough to actually have an endowment, the first thing we did was visit with an economics professor. It would have been easy just to buy everyone a new car, or a diploma, or a new pair of shoes, but we knew that wasn't wise. We questioned; do we just give because the money is there? We were interested in having parents, students, and the community give back; how could we create a sense of community in an environment where money isn't an issue? He challenged us to look at it in a different way. He suggested that we define a successful 30-year-old graduate of the school and that if we take a look at that person carefully, we would make different decisions. The question is not, what do we want an 8th grade ICS graduate to look like, but what do we want a 30-year-old graduate of ICS to look like.

I spent a lot of time thinking about that, and last year a team that I work with finished a research project that would examine the length of time it would take for a community to get a return on a student's educational investment. If a student finishes 8th grade and then drops out, how long would it be before his/her earnings actually contributed back into the community what may have been received from other sources? For instance, if National Science Foundation put two

million dollars into a reservation in one year, how many students have to finish 8th grade and how long do they have to work before the community gets that \$2 million back? Or, if a student finishes high school? The theory is that the student would have more qualifications and be a better wage earner. What if a student finishes a four-year degree? What about a terminal degree? We looked at all these models.

What we found was that the students who begin working after the 8th grade actually earn more money in their lifetime than a high school graduate would earn. The reason for this is that on the reservation, a high school graduate earns the same wage as an 8th grade graduate. In essence, we've been giving our students the wrong message all these years. The high school degree is not enough to make a difference; at least a 4-year college degree is required to change a student's earning potential over the student's lifetime.

What this means is that we need to prepare our students for an extended education and help them plan for the commitment that will sustain them over a lifetime. At ICS, we're trying to do that with our outcome goals tied to traditional values.

When the Urban Indian Education Research Advisory Board began to think about ways in which we could begin this process, we agreed that it was important to go back to our own elders and have individual conversations with them. It's critical that if we are going to teach culture we understand the tribes, and help the tribes understand that they, too, have an obligation to the children they have here. Yes, we have borrowed their children for awhile, but we want to give them back as better people. We want the elders to believe that they are not losing anything by the movement on and off the reservation or in and out of Indian country.

Another confounding problem has been actually finding the urban Indians. The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimate that they serve 10-15 percent of the Indian population in tribal or contract schools, which means that all the other Indians are somewhere else. The numbers, as presented by the Title IX programs and other sources, aren't formatted in any way that



means anything to us, so we have begun a project to try to cross-reference the Bureau of Indian Affairs data with the National Center for Education Statistics data, which categorizes school districts. We believed it would take us a month, but it has been a year and it still is not finished. We will continue to work on this preliminary database, but would welcome any suggestions as to how to accomplish this in a more timely manner.

We have also created an Urban Indian Education website, and link within it articles on Indian Education. We will also be adding other relevant information to the site as time goes by.

As a third prong of this strategy, we commissioned two papers on Indian Education. The first is a paper that contains the review of the existing literature. This paper will be on-line soon, as well, and there are hard copies available (see bibliography).

The second commissioned paper has to do with capacity. We just don't have people in the field; people who are out there and ready to do the kind of research we need in Indian Education. This paper, being done by George Petersen, Assistant Director of the University Council on Educational Administration at the University of Missouri, will show us how to build capacity in Indian country through an on-line doctoral degree—a fall semester and spring semester on-line and then a summer semester at a research university. This information will be on-line, as well, and should be completed by June, 2002.

The web site will also contain an on-line needs assessment, which we encourage all of you to complete.

The booklet, "Won in the Classroom," which was done by ICS last year, has now been updated to include technology. This little booklet is designed for classroom teachers anywhere who may be thinking about using culturally appropriate materials – materials about American Indians. This is available in hard copy or CD.

One last topic I wish to address has to do with an institutional review board (IRB). If we do research for a federal agency or uses federal dollars, we are obligated to have the people working on the project

go through an institutional review board to be sure the research protocols are safe for human subjects or animals. There are specific guidelines that have to be followed; and one can be certified to do that via a course on-line. In Indian Country, we need to think about what kind of institutional research criteria make sense for us to protect the indigenous knowledge in our communities. The Alaskan Native Federation has set a research protocol that is very specific to Alaska natives. The Navajo Nation has done the same thing. We've begun to collect examples of those culturally appropriate IRBs and at some point, those will be on-line as well.



# **SESSION I: RESEARCH NEEDS IN INDIAN EDUCATION**

## **■ Gerald Gipp -**

This is the time to make changes, because we know that people have moved off the reservations and into the urban and suburban areas. Their needs are not being addressed or met, and so it is critical that we begin to identify ways we can help them.

We can learn a lot from the Rural Systemic Initiative, with which I was involved for many years. Their focus has been to look at culture and how to use it as a base for learning, and it has changed Indian education in some basic, positive ways.

### **Tribal Colleges**

The Tribal College Movement began in the late-60s with the Navajo Community College, then grew to six schools. In 1972, those six colleges formed the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). AIHEC has struggled some, not only in developing the organization, but also in developing the tribal colleges themselves. Right now, AIHEC has thirty-three college members. Five of the institutions offer four-year programs; three of them have university status. Two offer graduate-level degrees; four others are in the process of transitioning into four-year schools. There are more than 25,000 students in the tribal colleges, drawing from more than 200 tribes across the country.

Two-thirds of the students in tribal colleges are women. In my mind, this raises a serious question about what's going on with our families; about the male role in our family structure. We need to address why young males are not taking advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

We also need to study why more than 50 percent of our tribal college students are single parents with one or two dependents. The average age is thirty, which seems to say that college represents a second chance for people who may have dropped out at a young age. We are seeing a rise in younger student enrollments, which could mean that students coming out of high school are beginning to see the tribal colleges as a viable option. A good number of these students are coming out of the urban areas, even though, traditionally, the tribal colleges have been perceived as pulling mostly from reservations.

**There is a definite connection we could talk about.**

Tribal colleges have had several milestones over the years. In 1978, the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act was passed. This was a good intention, but included verbiage that unintentionally limited funding opportunities for some tribes.

In 1989, The American Indian College Fund was created, and currently it supports about forty-five students. Also in that same year, the Carnegie Foundation published a Special Report on Tribal Colleges: Shaping the Future of Native Americans, which was significant because it legitimized the tribal colleges and by doing so, opened doors to other funding sources.

In 1994, there was the passage of the Equity in Education Land Grant Status Act, which granted twenty-nine of the colleges land-grant status. That allows funding to go to the tribal colleges for basic infrastructure. In 1995, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation infused \$30 million into the tribal colleges to do some fundamental planning and examination of structure and future development. We're encouraging these large foundations to continue with their investment in Indian education.

In 1996, tribal colleges lobbied for a Presidential Executive Order, which would increase the federal interest in funding tribal colleges. President Clinton signed that order and since then, we have seen an increase in funding from \$43 million to \$156 million.

In 1997, the Carnegie Foundation published a follow-up report about accomplishments of the tribal colleges. In 1998, there were changes made in the Farm Bill, which created a Tribal College



and Agricultural Research Program. This has enabled the colleges and their faculties to take leadership roles in research.

### AIHEC Research Initiatives

AIHEC will publish a report this summer dealing with several research topics in preschool and K-12 education, including: (1) health and nutrition; (2) the role of faculties in tribal colleges; (3) agriculture and research management; (4) culture, cultural development, and preservation. This report will be available on their website this summer (see bibliography).

### □ David Beaulieu –

I've spent many years in urban Indian education settings, and over the years, I have been involved in many initiatives to try to help Indian students be successful. I have always seen this as a mission to authenticate the needs of Indian students and to prepare them for a future that is uniquely their own. In my position now, I have been working on the Executive Order process, and a lot of you know that the framework of that Order is a summation of the national vision for what we need to be working on. One of the required activities the President ordered was research.

The advances we'll make in the future will be largely dependent upon the knowledge we create out of the research we do now. This will impact public policy for American Indians in terms of what we are able to document as need, which will be tied to program funding from Congress and others. Our representation to policy makers is important.

The Order's research agenda allows us to create that kind of focus agenda at the national level, which is an opportunity we've never had before. We can now say that we need to do something different; to allow American Indian people to ask the questions. We've never had the control to define the real questions or to ask teachers and school boards about curriculum or to set priorities in terms of funding.

The Executive Order specifically asks that we look at three major areas – develop baseline data (where are we and what does it look like nationally for Indian education), what are the best practices (what works and what doesn't), and look at the impact of culture and native education.

#### Baseline Data

Most questions about baseline data affect reliability and validity of national studies on Indian education. There is some evidence that current national studies on Indian people are significantly in error. There's a study on Indian participation in post-secondary education that tried to look at persistence of American Indians in getting an education. When examining the sample, however, we found that 30 percent of the Indian students who claimed to be Indian when they enrolled in college changed their identity a year later. If we're looking at issues of school performance and we want to look at schools from year-to-year, how can we ever measure progress if 30 percent of Indian students each year are coming and going from the sample? We need to get serious about validity and reliability of the questions in Indian education research. Are we, in fact, studying what we wish to study? What are the results really telling us? We're all using different definitions.

#### Best Practices

In terms of best practices, we've all been involved in Indian education for a long time and we have been studying schools in terms of how they're doing. We wonder why we continue to see examples of schools not working, but we fail to realize that a lot of our ideas are being implemented in schools with a high turnover rate. The ideas we have for improving professional development are being offered in settings where staff is always coming and going. It's impossible to develop a school reform model in that situation.

#### Native Language and Culture

If you look at recent studies about the loss of language, and if you look at the Native Languages Act and a proposal to increase funding for that Act, testimony after testimony provide credible evidence that about 75 percent of the spoken indigenous languages will be lost in a generation unless we do something about it...one generation.



We must find ways of using native language that are important to us as a people, not just better ways of teaching native language. Until we talk Indian to our children and use it in our communities, no approach will save native languages. It has to be spoken to be saved. One approach, which works, is immersion . . . using a native language as a vehicle of education is one socially appropriate way of using language. The tribal chairman of the Washow tribe said that he wanted to have another generation of children speaking Washow so that when they got their land back, the land would understand them. The connection between land, language, and sovereignty is such an interesting idea.

There is a research agenda, which will be published in the Federal Registry this year, and which will be open for comment to the Indian community. The comments will shape the final agenda, which will attract funding for research. We already are investing in longitudinal studies, born out of the idea that in many population research samples; American Indians don't show up in significant numbers. We have to pay extra attention to create a sample if we want Indians to be represented. An early childhood study that's being done, in order to create a sample, cost \$9 million; a significant investment just to ensure baseline information on that area.

There's another area that I think is vitally important in Indian education. I believe

we've been too focused on just schools in our research, just looking at what we do and measurement, without seeing the context of the community and school together. There are a number of factors that mitigate school reform and they've evolved out of the realization that we need a much broader approach if we're going to make progress in Indian education. What happens to young children, from birth until they enter school is significantly important in Indian education. We need to think about the opportunities for young people when they're not in school - opportunities in the community.

I believe we have focused on achievement too exclusively. In many ways, if you look at the statistics, what we do know is that the real issue is dropout rates. The rejection of schooling altogether. If you ask students who have dropped out why they dropped out, you'll hear that they don't see a future connected to who they are. They don't know why they're even in school. It's not just for getting a job. It has to do with being a human being. Our cultures speak to that.

Finally, our knowledge is not good unless that information is available to those who make the decisions. We need to provide information to parents so they can think about opportunities for their children, to teachers, and to boards of education. Together, we can make informed decisions in the best interests of the children.

## Carol Anne Hart -

As a child, I received an all-Indian, formal Catholic education, and during all the time I attended school, I never once learned anything about Indians. My Indian education came from my grandmother, with whom I lived as a child. My grandmother was a woman that, all throughout the day, would teach me something, or tell me something over and over until it finally took hold. One of the things she told me was that I was smart and that I would go away and help my people, but that I would always come back. And so when I went away to college, I always knew that I would be back with my people, no matter what. What I see today is that a lot of people leave Indian country and don't return, taking with them the knowledge they've gained.

As President of the National Indian Education Association, I have the mission to address all of the needs of Indian education in one annual three-day conference. I remember my first NIEA conference as a student. I was excited to see so many educated Indians in one place at one time and I tried to attend

too many sessions. I try to remember that now when we're planning our conferences.

When I went to school at the University of South Dakota, my first time off of the reservation, there were seven Indian students and we had no orientation about what we would encounter. My



grandmother tried to prepare me. I would be the first in my family to attend college so I knew I couldn't fail. She raised me to believe that I could do anything I wanted to do and she taught me to always ask questions, which caused me much grief over the years since girls were really not supposed to go to college.

Since I had never been off the reservation, I attended college with an entire culture of people I hadn't encountered before. I had to get over that before I could even think about studying. I believe that is one thing we need to think about when we look at preparing our students for a higher education. What is it that they bring with them when they come to this environment and what is it that they're being taught at home? How can we encourage them and nurture them so they can continue to want to be in the educational system? I believe that language and culture is really important and once it's with you, you never grow out of it. It's part of you every day, and in every way. We need to be sure that our students feel a part of a university environment and that it is a positive experience for them.

I spent a long time trying to find out what I wanted to do with my life. I tried science,

medicine, law, and finally discovered that education is what I really love. Education is exciting because one can take young minds and teach them, change them, and get them to do things that will affect the rest of their lives. The point is that it doesn't matter what field one is in; it only matters that one be educated. Education is the key that allows us to open doors that would not otherwise be available.

When we think about a research agenda for American Indians, I believe that health is an important need. If you look at what's happening in our communities . . . in my community in the northern plains our women have the highest incidence of lung cancer in the country and our people are the third highest in diabetes. A lot of the diseases we see among Indian people date back to when the first immigrants came to this country. They brought diseases with them that our people did not have. Small pox, measles, and whooping cough killed off almost 90 percent of our population. Some villages were empty. What strikes me is the knowledge that was lost. Our people were architects, artists, and healers, and they were talented beyond what we can imagine now. We need to rebuild and education is the key to that.

## □ Ernie Stevens, Jr. –

I am from the streets of Milwaukee and my mother was one of the founding mothers of this school. I am an Oneida from right here in Wisconsin.

My brother and I ran these streets, and not always in a good way. My brother committed suicide many years ago and I live in his memory with great inspiration. I am not sad for my brother, though, and it goes back to the theme today. How the educators in this room affect the Indian children of this community today will determine how these students turn out tomorrow.

The National Indian Gaming Association is an inter-tribal organization, comprised of 168 member tribes, all of which use or plan to use gaming as part of their economic development plans. The common commitment of NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian people economically, socially, and politically. Our mission is to protect and preserve the general welfare of tribal nations striving for self-sufficiency through gaming enterprises in Indian country.

To fulfill this mission, NIGA works with the Federal government and Congress to develop sound policies and practices and to provide technical assistance and

advocacy on gaming-related issues. One of the policies we continue to work on is the government-to-government policies and practices of the federal government and its corresponding departments and their relationships to the tribal nations. It is imperative that all tribal organizations work with and demand that this policy be followed to its fullest extent to insure our inclusion in the decisions that directly affect our future.

Working with the new Republican administration is an adventure. We aren't sure what President Bush's policies will be, but we have to be objective and assertive



with the new leadership. That's the posture I'm taking as Chair of NIGA.

More than thirty years after the passage of the Civil Rights legislation significant economic and social inequalities persist among racial and ethnic groups in this country. Analysis of well being by race and ethnicity using data from the 1997 National Survey of American Indian Families affirms that disparities exist. Even at higher incomes, whites and Asians repeatedly fare better than blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. These national studies are important in gauging the economic and social well being of our brothers and sisters who have moved to the cities to provide for their families. This practice of migrating to the cities for work has left us with a large number of Indian families with no access to health care, education, adequate housing or other benefits held by our people who live on the reservations.

These basic necessities are lost, but even more importantly, they are losing the benefit of the extended family and community culture. Being Indian is not only a matter of blood; it is a mindset of spirituality. The tradition of spirituality is an integral part of living in harmony with the rhythms of nature. As some of our nations have become more self-sufficient and are rebuilding their communities through the gaming enterprise, we must put out the word that all of our nations' members are welcome to return home and enjoy the fruits of our endeavors. We know that's not so simple and we know that a lot of our people are perfectly content with the city and so we have to balance that and battle on behalf of those urban dwellers, too. We have to encourage tribes to reach out to their urban populations. Funding for urban youth centers must be a high priority, as well as

funding for a good educational system for our people.

The urban Indian community has been created as a result of the federal government's relocation programs. Urban Indians make up 60 percent of the total Indian population, over 1.2 million people. The urban Indian population has grown over 30 percent in the past thirty years and urban Indians are undercounted by the U.S. Census and not included in the statistical data gathered by urban areas. These Indians have no representation at the federal, state, or local legislature, policy, or administrative departments. Urban Indians are excluded from all Indian programs such as housing, block grants, enterprise development, and elderly assistance programs. Our unemployment is double and poverty levels are three times that of all other races. The Urban Indian dropout rate is 75 percent and urban Indians do not benefit from gaming revenues in any significant way. Obviously this school does benefit from gaming dollars and it's a great example of what can be done.

I am a product of the city. I have had dark days with gangs, substance abuse, and violence, but I have also had great times; lots of them at this school. One of the things I keep coming back to is your effect on these young people. I am a product of what you work with every day. This school was founded to protect kids like me, and it is only by the efforts of the people at this school that I have survived and prospered. The teachers here motivated me and got me interested in things I never would have found on my own. In college, I had to be pulled and pushed to succeed, all the while fighting poverty and substance abuse. I encourage all of you to never give up; never get discouraged, and never stop helping.



## **SESSION II: EXAMPLES OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN CURRICULUM, POLICY, AND LEADERSHIP**

□ Tarajean Yazzi

### **The Role of Language and Culture in the Education of Indian Children**

The perspective from which I approach my work is the understanding that education is a political act. If we are to understand the role of native cultures and language in the education of American Indian children, we have to go back and look at the educational system's history, which reveals the purpose of education for Indian children. We need to consider, in our examination of the purpose of education, that the majority of native people became citizens in 1924, yet we were being educated in schools created by others.

So if we think about our people being placed within existing social, political and cultural constructs of a white dominant society, then we can begin to understand what's going on in our schools today with regard to English-only policies that impact our people too. Fortunately we do have the right to protect our language.

I have struggled with the question; what is the purpose of education? What is the role of language and culture in the education of Indian children, and what do I see in my own educational history that might inform teachers and learning in schools?

During my childhood, my family entered each year with a blessing, to renew our vision for acquiring balance and clarity in the work in which we engaged. In those ceremonies, the medicine man, informed by Navajo knowledge, history, economics, science, and philosophy, would share all the truth of the world with the family. He would philosophize in our native language about its history and issues that people face. The ceremony, filled with powerful stories and songs, created a space in which education and the transmission of culture took place. This motivates me to express the power that our native cultures hold for us. This, of course, is in the context of people who have a land base or homeland to which they are connected. For urban Indians, they have a land base and they too have created a culture. The things that drive us are the things that make us comfortable. So when we look back at the purpose of education in the U.S., we have people coming to this new land and looking for something to make them comfortable. Coming face-to-face with something different was the impetus for changing it into something comfortable. What better way to do that than to create an educational system that transforms

the culture of the people with whom you are uncomfortable?

At Harvard, there is a museum, the Peabody Museum that holds a lot of history of the American Indian – artifacts, masks, words and pieces that make up our identity. The reason it all is there is because there was a belief that native people would be extinct. Artifacts of culture are kept there and there is now a movement to try to get those artifacts back to their home lands and within the hands of the people who know how to use those artifacts. I think about all of the things that encompass what education could mean for us as teachers and how do we teach history to our students; how do we successfully incorporate language and culture into the classroom? We talk about how important it is; we know it's important, but what does that look like when we get teachers actually doing the work? That's been the question that has informed me throughout all the years I've been working in Indian education. I started out just trying to understand the history and foundation of Indian education and I slowly started to ask the question, how did that transformation happen with white teachers teaching Indian children. What was going on there? Why were they doing what they were doing?

J.D. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, articulated his views and those of the government in an English-only policy.

"Please inform the authorities of the schools that the English language only must be taught the Indian use placed here for educational and industrial training at the expense of the government. If Lakota or other language is taught to such children, they will be taken away and



support by the government will be withdrawn from the school. It is also believed that teaching an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect is a positive detriment to him. The first step to be taken toward civilization, toward teaching the Indians the mischief and folly of continuing their barbarous practices is to teach them the English language."

The government felt that the English language was the way to transform a people. From English-only to points in time when we experienced programs like bilingual education and immersion, the policy pendulum has swung back and forth. I look at the way my parents were educated and the belief that they were taught that native language is a positive detriment to their humanity. That stays with them and lingers through several generations of native people who went through the boarding school era. Because of this, my parents chose not to teach me the native language, thinking that I wouldn't succeed unless I spoke English only. The pressures are huge and so the challenge is to look at history and understand education as a political act.

I've spent my research time going to Navajo classrooms and working closely with teachers in trying to understand what it is they are doing - to try to get a description of what culture and language looks like in action and what purpose it serves.

Consider for a moment what you might imagine that schooling looks like with the incorporation of language and culture.

What would you see and hear; what kinds of behaviors would be present. Also consider the context in which you are teaching. In an urban setting, you might have children from different tribal backgrounds. What would your lessons be like?

When we think about why we might incorporate culture and academics, we talk about pride and caring, we talk about identity formation and learning from our communities. If you look at those purposes, they sometimes don't match what happens in schools. My challenge to teachers is to figure out a way in which one lessens the gap. I have found it in some of the teachers I'm working with now, but one of the things that concerns me is that there isn't enough sharing of these practices.

One teacher I've worked with is able to think through what her students see and live with on a day-to-day basis and assimilate that into her lessons. She allows them to write about their experiences and helps them to understand contemporary Navajo culture. How does she connect those curriculum lessons to state mandates? These are the things I want to identify; the creativity of teachers to inspire their students and to keep them interested in education. In a political system, education is power and it allows people to change their situation. Much more study is needed in this area.

## □ Susan Faircloth –

### Exceptional Education

My dissertation challenge was to bring together Indian education, educational administration, and special education. I searched the literature and emerged with a topic that deals with the issues of administrative preparation and special education.

One of the statements Dr. John Tippeconnic and I made last year in an article was that too often we read about failures or limitations of our students, their parents, and those who educate them. This prompted us to ask what are we doing successfully?

The difficulty we had when thinking about success was what constitutes effective practice? Who decides for Indian students what is an effective practice? In special education, I believe there are four major issues that need to be considered. One is the preparation and recruitment of special educators. Another issue involves the rights and responsibilities of parents in special education. They need to be involved and we need to help them be involved constructively. The third issue we were concerned about is the development and use of culturally and linguistically



appropriate assessments. If you look at the laws dealing with special education in general, there are specific provisions within the law that say our students must be assessed in their primary language or primary mode of communication. If our students are not competent in English and we are assessing them in English, what kind of results do we expect? The last issue we looked at is the education of American Indian Alaska Native Students with Disabilities in the least restricted environment and we find that there are many things being done with Northern Arizona University. They're teaching people how to work with American Indian students; they're training parents; they're training paraprofessionals; and they are including students in the general education classrooms. We can learn from that.

When we look at American Indian and Alaska Native students, they make up less than 1 percent of the total student population in the United States. More than 1.3 percent of our students end up in special education. The data suggests that Indian students are slightly over-represented in special education. That concerns me. Another concern is that if you look at public schools more than 10 percent of our students end up in special education, even though they only make up 1 percent of the student population. If you look at schools funded or operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Tribes, almost 20 percent of our students end up in special education.

In this study, I looked at two issues. One is a survey of principals' perceptions of their level of skill as related to the administration and supervision of special education programs and services. The second issue was to identify areas in which principals indicated a need for additional training.

At Penn State we have the perspective that our students are unique, and if our students are unique then perhaps there's something that's unique about the teachers and administrators who work with our students, and if that's true, then shouldn't the literature and research address that? Shouldn't it tell us who's working with our students? What are their training needs? What don't they know? What do they need to know?

I wanted to know how skilled they perceived themselves to be. I wanted to know the areas in which they rated themselves as having the most and least skill. I wanted to know if there were significant differences between principals in Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, Tribal Schools, and public schools. Then I wanted to find out some information about their needs for training.

There are eight areas of competencies that have been developed by the Council for Exceptional Children – things they feel special educational administrators should know. They are philosophical, historical and legal foundations of special education; characteristics of learners; assessment; instructional content; planning and managing the teaching and learning environment; managing student behavior; communication; and professionalism and ethics.

My study consisted of 33 principals in Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, 37 principals in Tribal Schools, and 203 principals in public schools with an American Indian or Alaska Native student population of 25 percent or more. I wanted those schools that had at least half of their students either American Indian or Alaska Native. There are more than 1,200 schools across the nation that fit that description.

Following is a summary of some of what I found. There are five areas in which principals indicated they had the least level of skill, and these included planning for the transition from school to post-secondary education, planning for the transition from school to work, interpreting and communicating case law, assessing students, and funding.

I was also trying to ascertain if there were differences between the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal, and public schools regarding how knowledgeable principals were of special education. I believed there would be a difference, but I could find none.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs now has a Special Education Law Institute where they train administrators and teachers, specifically in the area of special education law. This is critical because as I looked at principals in general, special education law is what they feel least knowledgeable about. We are expecting our principals to



be responsible for all students and teachers in the schools, including those who teach special education, and yet principals are not prepared to adequately assume these responsibilities. This is not a criticism of the principals but of the system. We need to develop our training activities to address these needs, and we need to be sure that the issues related to language and culture are also incorporated into training.

Another study at Penn State also has addressed a critical issue for Indian people. We have one student who did a review of literature, looking at special education. Between 1975 and the year 2000, she found more than 400 studies dealing with special education. Of those 400 studies, she found less than 70 that specifically had Indian students as the majority of their population. Only three of the studies looked at special education teachers and administrators; six that studied parental involvement; twenty-three that looked at

issues like transition or mental retardation, and thirty-one that focused on assessment. What concerns me is that even though Indians make up such a large part of special education classes, there is almost no research out there that focuses on that issue. The leading categories of disabilities among our students are learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance or speech and language impairment. How are students placed in these categories and what effect does language and culture have on how we assess those students?

It's important that when we look at research, we look at it from an Indian perspective. We are the people working with our students and we know what's important and we need to direct our research, the way it is analyzed, and the way it is presented.

## □ Sandra Fox –

### Infusing Culture and Standards Into the Curriculum

About this time last year, the OERI Department of Education called for projects that would help to build the capacity of available school reform models. Right now in this country, we are in the business of school reform, and schools are being asked to implement models. I'm sure you've heard of the models Success for All, the Modern Red School House, and Effective Schools. NISBA applied to see if it could take the effective schools process and Indianize it even more than it had been from an earlier project. We knew it could be better, further honed to make it work even more successfully. We were funded, one of fifteen projects, and in essence, we were going to develop an Indian model of school reform. Since then, we have been working on this with seventeen schools, and have added four major components for improvement.

The first component is a belief that the whole project should be based on the local tribal values, used as a basis for administration, daily interaction, discipline, and teaching. It's used from top to bottom.

The second component is wellness, led by Dr. Clayton Small. We are piloting wellness approaches, based again on Indian values and ideas.

The third enhancement is to use culturally based, unbiased, linguistically and culturally sensitive assessment. We are using the Learning Record Assessment System, which was developed in England at a time when they had an influx of children from all over the world. These children had to be fairly assessed and to use their native languages when doing so.

It has also been used in New York City and we use it now in about thirty Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. It is the only valid and reliable portfolio assessment system in use, in my opinion.

The fourth component is the integration of language and culture. The truth of the matter is, that even in Bureau schools, this is not happening.

The title of our project is Creating Sacred Places for Children, and it has a three-year cycle. This is the first year, a planning year. Next year, we'll start with nine schools and go on-site for implementation. The following year, we'll begin eight more schools.

The component I'm most concerned about and involved in is the integration of



language and culture. Those of us who developed this program believe that everything we need to teach can be caught in a cultural context. We also believe it can occur in a regular classroom. In most Bureau-funded schools right now, culture is taught down the hall for thirty minutes each week. This lets everyone know that culture is here because it has to be but it's not important enough to be a part of the everyday classroom. The teaching of language and culture is not tied to regular instruction or to standards.

We believe that if we incorporate language and culture, we will make Indian students proud of who they are, and that, we believe, is the key to understanding and motivating for them.

What we have done to try to accomplish this incorporation is to develop teacher research guides. We have worked with schools from sixty-three different reservations to develop general lessons that could easily be localized. What we learned as we worked with these schools and their teachers was that non-Indian teachers felt they weren't prepared adequately to teach culture. We also were surprised to find out that even most cultural teachers were often afraid to actually teach culture. They didn't

think they were teaching it correctly; they were fearful and didn't think they were good enough.

So how do you create a cultural curriculum when you've got so many diverse groups? What we did was to think about how our ancestors taught children. It was usually through story telling. What we did was to review the stories that are among our people and I found that in various places, these stories were written down in books, by Indian authors. I had not paid much attention to Indian literature before this, but I found myself fascinated and delighted by what was available. I did a literature review, categorized the topics, and put it all together, with other resources, in a set of resource guides for teachers. The resource guides are finished up to grade 8, and we're beginning the grades 9-12 guides now. These guides will provide a way for the regular teacher and the cultural teacher to work closely together to localize their lessons. Our main goal is to make this as easy for teachers as possible and to give them every possible opportunity to use language and culture in their classrooms. I believe that if we incorporate language and culture, it will make a difference.

## ■ Alison Meadow – Action Research Facilitator, Fairbanks School District

### Teacher Research Project in the Fairbanks School District

In our school district, we have a grant with three strands, one of which is most critical to this group here today – research.

Fairbanks is a multicultural, urban school district. We have almost fifty different languages represented by our bilingual program and a diverse Alaska Native population as well. We have 16,000 students total and 2,200 Alaska Native students in the district. The percentages vary from school to school, from a small percentage to almost 20 percent of the population.

I work with thirteen teachers in the district; in many ways far too small a group and in some ways, far too large a group. There are a number of challenges this group has to overcome, but the one I hear over and over again is incorporating Alaska Native culture into an already multicultural classroom. Another is educating multicultural teachers and how a non-native teacher successfully and respectfully incorporates native culture into their classroom, and the fact that there is limited information and training in

both teacher education programs and in district in-services in Alaska Native and American Indian student issues, knowledge, and curriculum. We are not relying on the institutions to provide the training; we're trying to do it ourselves within the scope of this project.

The group we work with is fairly mixed, but mostly we have non-native teachers. We have seen major changes in these teachers and in their attitudes toward Alaska Native culture and the integration of that into their classes. They are able to negotiate ways to



incorporate culture into their classroom in ways that really work for them. These teachers are beginning to understand the context of where those students are coming from and the experiences they've had.

We began the project in September of 1999, with thirteen teachers. We began with brainstorming sessions to identify topics the teachers would explore. Some of them include:

- the way native students are made to feel
- students don't have any ownership of the school
- underidentification of gifted or talented students
- overidentification of students for special education programs
- classroom structure in the village vs. Fairbanks
- class size
- definitions of success
- lack of native teachers
- well-being
- respect
- inclusion of culture and spirituality
- legal issues/separation of church and state
- curriculum
- racism
- personal issues

What each teacher did was to choose a topic to explore more fully. From this, we received a huge range of research projects. One of the major themes we saw was connections.

A lot of the research suggests that if students feel connected and respected by their school and teachers, they will stay in school. When talking about a connection to school, students' responses were categorized into three areas - academic, environment, and home.

School and class size was seen to be important. In the villages, students are accustomed to small classes within which they help each other.

Teaching and learning styles. Students became bored and stopped paying attention if teachers just lectured or if their classes were too large and they felt lost in the crowd.

The role of the teacher was mentioned many times. The overwhelming response from students was that the teacher made the most difference in their school careers. That finding, especially in a large class of thirty students, surprised some teachers.

Most of the students who participated in these studies were 15, 16, and 17-years-old, and it was amazing to listen to them talk about their concerns about school. They talked about racism and prejudice, stereotypes, the lack of Indian history being taught, and other issues that I would never have believed they were thinking about.

In the second year of the project, teachers expanded greatly on projects from the first year. They focused more on action, really trying things that they had learned. Some examples include:

- identifying barriers to students' success in the alternative high school
- bridging differences through the visual arts
- teaching styles that promote Alaska Native participation
- defining moments, in-depth interviews with students about key factors in their education
- building on Alaska Native home school connections
- tutor/mentoring programs
- transition programs at the middle schools
- junior fiddlers program in the elementary program

Teachers have noted remarkable changes in their teaching styles. One teacher realized that she's been using inappropriate reading materials in her classroom for years. She addressed the issue with her students and they made changes. This was the first time in twenty-five years that she had been challenged to think about her teaching style.

Other teachers commented that they were more aware of the need to be sensitive to body language and other subtle cultural communication cues. One teacher responded to a question about how her teaching has changed by stating that she realized that it's the schools that need to change, not the students.

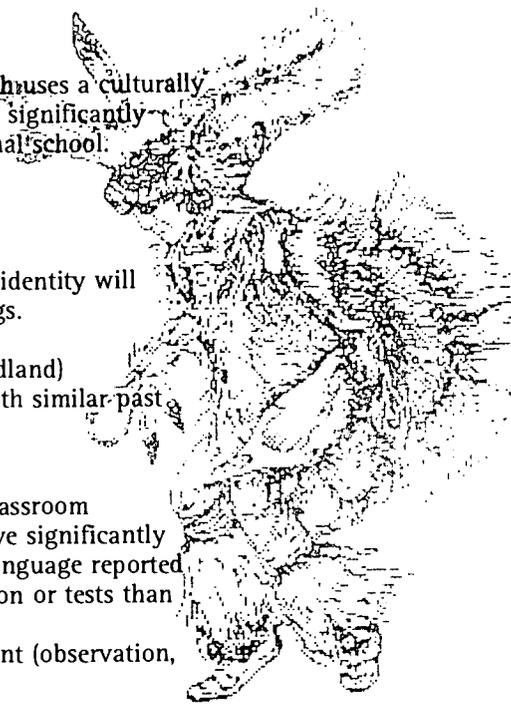
Next year's projects will focus much more on analysis of grades and changes in attendance and the traditional school success standards.



## **SESSION III:** **DEFINING AN AGENDA**

Within this session, in small groups, the following hypotheses were suggested:

- How to develop teamwork and cooperation, and its relationship to everyday living.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Students' backgrounds and learning styles
  - ❖ *Population:* Students at any grade level
  
- Students' development will increase a team concept that will result in less frequent trips involving the Responsible Thinking Process. If 3rd and 4th grade students are provided with field trips and internet clips before beginning a unit, students will comprehend more vocabulary and concepts at the end of a month-long unit, and on the 3rd grade reading list.
  - ❖ *Variables:* One class gets internet clips and one doesn't.
  - ❖ *Population:* 3rd grade classes
  
- Students that learn their tribal language will have increased learning abilities.
  - ❖ *Variables:* The teachers teaching the language class Student age while learning
  - ❖ *Population:* Students age birth to 7 years
  
- Students who feel a sense of choice and connection to their teacher will significantly increase their work output and positive decision-making behaviors.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Connection; classroom management; individuality
  - ❖ *Population:* Middle School Students
  
- Dropout rates of students attending a school which uses a culturally and linguistically relevant curriculum will not be significantly different from those students attending a traditional school.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Quality of schooling
  - ❖ *Population:* Native American students
  
- Including activities that enrich a sense of Indian identity will promote overall achievement in classroom settings.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Academic achievement
  - ❖ *Population:* Inter-tribal, 6 to 7 tribes (all Woodland)  
Two different classes composed of students with similar past academic records
  
- Native American children who receive specific classroom instruction in Native American language will have significantly more knowledge and skills in native American language reported by teacher verbally, through classroom observation or tests than children who do not receive instruction.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Knowledge; skills; type of assessment (observation, verbal report by teacher, and tests)
  - ❖ *Population:* Native American children



- What is an effective way of teaching culture and language in a classroom when 3 or more tribes are represented?
  - ❖ *Variables:* Language methods
  - ❖ *Population:* Multitribal schools
- The academic performance of urban Alaska Native students will improve in a class limited in size to no more than 15 students.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Teaching style; must have effective teacher; appropriate curriculum; manageable class size which varies
  - ❖ *Population:* Alaska Native (middle and/or high school) in an urban school district
- Teen parents participating in a parent/child group will show an increase in positive interaction with children than those teen parents who do not participate in a parent/child group.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Social interaction
  - ❖ *Population:* Teen parents
- Special needs students who remain in their Indian school receiving special services while mainstreamed in the classroom will show a significant development of skills over those who are sent to non-Indian schools.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Skill development
  - ❖ *Population:* Grade school children with special needs  
Students (Indian vs. non-Indian schools)
- Junior high students will not do better academically or socially until they have separate one-on-one time with a teacher.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Students/teachers interaction
  - ❖ *Population:* Indian Community School; Middle School
- Students that come from a home where both parents are present do better academically and socially.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Academic achievement, incidences of discipline referral
  - ❖ *Population:* Indian Community School and other tribal schools
- Students with high truancy will improve with a home/school intervention.
  - ❖ *Variables:* Those students who have 10 or more unexcused absences within one semester of school
  - ❖ *Population:* Teachers, staff, administration, students, families and extended families

## **SESSION IV: INCORPORATING ACADEMICS INTO AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURE**

Linda Sue Warner

We have here an example of the philosophy of our school – infusing academics into culture. In this school, our teachers spend a lot of time in professional development. The class sizes are small and we have advantages and we know that. We also think we can take those advantages and share them with other people. What we have today is the beginning of a model and we're looking to improve it and share it on a national level.

Katrina Coker, Amy Tromp, Carson Singer

For a year, we have been implementing a program called the High Scope Program (one of many and not specifically endorsed by ICS), and it's a philosophy of thinking, of looking at how students learn and how best to meet individual needs by differentiating learning based on students' styles and strengths. It's not a deficit model; it's building from strengths.

What we have to present today is a unit developed by our teachers, based on empowering teachers to use technology in their curriculum. Mr. Singer is doing this with his 4th grade class. We have portable labs that travel from classroom to classroom, so the students have to make the best use of the time they have computers available to them. We plan out how the teachers will integrate the computers into their classrooms to take full advantage of them. Virtually every lesson the teacher does for that week has a technology component, whether it is as simple as students typing in journals or creating a slide presentation for social studies.

Mr. Singer:

I asked my students to create six slides that talk about the six main reservations in Wisconsin. Fifteen students divided into six groups, gender-mixed. They used the Power Point software to create their slide show. Power Point and Microsoft Office software includes a lot of educational information to help students get started using them. An introductory assignment to help them familiarize themselves with Power Point involved slides they had to make that talked about themselves.

The slide show assignment about Wisconsin was designed to not only have the students learn about research, themselves, and each other, it met state standards, not just in one area, but in nine. We are expecting that this project will be developed over several years to include links, research from other sources, and many more components.

Amy Tromp

One of the things I think about as a teacher is how can we get students interested in their own history. By using technology and blending it into lessons, students get excited about getting on-line and doing research. It's hands-on for the children. They might even begin to love research and to begin to equate school with exciting projects they get to do that teach them about their own history. This sort of assignment also promotes teamwork and peer tutoring. At this point, we're going to present three separate workshops for all of you here, to demonstrate to you how components of this project work. Entitled, "Getting to Know Wisconsin's Tribal Geography," "Research, Research, Research," and "Storyboarding," you will be able to get a feel for what our students are asked to do.



## **SESSION V: REVIEW OF HYPOTHESES PRESENTED**

(See page 21, DEFINING AN AGENDA)

## **SESSION VI: OVERVIEW/COMMENTS**

Linda Sue Warner:

I need to remind Ernie Stevens that he has agreed to help us do a history of our school. We have many documents about the school but no real history. We will have that.

Comment from Rosemary Christensen:

Remember that literature reviews are great, but the studies haven't been done by us and don't contain samples of our people. The Indian perspective has not been captured in most of the research that has been done. We need to develop our own protocols for research and encourage our own researchers.

*Linda Warner:* One of the questions we always struggle with is what are we going to call research? We see so much to be done and we're in such a hurry to do it that we don't often define it well. In the interim, we have to figure out how to translate what's already been done so that it can speak to us. Your comments are well taken and we need to be sure that we do the research that we think is important, not the research that funding agencies think is important.

*Participant:* We also need to be sure that the funding agencies do not own the research, we do. Indian communities are becoming more careful to protect their people and their culture, so that research really does benefit their people, not just the funding agency.

*John Tippeconnic:* This represents a challenge to sort out the complexities of the issue. We can't do everything and we have to focus. We need to be sure that funding agencies know that we can do the research their way, but also that we can do it our way. That complexity is that we exist in a larger world where these issues come into play. We are capable of doing the research that is important to our people and we can improve practice with that research.

## **ADJOURNMENT**



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