QUALITATIVE DIMENSIONS IN THE TEACHING OF AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOLING ENVIRONMENT IN THREE NORTH PACIFIC COAST INDIAN COMMUNITIES

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the College of Education
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

September 1970

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to make explicit certain qualitative dimensions inherent in the teaching of American Indian children by describing the schooling environment in three North Pacific Coast Indian communities and the four public schools that serve these communities.

The study is intended to explicate some of the forces that affect the ability of teachers to provide American Indians with an adequate educational experience. The two questions central to the study are "What are teachers doing in schools attended by Indian children?" and "What are some complicating factors in the teaching of Indian children?" The study is intended to be descriptive and analytical. It is designed to refine a problem rather than prove or disprove preconceived hypothetical statements. An underlying assumption about the usefulness of the study is that the greater the understanding of the parameters of the problem, the greater the possibility that proposed solutions will be realistic and viable.

Overview

Numerous studies have documented the failure of the American educational system to provide Indian children with an educational experience comparable to the educational experience of middle-class white children. Some studies, taking the school as a given, blame the child for failing to meet the school's expectations. Others accept the child as given and find fault with the school for failing to meet the child's needs. Most researchers agree, however, that the educational achievement level of American Indian children is considerably and consistently below the national average (Coleman, 1966; Fuchs, 1970; Wax, 1964), even though their intellectual ability is demonstrated to be equal to that of non-Indian children (Havighurst and Neugarten, 1955). Erikson (1950; 154) describes the situation as "one of culture contact between a group of employees (teachers) representative of the middle-class values of a free-enterprise system on the one hand, and on the other, the remnants of a tribe which, wherever it leaves the shadow of government sustenance, must find itself among the underprivileged of that system."

Erikson indicates that the failure of Indians in school is partly due to basic qualitative differences in the cultural systems out of which the two primary sets of participants emerge. He implies that the

school and the tribe represent different orientations with regard to economic, political and social values, resulting in a privileged vs. underprivileged relationship. A statement of the problem in such broad and vague terms does not, however, delineate the parameters necessary for working with the problem at an operational level. This study is intended to make explicit some of these qualitative dimensions of the problem of teaching American Indians by examining the patterns of interaction of teachers, students, and parents within specific school and community environments.

Assuming the child as "given," the issue is not: Why haven't Indian children been successful in school? Rather, the significant question is: Why hasn't the school been successful in educating Indian children? This emphasis is not meant to deny the importance of the first question, but simply to pursue an avenue which has received little emphasis in previous studies of Indian education. Three notable exceptions in the particular focus of past studies are those by Wax, et al. (1964), King (1967), and Wolcott (1967).

The Wax, et al. study of the Oglala Sioux in South Dakota emphasized the constraints that the school's representatives placed on the learning environment. For example, they examined the affect of what they called the "vacuum ideology" of the school administrators, which presumed the Indian child to be "deficient in every realm of

experience," therefore, any activity of the school could be justified as being "educational" (p. 70).

The King study was conducted in a residential school for Indian children in Northwest Canada. Although King used the students as a basis for examining the school, he did so from the standpoint of how they learned to cope with the school environment. He effectively illustrated the frustrations that occurred when apparently well-intentioned staff members found themselves caught in a web of cultural and institutional forces over which they had no control and for which they had no meaningful explanation.

The study by Wolcott was concerned with the problems of education in a small Kwakiutl Indian village as seen from the perspective of a teacher who has lived in the village for one year. His study of both the community and the school, documented the mutual incompatibility that results from the divergent values of the two cultural systems. Although he initially asked the question "Why do Indian pupils fail in school?" he found that as his study progressed he needed to ask a complementary question "How do the schools fail their Indian pupils?" (p. 131).

In posing these questions, the issue of cultural pluralism vs. assimilation is raised. As long as Indian children attend schools, (including "Indian schools" such as the Rough Rock Demonstration School in Arizona), the children are subject to a certain degree of

assimilation. Schools are artifacts of white Anglo culture; therefore, anything called a "school" in an Indian community represents white society. Establishing a school is in itself a step toward assimilation. The question, then, is not whether assimilation should or should not occur, but to what degree it does occur. The answer to that question is to be found in each community, school, and event for which the possibility of assimilation exists. The schools, communities, and individuals described in this study represent varying degrees in their assimilative efforts, and in the resistance to those efforts.

Whether the teacher is trying to get the Indian child to adapt to "white ways" or trying to make him into a "better Indian," the implications for this study are the same. The fact the teacher is there and trying to do anything with the child is all that is necessary to describe what he is or is not doing. To the extent that the teacher has an ascertainable objective, the description can go further and examine the degree to which he has achieved that objective.

Problem

The central concern of this study is the failure of schools to provide American Indians with an adequate educational experience, that is, an educational experience which a majority of the people involved agree is of positive value to the recipients. The problem of the study

is to expose some of the qualitative variables related to the problem so that it can be more clearly understood.

Part of the difficulty in understanding the problem of educating Indians is that it is so complex that no one has been able to identify all of the variables. The cultural variable alone requires separate consideration for each tribal group and for each school that serves that group. Most efforts to educate Indians are based on goals that are either too generally, or too specifically, conceived. For the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the task is "to educate Indians"; therefore, all-inclusive, standardized policies are established. For local schools and teachers, the task is to "teach these students this skill"; therefore, specific procedures are worked out to attack the specific problem. Little attention is directed to such intermediate questions as "How can I make schooling meaningful to these Indian students?"

In consideration of the latter question, the writer has made the assumptions that each teacher and child brings to the classroom a personal set of attitudes, expectations, and behavior patterns based on his own background; each school has formal and informal rules that govern the behavior and interaction patterns of students and teachers; each community and each parent in the community has expectations of what the school and the teachers should and should not do. All of these forces interact to determine, in part, the quality of education provided

by the school in any given community. The success or failure of an educational program is affected by the compatability of these various forces. Any explication of the problem of providing Indians with an adequate educational experience must begin with an examination of the interaction of these forces.

Background and Field Methodology

The data utilized in this study were gathered during the 1968-69 school year in conjunction with the National Study of American Indian Education, directed by Robert J. Havighurst from the University of Chicago, and funded by the U.S. Office of Education. The purpose of the field work was to gather systematic information on the current state of affairs regarding education in a cross-section of native American schools and communities. Of specific concern were "the attitudes, aspirations, and expectations" of the various participants in the educational process in the selected communities.

Five communities were studied in the Northwest and Alaska region of the National Study. Three of these were small Indian communities on the Pacific coasts of Washington and Alaska. The other two were predominantly Eskimo: one was a boarding school in Oregon, the other was a large tundra community in Southwest Alaska. Only the three Indian communities are described in this study because

they are relatively similar in size, geographic location, and ethnic composition, and they also represent a variety of school-community interaction patterns. Table 1 provides a summary of the characteristics of the schools and communities represented in the study.

The field team, consisting of the regional field director (John Connelly, from San Francisco State College) the writer, and the writer's wife, lived for six to eight weeks in each of the three communities described. Charles McEvers, of the American Friends Service Committee joined the field team at the Taholah and Neah Bay sites. The field director obtained permission from tribal and school authorities in each community prior to entry of the field team. The purpose and procedure of the study was explained as clearly as possible to all participating individuals and groups.

Early acquaintance with each community was facilitated by the preparation of a map and household directory. Each home in the community was visited by a field team member, and the name, age, ethnic group, and educational background of the household members was recorded. In addition to acquainting the members of the community with the purpose of the study, the survey provided the field team with valuable demographic information and a "feel" for the community as a whole. The directory was distributed to members of the community and

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Taholah	Moclips	Neah Bay	Angoon
Indian Group Represented	Quinault	Quinault	Makah	Tlingit
Population of Community	525	800 (ap.)	685	400
Per Cent Indian in Community	99	5	90	99
Location and Type of School	Community Day School	Off-Reservation Day School	Community Day School	Community Day School
Governing Agency	Locally Controlled	Adjacent School District	Consolidated School District	State Operated
School Board Composition	3 All Indian	5 All non-Indian	5 One Indian	3 All Indian
Administration of School	Supt.-Prin.	Supt.-Prin.	Supt.-Prin.	Prin.-Teach.
Grade Range	K-6	7-12	K-12	1-8
Number of Students	110	310	314	138
Number of Indian Students	109	84	212	134
Number of Teachers	7	17	18	7
Number of Indian Teachers	1	None	None	1
Number of Students Interviewed	17	72	81	27
Number of Teachers Interviewed	7	10	17	7

to the school staff. Individual responses to the information in the directory provided a means for assessing teacher familiarity with the community.

The field team approached its assignment with as few assumptions and preconceived notions as possible. Both the method and the goal were open-ended, except to complete the instrument requirements of the National study. The general intent of the team was to find out as much as possible about the circumstances related to education--formal and informal--in each school and community within the time alloted. Participant and non-participant observation techniques were employed to gain an understanding of the context within which various aspects of education occurred.

A set of interview and questionnaire instruments specially developed for the National Study by members of the various field teams was administered to students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and influential members of the communities. The instruments were designed to obtain similar data from each group so that comparisons could be made between the groups in each community and between the communities and the field centers (see teacher interview in Appendix A). The interview and questionnaire data were compiled and analyzed at the National level.

One of the primary commitments of the field team in the Northwest and Alaska region was to provide the participating schools and communities

with locally meaningful feedback regarding the particular problems they faced. Since the National Study surveyed a variety of schools and communities, through several field centers using different approaches to the research, the National report can provide only comparative and quantitative feedback, except for some general statements of pervasive problems and a few broad policy recommendations regarding the direction of Indian education. Such reports necessarily cannot deal with specific issues of immediate local concern.

This study is intended to supplement the National Study as an examination of the problems within the context in which they occur. Most of the issues presented in the case studies are not subject to detached quantitative scrutiny. They represent qualitative elements that appear in the day-to-day interaction of the schools and communities described. The significance of such issues cannot be tested statistically. They must be examined in relation to the socio-cultural milieu from which they emerge. Therefore, the data reported in this study are those gathered through participation and observation on the scene in which they appeared. These data go beyond these reported by the National Study to the extent that they represent an inductive assessment of a variety of statements and observations which were impossible to record systematically.

Content and Procedure

The case study approach is used to present the data, thus enabling the researcher to "move beyond the formalistic treatments of educational process to the interaction between the people engaged in educative events, their thinking and feeling, and the content of the educational process in which they are engaged" (Spindler, in Wolcott 1967:v).

Two primary sources of data are used in the preparation of the case studies. The first includes a loosely structured, open-ended interview administered to teachers to elicit their attitudes and perceptions regarding who and what they were teaching. The teachers also completed three specially constructed questionnaires eliciting background information, sociometric data, and attitudes toward teaching Indian children. When it was impossible to interview all of the teachers in a school, a sample was selected to represent the various grade levels, subject matter, and community-school relationships.

The second body of data, although somewhat less systematic, is crucial for an accurate interpretation of the issues. These data, representing the milieu in which the teacher operates, consist of formal and informal observations and notes of the field team members; systematic interview and questionnaire data on students, parents, and

school officials; assorted records and documents; photographs; and demographic information on the school and community.

Each case represents an interweaving of the teachers' responses on the interviews and questionnaires, and the events and circumstances to which the responses pertain. Pertinent ethnographic data gathered by the research team are utilized to provide a concrete and coherent framework for examining the interrelationships among the teachers, students, and members of the community. The perceptions of the teachers regarding who and what they teach are described, along with the researcher's account of the same, based on the data gathered through formal and informal observation and discussion in the school and community. Every effort is made to specify the source of data presented so as to distinguish between fact and opinion, and survey information is designated by the question asked and the tabulated responses. A listing of the teacher interview questions is included in Appendix A.

The cases are written in the "ethnographic present"; therefore, the conditions described pertain only to the time in which the research was conducted. Where a reference to a specific individual is necessary, the code number assigned by the National Study is used.

The term "schooling," as used in this study, is intended to mean all aspects of education that have their origin in the school. The term

is synonomous with "formal education" except that the latter can also refer to formal training beyond that provided by the school, such as adult education classes.

For convenience, the terms "school" and "community" are often used in this study as if they represented rational, self-motivated entities. The collections of individuals that represent the school and the community are sufficiently similar within each group and sufficiently different between the groups to allow them to be characterized with regard to their interaction and attitudes toward each other. In effect, the school and community represent two distinct cultural systems; their interaction can be examined in much the same way as that of the individuals who make up each system. The context in which the term is used will determine whether it is intended to represent a collection of individuals or the physical entity.

Focus

Since the purpose of this study is to make explicit certain qualitative variables related to the problems of teaching American Indian children, the focus is on particular topics selected by the writer to illustrate the effect of differing socio-cultural orientations on teacher-student-parent and school-community interaction. To assist the reader in the interpretation of the data, the following

questions are posed as the implicit concerns of the writer in the preparation of the case studies.

1. For what are Indian children being educated?

2. To what extent can and should Indian adults participate in the determination of educational policy related to their children?

3. To what extent does the annual cycle of the school relate to the economic structure of the community?

4. What effect does the location of school facilities and teacher housing have on the quality of education offered by the school?

5. Does teacher familiarity with the community necessarily lead to better teaching?

6. What is necessary to increase the relevancy of the cirriculum for Indian students?

7. Can Indians be Indians and "teachers" too?

8. What effect do language differences and nonverbal communications have on the Indian students' success in school?

9. How are different conceptual orientations responsible for conflicting attitudes and expectations with regard to the school?

10. Are the problems of Indian children in school a result of deficiencies or differences?

11. What are some of the causes and effects of high teacher-turnover in schools in Indian communities?

12. How can teachers be better prepared for working with Indian children?

These questions will be alluded to, either directly or by implication, in the body of one or more of the following case studies. The

questions will be reviewed in the summary chapter to determine the contribution of the case studies to their explication.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The issues described in the preceding case studies are neither new nor exclusive to the field of Indian education. Nor are they the only or necessarily the most important issues confronting people involved in Indian education. The issues described have been selected to illustrate the impact of various forces on the schooling environment and specifically, to illustrate how certain perceptual and conceptual orientations affect teacher-student-parent and schooling-community interaction in three Indian communities on the North Pacific Coast.

Although these issues have been recognized and examined by people associated with Indian educations since the first Indians attended school, little has changed with regard to solving them. The same problems that plagued Indian schools in the nineteenth century are plaguing Indian schools in the twentieth century.

Part of the difficulty is that the various issues usually are treated independently because no coherent framework brings them into a common perspective without destroying the uniqueness of their cultural attachment. Where the issues have been brought into a common perspective, their uniqueness has been neglected in the search for

underlying similarities. The result has been destructive, rather than constructive education. That is, the elements of participating cultures that are different are disregarded, and thus undermined by the educational efforts of the school. In addition, the issues usually are viewed only from the school's perspective rather than as an interaction of two cultural systems.

The significance of this study, in addition to a description of the issues themselves, is that it demonstrates that techniques are available for explicating the issues. The field team, in six weeks, was able to gain enough insight into the educational problems of a particular school to provide plausible explanations for its problems. The team members expressed an interest in and listened to all views about education. Indians and whites alike were eager to talk to anyone who displayed a genuine and sincere interest in what they were saying. Consequently, the field team was able to obtain a comprehensive perspective on a variety of issues as they pertained to each school and community studied.

The following review of the questions posed in the introductory chapter represents the writer's assessment of the contribution that the case studies make to a clarification of the issues. Since the answers to the questions will vary according to the goals of the individual making the assessment, the following responses are offered only as tentative interpretations based on the writer's present understanding of the issues.

The biases of the writer, therefore, are necessarily reflected in the responses.

1. For what are Indian children being educated?

This question is posed first to underscore the lack of clearly defined goals in the schools and communities represented in the case studies. Although some individuals expressed personal opinions as to the purpose of educating Indians, few displayed a comprehensive plan for integrating their actions with their intent. Most teachers appeared anxious to establish a realistic goal; but their own culture-bound points of view, coupled with the lack of common direction in the school and community, often prevented them from conceiving an acceptable, viable goal.

The Taholah school, the only school described that consciously strived to build on the cultural base of the students, operated on the assumption that with a firmer identity base the students would be better able to cope with the expectations of the outside community. Despite the school's commitment to Indian-ness, the actual alterations in the school to achieve its goals were minimal in comparison to the accommodations made by members of the community who participated. The Indians had to leave their identity at home in order to conform to the role expectations associated with individuals who work in the school.

The other three schools described in the case studies displayed no readily ascertainable agreed-on goals relating specifically to the Indian students. Each of the teachers appeared to be operating on an individual conviction that somewhere, someone had a master plan; and their task was to teach the subject they had been assigned. The difficulty is that the master plan is nonexistent except in white, middle-class American society. And although a certain degree of assimilation into white society is implicit in the functioning of a school, the extent and the process of assimilation rarely are explicit.

The ambivalence of teachers and school administrators regarding the goals of education for Indian children contributes to the students' ambivalence regarding the school. If the schools can make explicit their goals--whatever they may be--and the steps for achieving those goals, recognizing the limitations of white schools for Indian children, both teachers and students will be better able to cope with each other (Wolcott, 1969).

2. To what extent can and should Indian adults participate in the determination of educational policy related to their children?

In no case do Indian adults have significant control over the operation of the school. Taholah comes closest to having Indian control with its all-Indian school board. Since the principal is regarded as the

authority on educational matters, however, the board serves in an advisory capacity rather than as a policy-making body.

Indians cannot be expected to take over the operation of schools and automatically produce dramatic changes. Their own educational experience has usually been in a traditional school, thus their conception of schooling is also limited. Their most immediate contribution often can be to establish a dialogue between school and community members. Through joint effort, teachers and Indian parents should be able to make a better assessment of the students' educational needs than either group could do alone; therefore, if Indian adults participate in all phases of their children's education, continuity of educational experiences can be provided.

3. To what extent does the annual cycle of the school relate to the economic structure of the community?

In communities such as Taholah where fishing, hunting, and clam digging are still important economic activities, the school can conflict with the economic well-being of the community. When the activities of the community are guided by the sun, seasons, or tides, the school can support the development of the community by accommodating the schooling cycle to these natural events. By orienting the activities of the school around the activities of the community, it can encourage cooperation in the educational training of the children.

4. What effect does the location of school facilities and teacher housing have on the quality of education offered by the school?

All of the schools described in the case studies are physically separated from, or elevated above, the communities represented. The effect of such isolation on the quality of education can only be surmised; but if communication or interaction are important elements in the schooling process, isolation is a detriment to that process.

The location of teacher housing often represents a self-imposed barrier to effective interaction with members of the community. Teacher housing, distributed throughout the community, would encourage teacher participation in community affairs and increase the opportunities for interaction. With an understanding of the background of his students', the teacher can be better prepared to offer realistic educational experiences.

5. Does teacher familiarity with the community necessarily lead to better teaching?

To utilize knowledge of the community in the classroom effectively, the teacher has to move beyond the perceptual or artifactual level. The teacher needs to understand the conceptual differences that affect his communications with the students and community members. The well-intentioned teacher who erected the "totem pole" in front of the Angoon school had only a stereotypical and superficial understanding of the significance of totem poles to the local people. He was able to reproduce

certain elements of the Indian background, but he structured those elements around his interpretation of their significance, rather than the Indian interpretation.

6. What is necessary to increase the relevancy of the curriculum for Indian students?

Relevance can be achieved at various levels. Courses in Indian history or the use of Indian stories and songs in the classroom usually represent artifactual relevance. That is, they bring artifacts of the Indian heritage into the traditional framework of the school. Rarely do such programs recognize the different perspective of the Indian people with regard to their heritage.

The Alaskan Reader is an illustration of perceptual relevance. Various elements of the world as perceived (but not conceived) by the students are incorporated into the framework of the school program.

The shop program at Nean Bay provides an example of utilitarian relevance. The teacher adjusted his program to fit the circumstances of the community, and in the process was able to provide skills and services of immediate use to the students and community members.

The "language problem" at Moclips illustrates the most difficult level of relevance to be attained--conceptual relevance. Such relevance implies an understanding of the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the Indian people, as well as their communication system. To achieve conceptual relevance, the teacher must either be a "natural" teacher

who operates on a purely intuitive level (such as the former Angoon teacher), or he must be exceptionally sensitive to cultural differences and have the expertise to accommodate to those differences in the classroom.

7. Can Indians be Indians and "teachers" too?

The examples of Indian teachers provided in the case studies illustrate the constraints placed on an Indian who is also a teacher. If an Indian teacher, representing the Indian community, is thrust into the traditional structure of a white classroom filled with Indian children and is not allowed to establish alternate patterns of interaction and communication, his experience as an Indian is of little value and may even be detrimental to his efforts as a teacher. If his training has so inoculated him with the stereotypical attitudes and expectations of a "teacher" that he is unable to establish a free-flow of communications with his students in their own mode, he is no more than a red-skinned white teacher. Indian teachers must be allowed to approach the students and "classroom" on their own terms if they are to use their expertise as Indians effectually. As representatives of the community, they can blend the formal aspects of schooling with the informal aspects of child-training in the community. But to do so requires a freedom of movement beyond that usually associated with formal education.

8. What effect do language differences and nonverbal communications have on the Indian students' success in school?

The description of the "language problem" at Moclips illustrates how different patterns of language usage (in this case, prepositions) can affect the teacher's perception of the students and the success of the students in school. If teachers can become familiar with procedures for diagnosing verbal differences and learn to distinguish the language patterns of the students, they can make the necessary adjustments in their teaching. Likewise, teachers' understanding of nonverbal communication signals can facilitate their effectiveness in overcoming barriers to verbal communication. Because of the emphasis on verbal communication in the school, considerable attention should be given to this aspect of the education process in program planning and teacher training.

9. How are different conceptual orientations responsible for conflicting attitudes and expectations with regard to the school?

The Angoon case study illustrates how different temporal perspectives can affect the motivational framework of the school. The "loose kind of existence" displayed by the students indicates an orientation to the present. Such an orientation does not recognize the long range goals implied in the "need for an education."

If teachers are to stimulate students with an orientation to the present, they must provide materials and activities with immediate

rewards, rather than tedious tasks with vague and distant purposes. The shop program and the family tree project at Neah Bay illustrate the success of locally-oriented activities. Though the teachers have the authority to make demands on the students, those demands will result in little more than frustration if the teachers and students are working at cross-purposes as a result of different conceptual orientations.

10. Are the problems of Indian children in school a result of deficiencies or differences?

The evidence provided in the case studies indicates that many of the difficulties of Indian children in school are the result of differences rather than deficiencies. The different patterns of language usage of the Indian students at Moclips and the different time orientation of the students at Angoon illustrate the negative consequences of a cultural background different from that represented by the school. The Remedial Reading program at Moclips is typical of the school's response to problems assumed to be the result of deficiencies; financial support is obtained for an intensive program aimed at providing larger doses of the same program which resulted in the problem. Such solutions do not appear to have any long-range effect. Recognition should be given to studying the subtle conceptual differences rather than to building programs on the basis of superficial similarities between Indian and white children. Then the program may be accommodated to the needs

of the child, rather than the child always having to accommodate to the needs of the program.

11. What are some of the causes and effects of high teacher-turnover in schools in Indian communities?

A variety of causes of teacher-turnover are presented in the Neah Bay case study. Several such as climate and geographic isolation, are beyond the control of the school or the community; others represent the inability of the teachers to reconcile cultural differences. Several teachers expressed dissatisfaction over their lack of acceptance by community members and their inability to communicate with the Indian students.

The short tenure of most teachers severely limits their chances of understanding cultural differences or of being accepted in the community. In fact, teachers contribute to the problems of the school by disrupting the continuity of the school program. The students must learn the idiosyncrasies of each new teacher while the teacher learns his way around in the new school and community. Teachers should be acquainted with the circumstances they will encounter on their teaching assignment prior to their acceptance, so that those who teach in the Indian communities will be prepared to stay more than the usual one or two years. More teachers from the local community may also provide stability to the school program.

12. How can teachers be better prepared for working with Indian children?

All of the data presented in the case studies have implications for the preparation of teachers to work with Indian children. The underlying issue throughout the case studies is the effect of differences in conceptual orientation of teachers and members of the Indian community regarding the educational experiences provided by the school. Therefore, the implied need with regard to teacher preparation is to increase the ability of teachers to recognize and understand conceptual differences. To achieve such an understanding requires a sensitivity to a wide range of subtle and complex factors that affect the interrelationship of individuals with others and with their environment.

The development of an awareness of the differences that exist in Indian communities and schools might be facilitated in teacher preparation by giving prospective teachers an opportunity to observe and interact in such a setting without the handicap of the formally institutionalized role of "teacher." Much of the data presented in this study was not readily available to many teachers because they were unable to establish a communicative relationship with members of the community. The expectations regarding their role as "teachers" was a handicap, in their own attitudes toward the community as well as in the communities' attitudes toward them. The neutrality of the

researcher's role allowed the field team members to move freely between oftentimes antagonistic groups in the community and thus develop a broad perspective of the community.

If, in their training, prospective teachers of Indian students could be placed in an Indian community to interact with, observe and record the ways of the people whose children they plan to teach without a prescribed role, they might develop a clearer perspective on the implications to their role as teacher. Then, when given a teaching assignment, they could apply both the approach and the experience to their efforts in the school (Cf. Warren, 1970).

The various issues described in this study are intended to illustrate how certain differences in the socio-cultural orientation of teachers and members of Indian communities affect the quality of the students' educational experiences. If teachers are aware of these differences, and understand their implication with regard to teaching, they are in a position to make a positive contribution to the quality of American Indian education.