

Federal Language Policy and American Indian Education¹

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Abstract

The past two-and-a-half decades have witnessed tremendous change in both the content and the context of American Indian education. Content refers to curriculum, pedagogy and the micro processes that occur within Indian classrooms, schools and communities. Context refers to the larger institutional framework in which those processes operate. Change at both levels has resulted from a dynamic interplay between federal language policy on the one hand, and initiatives generated at the level of Indian schools and communities on the other. Integrating an historical analysis of federal language policy with comparative ethnographic data from several well-documented Indian bilingual programs in the southwestern U.S., this paper examines that interplay and its implications for local control over Indian education.

Introduction

In a seminal paper presented to the American Educational Research Association in 1975, educational linguists John Read, Bernard Spolsky and Alyse Neundorf observed that “bilingual education involves more than a new kind of curriculum organization. It may represent,” they stated, “a whole new approach to education and reflect complex processes of social change to which it contributes in turn” (1975, p. 2).

Read, Spolsky and Neundorf were then engaged in the Navajo Reading Study--the first comprehensive, long-term research on the impacts of bilingual education in American Indian settings. That study began in 1969 with the seemingly straightforward aim of looking into the effects of “teaching Navajo children to read in their

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own language first” (Spolsky, 1975, p. 347). In the course of investigating this “new” approach to reading--new at least to American Indian children, for whom use of the native language had been prohibited and brutally punished in schools--it became clear that the project’s aims were neither simple nor straightforward. In fact, five years into the project and after a thorough review of existing American Indian bilingual programs, Spolsky reported that these programs’ pedagogical and linguistic outcomes were hugely overshadowed by the larger social, political and economic transformations the programs gave rise to--transformations that at their root involved a fundamental question: Who controls Indian education (Spolsky, 1974; cf. McKinley, Bayne & Nimnicht, 1970)?

The 24 years since the Navajo Reading Study began -- years that correspond to the enactment and implementation of the federal Bilingual Education Act -- have witnessed tremendous change in both the content and the context of Indian education. By content I mean curriculum, pedagogy and the micro processes that occur within Indian classrooms, schools and communities. Context refers to the larger institutional framework in which those processes operate, the macro-level social, political and economic forces impinging on them. These changes in content and context center on the issue of control alluded to by Spolsky et al., and represent a dynamic interplay between federal language policy on the one hand, and initiatives generated by micro-level processes within schools, local communities and tribes on the other.

This paper examines that interplay and its implications for the question of education control. First, I analyze the ways in which local Indian communities transformed historically constituted school-community relations through bilingual education, thereby transforming the content of education for their children as well. I then consider how these changes, while modifying the context of Indian education by strengthening local control over schools, at the same time raise new questions centering on how such processes can be enhanced and institutionalized. These questions, it is argued, grow out of the unique tribal-federal relationship and in particular, the pattern of funding for Indian education programs.

Nowhere are these issues more salient than in Indian schools and communities in the Southwestern United States, where there are some 26 indigenous languages spoken by members of over 40 tribal groups (see Figs. 1 and 2). Issues concerning cultural and linguistic

identity remain strong in these communities, and tribal governments as well as schools are actively involved in trying to maintain and develop their languages in their oral and written forms (see, e.g., Zepeda, 1990).

The discussion here focuses on bilingual education programs in this region, and integrates an historical analysis of federal language policy, especially the Bilingual Education Act in its several authorizations, with comparative data from several well-documented Indian bilingual programs. These include: (1) the Navajo program at Rough Rock, Arizona, where ethnographic and applied research on the program has been ongoing for the past 13 years (e.g., McCarty, 1993; McCarty, Wallace, Lynch, & Benally, 1991; McCarty, 1989); (2) the nationally recognized Hualapai bilingual program at Peach Springs (Watahomigie & Yamamoto, 1987; Watahomigie, 1988); and (3) programs involved in region-wide bilingual teacher training growing out of the Hualapai program (McCarty in press). I begin with some historical background.

The Initiation of American Indian Bilingual Programs

When President Lyndon B. Johnson approved the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), bilingual education was virtually unknown in schools serving American Indian/Alaska Native students. With a few notable exceptions, these schools emphasized the exclusion of local cultural knowledge, and the inclusion of curricula explicitly designed to extinguish indigenous languages and cultures (Reyhner & Eder, 1989). The statement of one Commissioner of Indian Affairs sums up the historic thrust of federal Indian education policy: The goal, he stated, was to remove “the stumbling blocks of hereditary customs and manners,” and of these, “*language is one of the most important...*” (quoted in Medicine, 1982, p. 399; emphasis added).

This repressive policy persisted well into the twentieth century, but by the late 1960s several schools, including Rough Rock, directly challenged that policy and began teaching in and through the native language (Holm & Holm, 1990; Roessel, 1977). Though clearly a compensatory policy, the Bilingual Education Act propelled

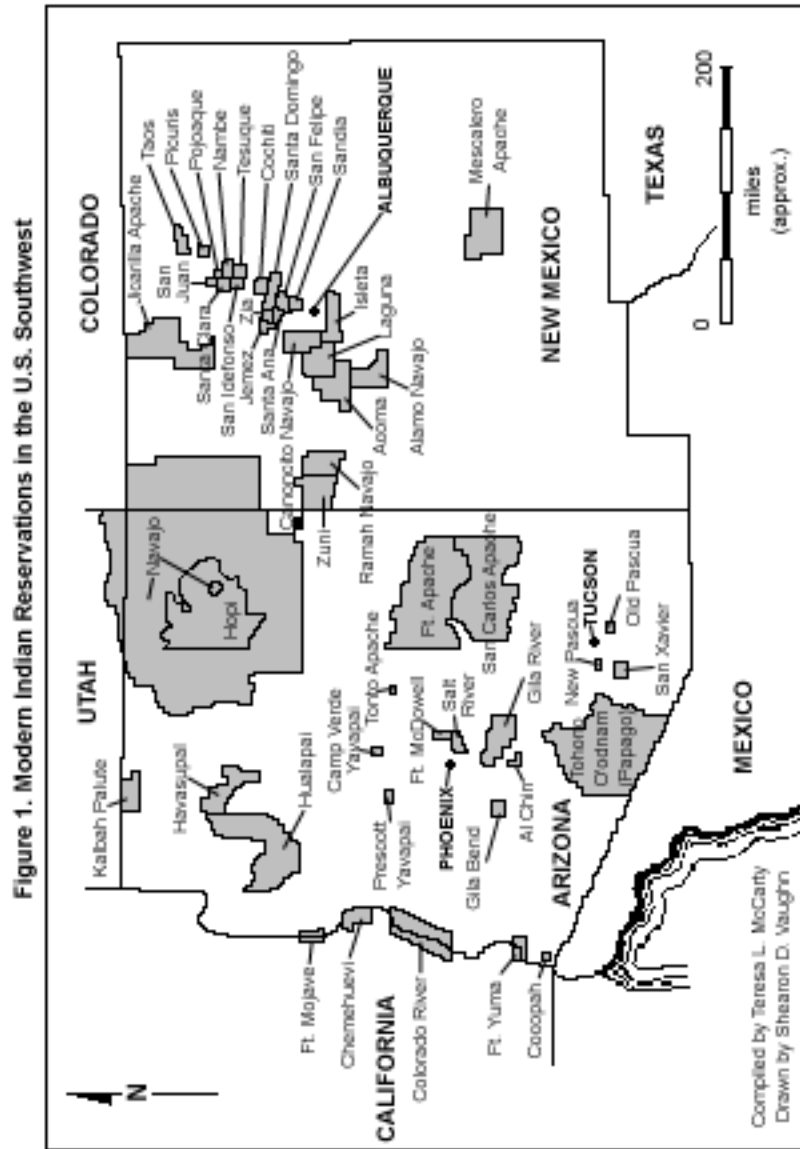


Figure 2
Indigenous Southwestern U.S. Language Groups and
Primary Location of Speakers, 1993[†]

Language Group	Location of Speakers
Southern	
Athapaskan	
Navajo	Navajo Reservation (AZ, NM, & UT)
Western Apache	San Carlos & Ft. Apache Reservations (AZ)
Mescalero Apache	Mescalero Reservation (NM)
Jicarilla Apache	Jicarilla Reservation (NM)
Hokan	
<i>River Yuman</i>	
Mohave	Ft. Mohave & Colorado River Reservations (AZ)
Quechan	Ft. Yuma Reservation (AZ)
Maricopa*	Gila River and Salt River Reservations (AZ)
Halchidhoma*	Salt River Reservation (AZ)
Cocopah	Cocopah Reservation (AZ)
<i>Upland Yuman</i>	
Hualapai*	Hualapai Reservation (AZ)
Havasupai*	Havasupai Reservation (AZ)
Yavapai*	Ft. McDowell, Prescott, Camp Verde & Payson Tonto-Apache Reservations (AZ)
Keresan	
<i>Keres (7 dialects)</i>	
Western: Acoma & Laguna	Acoma & Laguna Pueblos (NM)
Rio Grande Keresans*	Zia, Santa Ana, San Felipe, Santo Domingo, Cochiti (NM)
Tanoan	
Northern Tiwa	Taos, Picuris (NM)
Southern Tiwa	Sandia, Isleta, Tigua (NM)
Southern Tano (Tewa)*	Hopi Reservation (AZ)
Northern Tano (Tewa)*	Santa Clara, San Juan, San Ildefonso, Nambe, Tesuque, Pajoaque (NM)
Towa	Jemez (NM)
Uto-Aztecan	
<i>Shoshonean</i>	
Southern Paiute	Kaibab Paiute Reservation (AZ), Chemehuevi, Reservation (CA), & Colorado River Reservation (AZ)
Hopi	Hopi Reservation (AZ)

Figure 2 (continued)
Indigenous Southwestern U.S. Language Groups and
Primary Location of Speakers, 1993[†]

Language Group	Location of Speakers
<i>Southern Uto-Aztecan</i>	
Upper Piman (Pima & Tohono O'odham)*	Pimas: Salt & Gila River Reservations (AZ); Tohono O'odham: San Xavier, Ak Chin, Gila Bend and Main Tohono O'odham Reservations (AZ)
Yaqui (Yoeme)	Guadalupe, Tucson & Pascua Yaqui Reservation (AZ)
Zunian	
Zuni	Zuni Reservation (NM)

[†](adapted from Martin & McCarty, 1990) *Dialect difference.

and expanded these initial efforts in Indian bilingual/bicultural education. In keeping with the Johnson administration's Great Society-War on Poverty aims, the Act called for "new and imaginative" instructional programs for "children who were both poor and 'educationally disadvantaged because of their inability to speak English'" (Crawford, 1989, p. 32; cf. Bennett, 1985). Despite these deficit-view assumptions -- assumptions I will return to in my conclusions -- the Bilingual Education Act provided an opportunity and some financial means to build on Indian students' lived experiences by bringing their language and local knowledge directly into the school curriculum.

In its first year of funding the Bilingual Education Act supported 76 local projects. Of those, only five served American Indian students. Within a decade, that number grew to nearly 70, representing 10 per cent of all Title VII allocations in 1978 (Leap, 1983; Lawrence, 1978). Virtually all of these programs faced several immediate needs: With few native language print materials available, there was a tremendous need to develop curricula in indigenous languages. In many cases this entailed writing the languages for the first time. Moreover, the legacy of a colonial past had denied access to schooling, especially higher education, to those now charged with providing bilingual instruction. There was thus a pressing need for the certification of local, native-speaking educational personnel. How those needs were addressed at the local level spurred some of the most significant developments in the

history of Indian education. To explore those developments and their implications, we now turn to several cases.

Demonstration at Rough Rock

Situated at the base of Black Mesa in northeastern Arizona, the community of Rough Rock captured national attention in 1966 with the founding of the Rough Rock Demonstration School, the first to elect an all-Indian governing board and the first Indian school to teach through and about the native language and culture (Collier, 1988; Roessel, 1977; Johnson, 1968). An outgrowth of federal War on Poverty programs and in particular, the 1964 Equal Economic Opportunity Act (OEO), the demonstration at Rough Rock involved a unique contract between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Office of Economic Opportunity, a five-member Navajo board of trustees, and the Rough Rock community, who elected the local school board (Roessel, 1977).² Rough Rock sparked the Indian community school movement. ‘Until the advent of the Rough Rock Demonstration School,’ Holm and Holm (1990, p. 183) write, “no school had formally empowered parents or the community to have a significant say in the education of their children.”³

²The events leading to the founding of the school at Rough Rock are well documented elsewhere (e.g., McCarty, 1989; Collier, 1988; Roessel, 1977; Johnson, 1968). In brief, the original demonstration began with a 1965 experiment at nearby Lukachukai, Arizona, where a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school operated. Underwritten by a three-year contract between the Bureau, the Office of Economic Opportunity and a local Navajo governing board, the Lukachukai project merged an OEO-funded Navajo program with the existing BIA school organization. The dual structure proved untenable after the first year, largely due to the intractability of Bureau personnel requirements and policies in relation to the experimental Navajo programs (Roessel, 1977). To complete the project’s remaining two years, federal and tribal representatives identified the new and as yet unstaffed Rough Rock boarding school about 40 miles to the southwest. The BIA contributed the Rough Rock school plant and operational monies, while OEO funded the school’s experimental Navajo programs. After several community meetings at which Rough Rock residents agreed to undertake the demonstration project, community leaders, a tribal trustee board, the BIA and OEO entered into a contract that inaugurated the Rough Rock Demonstration School in July 1966.

³Within a decade of its founding, a dozen other Indian schools, including nearby Rock Point (see Holm & Holm, 1992; 1990), had “gone contract,” signing agreements with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to operate their own schools. In addition, under the leadership of several Rough Rock school founders, especially Robert and Ruth Roessel, the Navajo Nation initiated the first Indian-run community

Thus, when the school first sought and received Title VII funds in 1970, it had already launched its own Navajo Curriculum Center and was deeply committed to what school founders called a “both/and” approach: exposing Navajo children to “important values and customs of both Navajo culture *and* the dominant society” (Roessel, 1977, p. 10). But the pre-Title VII ESEA legislation supporting the school limited this both/and approach by requiring that all materials be written in English. Title VII funds boosted the Curriculum Center’s work, and Navajo literacy, by enabling the production of teaching materials *in* Navajo.

By 1974, when Congress reauthorized the Bilingual Education Act, considerable political support had been mustered for enrichment over compensatory models. Though language enrichment was never a policy goal, the Act for the first time called for instruction in the native language and culture (Crawford, 1989, p. 38). In combination with several precedent-setting civil rights cases, especially *Lau v. Nichols* and *Denetclarence v. Denver Board of Education*,⁴ this political environment fostered further developments in Indian bilingual education.

But for Rough Rock and other federal Indian schools, two pieces of federal legislation were even more critical: the 1972 Indian Education Act, which supported specifically *Indian and Alaska Native* bilingual/bicultural programs, and the 1975 Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, which channeled funds for education and other social services directly to tribes and local communities. The Indian Self-Determination Act paved the way for communities like Rough Rock to “go contract” and run their own

college, spurring the movement toward tribally-controlled colleges and eventually, the Tribally Controlled Community College Act of 1978.

⁴The 1974 *Lau* decision, cited by some as the most significant Supreme Court ruling on language minority rights (Crawford, 1989), found that students whose first language is not English do not receive “equality of treatment” (the standard in the 1954 landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case), solely on the basis of integrated school facilities, curricula and teachers (see, e.g., Crawford, 1989, pp. 35-36). While *Lau* “stopped short of mandating bilingual education” (Crawford, 1989, p. 36), it did cause the U.S. Office of Civil Rights to announce “suitable remedies” for schools found in violation of *Lau*, which prescribed both bilingual and English-as-a-second-language instruction. *Denetclarence*, a lower court opinion, preceded *Lau* by one year and specifically addressed the language rights of American Indian students, ordering Denver Public Schools with high enrollments of Navajo children to institute appropriate bilingual/bicultural and English-as-a-second-language services.

schools. Today there are over 70 such schools (Reyhner & Eder, 1989).

In this context, Title VII grants became one means by which Indian community-controlled schools achieved the initiatives of their governing boards, as well as those of federal policy-makers. Title VII, for example, supported Rough Rock and three other Navajo contract schools in forming the Native American Materials Development Center, a nationally-recognized cooperative based in Albuquerque which, during its eight years of funding, produced and disseminated hundreds of high-quality Navajo materials. Title VII also brought university courses in Navajo literacy and bilingual education directly to Rough Rock, facilitating not only materials development, but the certification of Navajo teachers as well.

In the substance of these changes, Rough Rock represented one instance of a massive Navajo teacher education effort. That effort was informed by the directives of the growing numbers of Navajo contract school boards, and by a broad tribal initiative to “alter the composition of the teaching force on the reservation” (Iverson, 1981, p. 152; cf. Holm & Holm, 1990, p. 179).

The 1974 reauthorized Bilingual Education Act lent crucial support to all of this by adding training and professional development activities as part of a policy emphasis on local capacity building. Through summer and on-site coursework, Rough Rock did indeed transform the composition of its teaching staff. Whereas only three Navajo certified teachers were on the staff when the school began in 1966, by the late 1970s Navajos comprised the majority of the elementary faculty. Holm & Holm (1990) report similar outcomes for nearby Rock Point Community School; in a more recent analysis they cite a total of 6,000 Navajo certified teachers in reservation schools (Holm & Holm, 1992).

It can be argued that these developments in the Navajo context were aided by the fact that Navajo is a language with a large number of speakers -- over 160,000 in recent census counts -- and one with both a significant tribal political base and a relatively long history (about 140 years) as a written language (cf. Benally & McCarty, 1990; Young, 1988). To more fully examine the conditions underlying these changes, we can compare the Navajo situation with that of indigenous groups with fewer speakers and written language traditions. What has been the impact of bilingual education policy and programs for these groups? As the comparative data will show, bilingual programs not only have improved the quality of education

available to Indian children, but in so doing have helped halt a process of virtual language extinction as well as generated major structural transformations in Indian education.

The Hualapai Bilingual Program: Curriculum Development and Teacher Education

Perhaps no bilingual program has been more influential in spurring these transformations than that headed by Lucille Watahomigie at the Peach Springs public school, on the Hualapai Reservation in northwestern Arizona (U.S. Department of Education, 1991; see Fig. 1). A Yuman language unrelated to Navajo, Hualapai has approximately 1,200 speakers and a total tribal population of 1,700 (Watahomigie, 1988; see Fig. 2). Until the Hualapai Title VII Program began in 1975, Hualapai remained an unwritten language (Watahomigie, 1988; Watahomigie & Yamamoto, 1987). Beginning in 1975, Watahomigie and her staff, working with community elders and academic linguists, developed a practical orthography and grammar for the language, and an integrated K-8 bilingual/bicultural curriculum. More recently the program introduced an interactive technology component that involves students in such enterprises as scripting and producing bilingual/bicultural video documentaries on Hualapai ethnobotany and the natural history of the Colorado Plateau (Watahomigie, 1988). Currently funded as one of 12 Title VII Academic Excellence programs being adapted and replicated at several school sites, the Hualapai project is widely recognized as an exemplar in Indian bilingual/bicultural education (see, e.g., U.S. Dept. of Education, 1991, p. 54).

Central to these outcomes has been the certification of Hualapai teachers through on-site coursework similar to that at Rough Rock, and through a university-accredited summer institute. Founded by Watahomigie and several academic linguists in 1978, the institute began with 18 parents, all Yuman speakers committed to learning to "read and write my language" (Salas, 1982, p. 36). During the first summer, the group developed practical writing systems for their languages along with native language teaching materials.

What began in 1978 as a training opportunity for Yuman language speakers has since grown into the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI), a teacher education program now housed at the University of Arizona which has enrolled indigenous educators from throughout the U.S. and

Canada. Despite this growth in numbers and in the diversity of tribal representation, the AILDI philosophy remains consistent with that under which the program began:

American Indian tribes have great knowledge of their language and culture which should be utilized and incorporated within the educational systems that their children attend... The community should have input and control of the curriculum taught to their children (Weryackwe, Watahomigie & Gibson, 1982, p. 3).

Hence, participants in the AILDI have been largely American Indian parents and school-based educators involved in bilingual education programs. For many, the institute has provided their first experience in a university setting; for most, it has offered a primary opportunity to work toward college degrees and bilingual or English-as-a-second-language endorsements (see, e.g., McCarty, in press).

The AILDI grew up during the heyday of Bilingual Education Act capacity-building initiatives, a period that saw more inclusive legislative language for limited-English-proficient American Indian/Alaska Native students, as well as funding for the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, regional Bilingual Education Service Centers, and by 1983, 16 Multifunctional Resource Centers (MRCs). For Indian education the most significant of the centers was the National Indian Bilingual Center (NIBC), an MRC based in Arizona and charged with providing training and technical assistance to some 85 Indian bilingual programs in 13 states. Staffed with personnel who helped organize and teach in the AILDI, NIBC disseminated the institute concept to Indian Title VII sites throughout the country (Kalectaca, 1984; Leap, 1983; Hinton, Langdon, Munson, Rouillard, Yamamoto, Watahomigie & Zepeda, 1982).

The upshot was a widespread university-based training network that paralleled, on a national level, the earlier teacher education initiatives of the Navajo Nation, and in fact brought Navajo schools and communities directly into that network. The long-term consequences included major overhauls in school curricula that in turn led to significant improvements in children's English proficiency, but through the heritage language (Ayoungman, 1992; Begay, Dick, Estell, Lewis, & McCarty, 1992; Holm & Holm, 1992; 1990; Crawford, 1989; Watahomigie, 1988; Watahomigie &

Yamamoto, 1987). In the process, languages as diverse as Navajo and Blackfoot have been strengthened and a growing body of indigenous language literature has been developed. Most important, a cadre of certified American Indian educators has emerged, many of whom have assumed teaching and administrative positions in their local schools. All of this has the potential to bring indigenous students' experiences directly into the classroom, building on their linguistic and cultural resources instead of treating those as deficits, and engaging students in using their experiences to learn (cf. McCarty, in press).

These changes in the *content* of Indian education have transformed the *context* of that education process as well. There now exists a constituency or political base within the Indian education community, the power of which is manifested not only in local-level curricular change, but in tribal language policies designating the native language as official in specific reservation communities (Zepeda, 1990),⁵ and in federal policies such as the Native American Languages Act. Drafted in the summer of 1988 by participants in the AILDI and a concurrent meeting of the Native American Language Issues Institute, the Native American Languages Act was signed into federal law in 1990. The Act calls for the preservation and protection of indigenous languages and cultures, and hence serves as a direct challenge to the various language restrictionist proposals currently before Congress (Crawford, 1992; Hinton, 1991). While no federal funds have yet been allocated to implement the Act, such funds have been authorized, making the Native American Languages Act a promising development in Indian education (Nyhan, 1992; Select Committee on Indian Affairs, 1992).

The point is that these are transformations in macro-level social-structural relations. Their roots are a fundamental rejection of past educational practices and the reclamation of indigenous language rights and language education (Holm & Holm, 1990; Spolsky, 1974). Yet a struggle continues for control over American Indian education. That struggle, unique to Indian education, exerts a

⁵The Tohono O'odham (formerly Papago) and Pascua Yaqui Tribes of Arizona, the Southern and Northern Ute, and the Cheyenne now have in place such language policies. Some tribes, like the Tohono O'odham, also have developed standards to help ensure implementation of the policies and the meaningful incorporation of the native language and culture in school curricula.

profound influence over the possibilities within Indian classrooms and schools. An update on the case of Rough Rock illustrates how this is so.

The Rough Rock Bilingual Program Today

Since the early days of Rough Rock's experimental programs, bilingual education there has waxed and waned. For many years there *was* no bilingual program. This is not because the school board radically reversed its philosophy, nor is it because there are insufficient native language teaching materials, though there could and should be more. The reasons instead lie in the economic relations of the local area to the larger society, and the attendant nature of funding for academic programs at the school.

Like other reservation communities, Rough Rock has no property tax base, nor does it receive significant revenues from any industry in the area. Aside from this, as a federal school Rough Rock relies almost entirely on Congressional appropriations for support. This includes a base budget which finances the physical facilities and school operations such as maintenance and transportation. As it depends on federal allocations, the base budget fluctuates from year to year.⁶ Beyond this base funding, virtually all school instructional programs require supplemental support, derived primarily from discretionary federal grants. In "good" years academic programs supported through these funds have flourished, though their disparate aims--virtually written into the federal legislative and budgetary process--create great discontinuities in instruction. The 1980s, in general, were not good years for Indian education, as the Reagan Administration slashed Indian Education Act programs and budgets, did away with support services such as NIBC, and increasingly focused bilingual education policy on

⁶Recent federal legislation allows Indian school boards to opt for grant rather than contract status. Rough Rock has done this, and this has eased budgetary fluctuations somewhat. Unlike the contract arrangement, which requires annual budget negotiations with the Bureau that often lasted well into the fiscal year for which funds were sought, the grant process -- still operated through the Bureau -- allows for forward-year funding. This means that Rough Rock is assured of a minimal base funding level in any given upcoming fiscal year. However, because overall school funding is tied to Congressional allocations, Rough Rock's financial structure and by extension its academic programs, like those of other federal Indian schools, are intrinsically insecure.

transitional and English-only instruction (see, e.g., Bennett, 1985; San Miguel, 1988).

At Rough Rock, the impacts of this were to blunt the bilingual education efforts of previous years and to engender great overall instability in curriculum, staffing and instruction. Without sufficient staff and coordination, bilingual materials tend to sit on the shelf. Rough Rock students, not surprisingly, did not fare well under these circumstances. Seeking to stabilize the curriculum and lift student scores on federally mandated achievement tests, the school board in the early 1980s turned to a commercial, scripted-drill, English basic skills program which was funded by yet another federal grant.

What brought bilingual education back to Rough Rock, and what recent evaluative data suggest is improving the school success of Rough Rock students, is the legacy of its earlier teacher education efforts. A core group of Navajo elementary teachers, dissatisfied with basic skills, have adapted the contextualized reading strategies of the Hawaii-based Kamehameha Early Education Program to capitalize on the bilingualism of Rough Rock students (cf. Dick, Estell & McCarty, in press; Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1987). These teachers, some of whom now hold administrative positions at the school, are the same individuals who, just over a decade ago, earned their degrees through Rough Rock's bilingual teacher education programs. Their presence as members of the community, and their long-term investment in the community's children and bilingual education, have helped stabilize the elementary curriculum and reinstate bilingual instruction in the primary grades.

It is of note that, to further their work, the teachers recently sought and received a new Title VII grant. Achievement results from this new bilingual program are tentative, though some trends are worth noting. On locally developed measures, the K-3 group overall gained 12 percentage points in English reading comprehension (from 52 to 64), from Spring 1990 to Spring 1991. During the same period, K-3 median percentile scores on a national test of achievement more than doubled in reading vocabulary, though they are still below national "norms" (Begay et al., 1992). When individual and grade cohort scores are analyzed for all K-6 students over the past two years, an overriding pattern emerges: Bilingual students who have the benefit of cumulative, uninterrupted initial literacy experiences in Navajo make the greatest gains on local and national measures of achievement (Begay et al., 1992; cf. Holm

& Holm, 1992; 1990). Further, in qualitative assessments of their English and Navajo writing, these students consistently demonstrate control of the lexical, syntactic and pragmatic properties of writing, as well as considerable content area knowledge (McCarty, 1993).

The Rough Rock bilingual program is still evolving, with many issues to be resolved. These include what happens to students when they leave the bilingual program after third grade; in general, students have fewer bilingual teachers and much less bilingual instruction. Change in this situation requires minimally, more bilingual teachers and native language materials at all levels of the system. Moreover, teachers in the bilingual program have been required to implement an outcome-based education curriculum adopted to meet national accreditation standards. For the moment at least, the bilingual program staff has muted the differences between this curriculum and their more holistic, literature-based approach by fusing that approach and bilingual instruction with the required curriculum. The differences between the two approaches, however, and the lack of teacher ownership over a mandated curriculum, have been the source of some antipathy between the bilingual faculty and non-Navajo district administrators. For the bilingual program staff these difficulties are heightened by the uncertainty of financial support for their program once the Title VII grant expires.

Who Controls Indian Education?

The struggle at Rough Rock parallels that of many Indian schools and communities. It is a struggle for control of both the content and the context of local education programs. Peach Springs has been relatively successful in this struggle in part because of its different economic situation -- it is a public school with adequate local revenues -- and because of the continuity and vision of its local educational leadership.

For American Indian communities, bilingual education programs have been at the center of this struggle. Because of the essential role of indigenous educators in bilingual programs, bilingual education has widened the possibilities forged by the local control movement and by two decades of evaluative research showing the clear benefits of initial literacy in the native language (see, e.g., Begay et al., 1992; Cummins, 1992; Holm & Holm, 1992; 1990; Ramírez, 1992; Crawford, 1989; Spolsky, 1974). Educators at Rough Rock, Peach Springs, and those involved in the AILDI have capitalized on those possibilities to improve the conditions of schooling for American

Indian students. In the process, they have strengthened threatened language resources, reformed curriculum and pedagogy to enhance students' academic success, and promoted the greater integration of Indian schools with the communities they serve.

These represent fundamental changes, as Bernard Spolsky predicted nearly two decades ago, not just of philosophy or language and pedagogy per se, but of *teachers, power and control* (cf. Spolsky, 1974, p. 52). The limits on that control continue to lie largely in the economic and political context surrounding Indian bilingual programs and in particular, the imposed reliance of reservation schools on fluctuating federal resources and policies.

In this context, truly empowering outcomes entail more radical changes at the macro level, including a sober reassessment of the compensatory, scattergun approach of federal targeted intervention programs like the Bilingual Education Act, and development of a stable funding base with a great deal of openness in what is supported at the local level. Recent policy resolutions by delegates to the White House Conference on Indian Education are one very public and positive step in this direction.⁷ In particular the delegates, representing a cross-section of tribes and indigenous communities, call for amending the Bilingual Education Act to "include a new chapter" allowing American Indian and Alaska Native students "to learn their tribal language as a first or second language;" the delegates also call for native language immersion along with strong English literacy programs (White House Conference on Indian Education 1992a, pp. 225-227). Further, the recommendations specify that these and other resolutions be carried out through a uniform and consistent funding cycle coordinated at both the tribal and federal levels (White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992a; 1992b).

⁷The white House Conference on Indian Education was authorized by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988, and enacted as P.L. 100-297. The conference itself, convened in Washington D.C. in January 1992, was preceded by a long-term study and nationwide hearings under the auspices of a central coordinating team, a national task force and an advisory committee. Delegate selection and the organization of the conference also were coordinated through the advisory committee and central staff. In accordance with the authorizing statute, a final report on the conference, including findings and recommendations of delegates and the task force, was submitted to the President in May 1992 (White House Conference on Indian Education, 1992a, pp. 1-17).

These recommendations strike at the heart of the challenge in Indian education: how to achieve local control in the face of inadequate local finances. This challenge, it might be argued, is present wherever there is a move toward decentralized control while financing remains dependent on state and/or federal resources. The challenge is extreme, however, in reservation communities whose political and economic relationship to the federal government is unparalleled in this country. Local control demands local power and the ability to tailor curriculum and pedagogy to the needs and desires of the community. By virtue of their economies, reservation communities often are forced to rely on centralized funding which not only lacks uniformity and consistency, but is largely controlled by outside interests.

Real change thus requires, first, a system-wide policy shift away from the compensatory, deficit-view orientations that have characterized nearly three decades of ESEA programs, toward policies that value indigenous languages as the national assets and the immense learning resources they are. Second, real change requires that services in support of children's language development be established and administered as part of an integrated system. In operational terms this means that the legislative aims and implementation of Title VII should be coordinated with those of the many other authorizing statutes for Indian education, including Chapter I, Title V (the Indian Education Act), and the Native American Languages Act (see, e.g., Stanford Working Group, 1993). Real change also entails new intermediary mechanisms to systematically articulate the interests of diverse American Indian/Alaska Native communities, and to funnel those interests directly to federal policy. It is critical that these interests impact the flow of federal funding, ensuring a stable but flexible financial base. Together, these changes have the potential to reverse the present piecemeal pattern of Indian education programming, enabling communities to build coherent education systems that are at once resistant to sudden national political shifts, yet responsive to changing local and national conditions.

At present, coordination and integration of this sort are ad hoc, occurring through organizations like the AILDI and the White House Conference on Indian Education, which address policy but which themselves rely on discretionary federal resources for support. Yet in these same organizations lies the hope for systemic educational reform. "The thing that has always been missing in Indian

education,” writes historian Vine Deloria, “and is still missing, is Indians” (1991, p. 13). Data from Southwest Indian bilingual programs suggest the need for an even stronger role in creating new institutional arrangements by the indigenous educators responsible for the transformations reported here, so that pedagogy and policy are not imposed from the outside, but genuinely represent the interests of Indian students, communities and schools.

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