



Lowenfeld mosaic responses of Crow Indian Head Start children
by Karen Elaine Chaloupka

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE in Home Economics
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Abstract:

The goal of American Indian Education is to aid Indians in assimilating into the larger white society. The existing educational system has not been successful in reaching this goal. Differences between Indian and white children must be determined if the educational programs are to meet the Indians' needs.

An attempt was made to determine the maturational level of Crow Indian Head Start children through their response to the Lowenfeld Mosaic Test.

The sample consisted of forty-two Crow Indian children participating in three Montana Head Start Centers. The Mosaic Test was administered to each child, and their responses were evaluated. The findings revealed that although the Indian patterns of response were the same as white patterns, the Indian children were functioning one year and three months behind white children of the same age.

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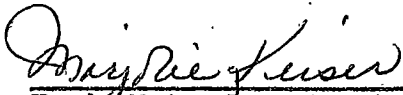
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ABSTRACT

The goal of American Indian Education is to aid Indians in assimilating into the larger white society. The existing educational system has not been successful in reaching this goal. Differences between Indian and white children must be determined if the educational programs are to meet the Indians' needs.

An attempt was made to determine the maturational level of Crow Indian Head Start children through their response to the Lowenfeld Mosaic Test.

The sample consisted of forty-two Crow Indian children participating in three Montana Head Start Centers. The Mosaic Test was administered to each child, and their responses were evaluated. The findings revealed that although the Indian patterns of response were the same as white patterns, the Indian children were functioning one year and three months behind white children of the same age.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Study

The problem of adjusting to the society as a whole, without losing his identity, has plagued the Indian since the first white man set foot on American soil. The values and ideals of the Indian contrast greatly from those of the dominant white group.

If the Indian is to participate effectively in the larger white society, some degree of assimilation must take place. It is agreed, by whites and Indians alike, that education is the most promising means of achieving this goal. The overwhelmingly large percentage of absenteeism, tardiness, over age-ness, and drop-outs in the schools is evidence that education has failed to meet the Indian's needs.¹

When Indian children start school, they are attentive, busy, and happy. They are equipped, however, with different values, different experiences, and in many cases, a different language than that of the white children starting school. They can not compete and perform successfully with their white peers, and their attitude changes to disinterest early in their school experience.

¹Brewton Berry, The Education of American Indians (Columbus, Ohio: Research Foundation, 1968), p. 37.

When compared with white students, Indians do poorly on standardized achievement tests. Poor achievement leads to a poor self image, which in turn leads to the high drop-out rate. Reports show an average drop-out rate of fifty percent throughout the nation. In some schools it is as high as ninety-five percent.²

The Indian is at a below average level of educational development in America. School programs must be ready to make room for individual differences and be flexible enough to meet individual needs.³ The educational system has the challenge of creating an environment that will motivate children who are culturally apart from the middle-class norm.³

Purpose of the Study

It is impossible to develop educational programs that will be suitable for Indian children until the level at which they are functioning is known. With this information it will be possible to incorporate the applicable characteristics of the American Public

²Lorraine Misiaszek, "The Cultural Dilemma of American Indians," Social Education, XXXIII (April, 1969), p. 439.

³Robert L. Bennett, "Our Schools and the 'Forgotten Americans'," Journal of American Indian Education, VIII (October, 1968), pp. 6-7.

School system in a way that will cope with the significant differences of Indian children.⁴

The purpose of this study is to determine the maturational age of Crow Indian Head Start children, through their response to the Lowenfeld Mosaic Test. The test reveals the age level of the child's response, and something of his individuality. This information should be useful in planning effective school programs for Indian children.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the maturational age of Head Start Crow Indian children is the same as that of white American children of the same chronological age.

⁴Leif Fearn, "The Education of Indian Children," Journal of American Indian Education, VIII (October, 1968), p. 30.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Indian Culture

Historical Development

The American Indian is set apart from the larger society by his unique way of life. His rich heritage of ideal and values differ greatly from that of the white man. If the Indian is to be understood by the members of the white society, his background and value differences must also be understood.

Unlike early white settlers from Western Europe, Indians are indigenous to the North American Continent. The settlers' ideas about life were shaped in a post-Roman atmosphere. Kings, English Common Law, and feudalism were existing concepts. The Indians do not have these emotional, historical, or political relationships with another continent or another age.

Before the arrival of the white man, great confederacies occupied the country. Democracy in its true sense was more prevalent in pre-Columbian days. Despotic power was abhorred, and tribes thought of themselves as combinations of hunting parties, rather than political factions. The tribal system is a method of conforming to European political forms. Indian tribes have managed to coordinate

a modern political structure with a reservation program that compares favorably with the prevailing political system.⁵

Value Systems

Each Indian tribe has a unique set of characteristics setting them apart from other tribes, but there are some qualities that all Indians possess making them different from the white population. The following paragraphs include some of the conflicting aspects of white and Indian life styles.

Time.-- "Indians are like the weather...when storms are predicted, the sun shines. Likewise if you count on the unpredictability of Indian people, you will never be sorry."⁶ This quote by Vine Delauria, Jr. points out several Indian characteristics. Indians are unpredictable to whites because they are present oriented. They are concerned with what is happening now, and do not think in terms of tomorrow, next week, or next year. The white man is future oriented. In conjunction with this, Indians are not concerned with time as the white man is. They are consistently late for appointments that are important to the time centered white society.

⁵Vine Delauria, Jr., Custer Died For Your Sins (New York: Macmillan Company, 1969), pp. 11-13.

⁶Ibid., p. 1.

This characteristic is so apparent that a special term "Indian Time" has been coined to explain their inevitable tardiness.⁷

Wealth.-- The Indian tribe is concerned with taking care of its own people. Sharing and giving are highly valued. Indian people fail to see the importance placed on material things and accumulated wealth in the white way of life. The Indian who tries to accumulate wealth is often feared by his people.⁸

Age.-- Indians show a great respect for age, and to be old is synonymous with being wise.⁹ This is in contrast with the larger white society that emphasizes youth to a great extent.

Cooperation.-- Working together toward common goals is most important in the Indian culture. They strive for cooperation in an atmosphere of union and harmony. The white society is organized around competition. To be successful, white men feel the need to compete with their peers.

Nature.-- The Indians wish to live in harmony with their land and nature. They do not value the science and technology that the

⁷Kenneth Anderson, Gordon Collister, and Carl Ladd, The Educational Achievement of Indian Children (Kansas: Haskell Institute Print Shop, 1953), p. 31.

⁸Ibid., p. 31.

⁹Misiaszek, "Cultural Dilemma," p. 437.

whites use to manipulate the natural environment. This difference has caused a great deal of conflict in the history of the white and Indian relationship.¹⁰

Kinship Pattern.-- The extended family system in which blood ties are more binding than marital ties, is prevalent in the American Indian culture. In this type of kinship arrangement, the child becomes accustomed to being surrounded by numerous relatives, many of whom treat them as their own children. The conjugal family is dominant in the white society. The husband, wife, and their children make up the family unit.

Communication.-- Emotional rather than verbal expression is stressed in the Indian home. Ideas are conveyed through behavior, and the Indian becomes very adept at perceiving meanings of facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice. Being able to express oneself verbally is highly valued in the white culture.

Because the Indians have chosen to retain these aspects of their culture, it has been difficult for them to function in the white society. "I trust that one day soon American society will see that its strength lies in the differences of its multi-racial

¹⁰Anderson, Educational Achievement, p. 31.

membership and that respect for individual differences will become the rule rather than the exception."¹¹

Indian Education

Among the Indians of the United States, formal education began four hundred years ago with the coming of the white man. At first, missionaries took the responsibility of teaching Indian youth, and many mission schools were established across the country.¹² The kind of education provided depended upon the religious order prevailing in the area. The Jesuits from France, the Franciscans of Spanish origin, and the Protestants each had their own educational philosophy and approach. All shared, however, the common goals of Christianizing and civilizing the Indians. Researchers agree that the mission schools did not succeed in accomplishing these goals.

While most Indian education continued to be under the auspices of the church, the government began appropriating funds for the education of Indian children in 1775. Boarding schools away from the reservation became the trend. Their philosophy was to remove

¹¹Misiaszek, "Cultural Dilemma," p. 446.

¹²Berry, Education of American Indians, pp. 8-9.

the children from their homes, enforce strict discipline, and provide work-study programs emphasizing industrial arts.

Tribal histories show that although both the church and government were involved in setting up schools for the Indian, individual tribes were concerned with establishing their own educational systems.¹³

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was concerned with the education of Indians.¹⁴ Their goal, to provide an educational program for all Indian children, has come very close to being fulfilled. Although the system leaves something to be desired, it has been successful in providing an educational opportunity for each Indian child.¹⁵

The trend today is away from special Indian schools, and toward the integration of Indians into the public schools. In 1968 it was reported that approximately 150,000 Indians between the ages of six and eighteen are enrolled in 216 boarding schools and public schools in the United States.¹⁶

¹³Ibid., pp. 13-15.

¹⁴U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, The Montana-Wyoming Indian: 1968, p. 13.

¹⁵Fearn, "Education of Indian Children," p. 28.

¹⁶Cory Arnet, "Education, A Promise Unfulfilled," The Indian Historian, I (Winter, 1968), p. 13.

Previous goals for Indian education have changed from civilizing and Christianizing the Indian to helping him assimilate into the larger white society, and take part in the mainstream of American life. Researchers and educators do not believe that the new goals have been attained.¹⁷ The major justification for this belief is the level of academic achievement attained by the Indian students.

Young Indian students entering the first grade tend to be eager and bright in the school situation. As they attend the white man's schools and experience the lack of success, they become withdrawn and shy, losing their enthusiasm for school. Studies show that the gap between the levels of achievement between white and Indian children gets larger as they move through school.¹⁸

Before 1935 it was believed that Indians were less intelligent than whites. Since then research has shown that differences in I.Q. can be explained on the basis of cultural differences.¹⁹ Studies

¹⁷Berry, Education of American Indians, p. 21.

¹⁸Everett D. Edington, "Academic Achievements," Journal of American Indian Education, VIII (May, 1967), p. 11.

¹⁹Robert Rossel, Jr., Handbook for Indian Education (Los Angeles: Amerindian Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 57.

reveal that Indian students achieve poorly regardless of the criteria or instrument used.²⁰ When standardized test results are compared with state and national norms, Indian children, as a group tend to score lower than comparable grade white children.²¹

Achievement tests are the most widely used criteria for determining the effectiveness of education. Because Indians have a poor achievement level, the school programs are thought to be ineffective. Some educators believe that the success of their graduates is determined by the success of their schools. Graduate follow up studies reveal little effectiveness.²²

The history of Indian education reveals that the Indian has not profited satisfactorily from the great expenditure of money and effort. Recent literature indicates that educators are looking at Indian educational needs through the eyes of the Indian. They are realizing that Indian culture, history, traditions, philosophy, and language have meaning and value.²³

²⁰Anderson, Educational Achievement, p. 28.

²¹Edington, "Achievements," p. 11.

²²Berry, Education of American Indians, pp. 33-4.

²³"Montana's Indian Situation Today," Bozeman Daily Chronicle, February 22, 1970, p. 20.

