Navajo Bilingual Language and Cultural Education Programs: Will the Navajo be able to Revitalize and Maintain their Language and Culture?

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Abstract

This paper will deal with the interwoven relationship of language and identity. I will focus on how the Navajo Nation is trying to teach the Navajo language and culture to its people in order to build self-esteem and respect for their traditional culture, and perhaps reduce the sense of alienation the younger members feel towards both their native culture and that of the white or Anglo society. The paper will also contrast the goals of the Navajo bilingual program and the goals of the 'English Only' lobby by indicating that this latter group's policy is really exclusionist or alienating. I believe that a discussion of the various contending ideas may be instructive about the continuing cultural struggle between the Anglo-American majority society and the Navajo and other Native American tribes or nations as they strive to revitalize and/or enrich their cultures so that they will not die. This is an important struggle, for the world would be a lesser place if the cultures and the worldviews expressed in the languages of the Native Americans are lost to mankind.

> *Through sameness of language is produced sameness of sentiment, and thought; customs and habits are molded assimilated...*
>
> The Indian Peace Commission of 1868
>
> *Our native languages nurturing our spirits and hearts and the English language as sustenance for our bodies*
>
> Dr. Richard Littlebear (1990)

The United States is often called a melting pot, a place where one could get a new start and enjoy the freedom it offered everyone, but this view is far too simple to describe the actual situation. It might be better to look at the history of the United States as the history of the dominant Anglo society's struggle to achieve hegemony over what it considered were the lesser cultures and languages that came under its control. The above quote from the peace commission reveals the assimilationist's attitude that has controlled various Native American nations for most of the history of the country. However, today there is an organized effort to save the languages and cultures of the various tribes by reintroducing their languages to their own people. The movement has been given support from individual educators and associations dealing with the retention of indigenous languages and bilingual education. Even Congress has become involved after the deteriorating condition of native language was revealed to them. In 1990, Congress passed the Native American Language Act in which it recognized two

very important facts:

- Acts of suppression and extermination directed against Native American Languages and cultures are in conflict with the United States Policy of self-determination for Native Americans
- Languages are the means of communication for the full range of human experiences and are critical to the survival of culture and political integrity of any people

As an extension of this thinking it recognized the duty of the United States Government to assist the various nations in saving and maintaining their languages and the inherent knowledge and the worldview that they expressed.

In 1990, the Secretary of Education established The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force. It was assigned the job of gathering opinions from Native American educators and researchers on Native American languages across the country. As a result, the task force was able to establish 10 national educational goals for Native Americans. One of these goals was to "maintain and develop their tribal languages and cultures: by the year 2000 all schools [on tribal lands] will offer students the opportunity to maintain and develop their tribal languages and will create a multicultural environment that enhances the many cultures represented in the schools." Furthermore, the members made it clear that they agreed with the bilingual ideas of researchers like Krashen, Cummins and others by stating that it was their belief that the Native languages were being eroded because former policies have "discouraged the use of Native languages...[and these have undermined the] cultural base of the American Native". The Task Force also opinioned, that "schools that respected and supported a student's language and culture are significantly more successful in educating those students" (Final Report of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force). In this manner, the Task Force called on schools located on Native American territory to accept the responsibility of promoting Native language and culture. This viewpoint was reinforced by the White House Conference on Indian Education of 1992, which adopted a resolution calling for the "strengthening, preservation, and revival of native languages and cultures" (White House Conference on Indian Education).

This kind of support has given rise to many programs to revitalize Native American languages. Some nations had already noticed the impact of the dominant Anglo culture and had recognized the need to re-introduce their language and culture to their young people. The Navajo was one of the Nation's that early on had begun Navajo language/English bilingual education programs. I believe that a study of their programs will reveal many of the benefits of bilingual education and will also illuminate some of opposing forces of bilingual programs in the United States.

The Dine or Navajo people are the largest (255,435 registered members) federally recognized tribe of Native Americans in the United States. The majority of this number resides on the *Dine Bikeyah* or Navajo Nation, which covers parts of Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. The seat of government is located in Window Rock, Arizona. The Dine, like most Native American groups, have been given certain powers to govern the actions of both Dine or non-Dine people within the boarders of the Nation through its popularly elected government and the various agencies created by it. One of these agencies is the Navajo Department of Education, which is in charge of education within the boarders of the Navajo Nation. This autonomous system of government may seem strange and complex to some of you, and indeed it is, but a detailed discussion of the nature and range of the autonomy of the Navajo Nation is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that a certain amount of autonomy is guaranteed by treaty with the government of the United States and the various Native American Nations.

Anyone who saw the recent movie *Windtalker*s may have the idea that all Navajos are bilingual in English and Navajo. Unfortunately, this is not an accurate description of the situation. Granted, the story about the importance of the 'Code Talkers' is true. This proud group of men is also honored with museums and statues to their heroic exploits in the Pacific War. Unfortunately, this episode is an anomaly in the relationship between the Anglo-Americans and the Dine. The Dine had to endure years of the Anglo's attempts to 'civilize' them and attempts to eradicate their language and culture through the system of Indian Schools. Most of these schools enforced an 'English Only' policy, which severely punished those who broke the rule and spoke their forbidden "heathen" tongues. This barbaric treatment succeeded in accomplishing two things. It made many Navajos doubt the value of their own language, culture and traditions and it alienate the Navajo from the so-called superior Anglo-American society. Additionally, the long periods of separation from their families at the boarding schools deprived them of the chance to observe and learn in the traditional Navajo way the Navajo family values of childcare and respect for elders (Reyhner, 1996). Many social theorists believe that this lack of an internalized system of basic cultural values or alienation from the Native cultural values maybe an underlying factor of many of the social ills like alcoholism found on the various tribal lands.

Fortunately, for the United States the attempts to eradicate the "heathen" Navajo tongue failed. Before World War Two, the remoteness of their Nation and the ruggedness of the land, which allowed little contact with the outside world, saved the Navajo language. Especially the remote villages were able to continue the closeness of the traditional extended Navajo family structure. This closeness allowed for the language and culture to be passed down from grandfathers and grandmothers through daily contact with the grandchildren. This traditional or natural way of language acquisition allowed the language to remain strong and vibrant. It remained vibrant enough for the United States to utilize it for a code that the Japanese were never able to break during World War II.

In the years following World War II, the Navajo or Dine language and other Native American languages suffered from the great influence of the media. Television, radio and movies began to indoctrinate young Dine about the Anglo life style and values. Roads were built and the Nation became more accessible to the Anglos. More recently, satellite dishes have become common bringing even more channels and choices for the people. In addition, the United States Government policy encouraged the construction of single-family homes, which were the mainstay of Anglo, or mainstream US culture. This living style shift was reinforced by the media through advertisements and through television programs, which presented the independent nuclear family as the best, if not only way to live a fully modern life. The single family home further reduced contact with grandparents and other older relatives reducing the influence in acculturating the younger generation and serving as models of social norm. Children turned to the Anglo television and radio for their role models. The influence was so strong that many young people began to prefer to speak English rather than Navajo. Some parents even encouraged their children to speak English as a way to succeed in American, or more precisely Anglo-American society.

Navajo Language Policy

To the elders of the Navajo Nation this state of affairs was very threatening. Few of the young Dine showed any interest in taking up the professions of storyteller or medicine men and other traditional cultural

roles necessary for Dine culture to survive. Tribal leaders were concerned of what might happen to the young members if they became completely alienated from their cultural roots. They sensed that their young would become less than Dine and yet not really Anglo. They would be left in a state of limbo without strong roots connecting them with either culture. This concern forced the leaders of the Bikeyah or nation to form an action plan that would stop the erosion of their culture and language.

The Navajo created the Long-Range Navajo Language Goals. This document recognizes a strong relationship between the Navajo Language and their sense of identity as a nation as it clearly states that:

- It is our language that has made us, and now makes us, Navajo Our way-of-life has changed, and is changing, over time. Despite these changes, we have through our language continued to be Navajos.
- It is our language which enables us to perceive and understand, think and feel, speak, interact as Navajo
- Without the ability to understand and speak Navajo, we cannot fully participate in the Navajo way-of-life. Only a knowledge of the language will allow us access to a full range of Navajo activities.

At first glance the Navajo's strong sense of identity with their language would seem to echo the sentiments of the Peace Commission quoted above as far as the power of language goes, but the Navajo position is much more flexible than that of the Peace Commission. Although it recognizes that "opportunities to acquire the ability to understand, speak, read, write, think, feel, sing, pray, in Navajo to be the birthright of every Navajo child," it does not aim at the abolition of English among its people. The goals make it clear that Navajo Nation will work "towards the acceptance of the Navajo language in all areas of contemporary Navajo life, and the prohibition of the Navajo language in none." I think the wording is very important because it seems to reveal a fear that the Navajo language might be prohibited again by the majority Anglo society or that the young people may reject the language and those who speak it. In this light one may sense that the Navajo really desired to instill an acceptance of the Navajo language and culture in their youth. The goals also make clear that "Navajo will be "a" language of communication, not "the" language of communication" (Navajo Long-Range Language Goals). This reveals a dramatic difference than the attitude expressed by the Peace Commission. Clearly the Navajo policy is one of inclusion and not of exclusion and is closer to the sentiment expressed by Dr. Littlebear than that of the Peace Commission. I believe that it shows the intent of including non-Navajo people and Navajo who have already loss their language into all areas of Navajo life. Also, it is clear to anyone who reads the goals objectively that the intent of the Navajo Nation is to make their people "bilingual, bi-literate, bi-cognitive and bi-effective" as stated in the document. The intent is to give their people the freedom of choice to use either Dine or English in all daily situations whether within the family, within the community or in business. As bicultural people the Navajo would be able to "use either language, or both, to best express thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and dreams" (Appendix E Navajo Long-Range Navajo Language Goals).

In a parallel development, Dine College (formerly Navajo Community College) had developed a Dine Studies Curriculum that started in 1977. This program was uniquely suited to help fulfill the Navajo Language Goals by providing participants a good knowledge of Dine language and culture that would enable them to be bilingual teachers or teach Dine as a foreign language. The curriculum of the Center for Dine Culture at Dine College, Ship Rock, Arizona, seems well structured to give the participating students a solid background of

Dine culture and a broad range of language skills. It includes courses on Navajo as a second language, introductory and intermediate courses for non-native speakers, Navajo literature, legends and stories, Navajo linguistics, Elementary and Advanced Navajo Public speaking among others (Dine College Dine Studies Curriculum). The college began offering an Associate of Arts degree in Elementary Education in 1978. In addition, Dine College credits could be transferred to fully accredited universities so that students could qualify for BA or BS degrees and complete qualification for teaching licenses from several states. In 1996, Dine College and Arizona State University began to offer a collaborative program of Teacher Education at Tsaile Campus. This program utilizes the Dine Studies Program of Dine College and the Education Programs of ASU and awards a BA degree. The program is based on the *"S'ah Naaghai Bik'eh Hozhoon* the Dine system of values and beliefs that place human life in harmony with the natural universe" with the projected outcome being *"T'aa ho ajit'eego*, efficacy, self-confidence, initiative, responsibility, critical thinking, and courage to act" (ACCEPT Newsletter, Fall 1997).

In addition to designing the curriculum of Dine Studies, Dine College was also assigned the job of administering the Navajo Proficiency Test. This test was designed in Window Rock under the guidance and supervision of Navajo Division of Education. The purpose of this test was, of course, to standardize the quality of those who would be teaching in a Navajo bilingual program on the Navajo Nation or in neighboring communities. This test is to evaluate Navajo proficiency only and not the participant's teaching abilities. However, the test's results are accepted by states as part of their licensing procedures for those wishing to work in Navajo bilingual education programs.

In addition to the program with ASU, the Navajo bilingual education program is receiving assistance from other sources. The Ford Foundation is assisting in teacher development by funding the Learn in Beauty Master's Fellowship Program at Northern Arizona State University. This program has helped develop bilingual Navajo educators by sponsoring students like Helen Dineyazhe, a Dine College graduate and presently a bilingual teacher at Chinle Primary School on the Navajo Nation. The stated goal of the Ford Foundation's program is,

> To prepare Navajo teachers who read, write and speak Navajo, who understand the social, economic and cultural dynamics of Navajo communities, and who motivate and challenge students in the classrooms while providing a quality education that empowers Navajo students to succeed (Mary Ann Goodluck, Louise Lockard, Darlene Yazzie　Language Revitalization in Navajo/English Dual Classrooms)

This program has helped other people to complete bilingual training and become effective teachers in the Navajo bilingual program. However, Dine College remains the center of Navajo Language skill development and, perhaps the re-birth of Navajo cultural awareness as Tony Smiley, a literacy tutor at Rock Point Community School testifies,

> There were Navajo literacy classes offered locally. Dine college also offered classes and we were even encouraged to get our certification in Navajo language through the college. Eventually I ended up in the classroom and taught Navajo language. I think that this is the best thing that happened to me. I believe that it made me more aware of myself. I consider myself lucky to be able to read and write in Navajo (Goodluck, et al).

It is clear that Dine College and its several collaborative programs with other institutions have been of invaluable help to the Navajo language programs and have better prepared the Navajo to accept the challenges set

forth in the Navajo Language Coals.

However, Navajo language revival was not to be limited to higher education. The Navajo Language Goals stated clearly that Navajo was to be taught in all school levels. In accordance with this, schools on the Navajo Nation have designed bilingual curriculum that incorporate many of the ideas of bilingual educators like Krashen, Hakuta and Cummins among others. These programs are designed to strengthen the Navajo language to those students who still speak it as their dominant language, or reintroduce it to those students who speak English as their dominant or only language. They try to incorporate "the culture and linguistic background of the student into the school, and its curriculum" develop the "participation of the community in school activities" and encourage the "use of interactive/experimental teaching methods that emphasize an active role for students" (Cummins, 1989). Many of the Navajo schools use innovative programs that use Navajo to introduce the stories of the various clans, legends and other stories from the Navajo oral tradition. The schools hope that by teaching about the clans the students will develop a stronger sense of kinship and a deeper respect and pride of their own cultural traditions.

Cases Studies

Rock Point Community School is a good example to see how the bilingual programs are doing and the changes that are taking place. This school is located deep in the Navajo Nation and the program has developed into a K-12 program. In 1960, it introduced an ESL course and it introduced bilingual instruction seven years latter. Desiring to make the school reflect more Navajo ideas and values, the community elected a school board in 1972. This board then contracted with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to run the school (Reyhner, NALI, 1990). The school has designed an innovative teacher-training program that has allowed them to hire local people who were not fully certified as teachers. These teachers were then required to take classes that would earn them an Education degree through such programs as those mentioned above. Perhaps it seems unprofessional to hire local people, like Tony Smiley mentioned above with limited professional qualifications, but Rock Point and other Navaho schools were trying to develop a stable teacher base and they believed that local people would be more likely to remain in the area. Their idea has been proven correct, as 21 teachers of a staff of fifty had worked at the school for more than ten year as of 1989 and all but one was Navajo. In addition, by drawing on the pool of local people the schools fosters more community involvement and encourages community members to continue in their educational endeavors and add to the economic development of the community. The success of the program at Rock Point has encouraged other Navajo schools to institute similar programs (Reyhner, 1990).

Rough Rock Community Schools gives us another good example of a school that has been able to empower the local residents by having them directly involved with the school. Rough Rock was the "first school to elect an all-Indian governing board, to use Navajo as the language of instruction, to teach through and about the native culture, and to explicitly define its role as a facilitator of local leadership and community economic growth" (Galena Sells Dick 1994). Limited and inconsistent funding combined with lack of bilingual teachers made it impossible for the school to offer well-organized bilingual/bicultural education for several years at a time. In spite of the inconsistent program goals, the Rock Point School's training program has become a model for other schools and the teachers themselves have become more proficient in developing innovative student

centered materials. The teachers have also been influenced and encouraged by the efforts of other indigenous language programs like KEEP (Kamehameha Early Education Program) which have shared their experiences and knowledge about language program development.

However, on my recent trip to the Navajo Nation (August 2004), I talked with several people who were very critical of the present program. Several critics claimed that that the school is always redesigning its curriculum in order to get one kind of financial grant or another and, thus, was often deviating from its previous goal of revitalizing Navajo language and culture. Apparently, the biggest problem is the new education law, which has been dubiously named the "No Child Left Behind" Act and its system of standardize Anglo-American-white society based testing which can cut funds to schools not meeting the test goals, even those on the Navajo Nation. In addition, several critics pointed out that there were far too many problems with certifying teachers under Arizona's Indian Education Act of 2003 and that the Navajo Nation should use this opportunity to certify bilingual Navajo teachers for public schools in Arizona.

Most schools on the Navajo Nation have implemented bilingual education programs and many of them are involved in cooperative learning programs like those described above. Unfortunately, some schools located on the reservation actually belong to a unified school district located outside of the Nation. One such school is Leupp Public School (K-12). This school has a student body of that is 99% Navajo and half are LEP (Limited English Proficient). Leupp is the only Navajo Nation school in the Flagstaff Unified School District. Leupp's standardized test results have been the lowest in the district. For example the test scores for seventh graders in 1995 were 27,27 and 23 percentile points lower in reading, language and math respectively. These scores indicated that these students would be academically handicapped in their future educational career, which would probably be stunted. It should not surprise anyone that although Leupp graduates made up only 7.5% of the student body of Sinagua High School, the local high school, they made up 25% of the dropouts from the school. In addition to the Standardized Tests, Leupp's students also tested poorly in the Navajo language in 1996 with only 7% fluency, 11% limited proficiency and 82% no proficiency (Fillerup, Report on Leupp 2000).

These test scores indicated that the students may very well benefit from a Navajo language program that would give them the self-confidence and academic skills needed to improve their performance. However, in order to apply for the grant local community support for a bilingual program must be proven. It was ascertained that the local community overwhelmingly (95%) supported the idea of introducing an immersion bilingual education program to Leupp. The program was designed like those of the other Navajo language programs discussed above. It was to utilize traditional Navajo stories, legends and song and other cultural elements began in the fall of 1998 for kindergarten and was to add a year each year until the whole school was to be included in the bilingual/bicultural program (Fillerup).

Navajo bilingual immersion programs can also be found in the Navajo Head Start Program (3-5) and Early Head Start Program (0-3). I was informed there are 4,073 students enrolled in the program and that they have been using three levels of immersion styles. One is situational based with the teachers advising students about situations where they could use Navajo freely like at lunch or recess or on the bus. Another is partial immersion in which the students would spend one hour concentrating on Navajo language through stories, traditions and songs and finally complete immersion where only Navajo would be used. The staff is 90% Navajo speaking bilingual teachers and only 10% dominant English speakers, so the staff seems qualified for their task. Unfortunately, a recent survey of incoming students revealed that only 2% were Navajo dominant speaking,

14% bilingual and 84% dominant English speakers. Though these scores would indicate a strong need of Navajo immersion methods the program has been ordered to increase the use of English. This means the staff will have to depart from the present immersion program and redesign their courses.

In final analysis, one finds that the Navajo Nation's Navajo Language Goals are being implemented in programs that seem to be flexible enough to meet the needs of the individual school and the various needs of the different student bodies. It seems that in recent years Navajo immersion programs have become the main tool of the bilingual program as the percentage of Navajo dominant speakers continue to drop. Whether the programs are considered Immersion, two way-immersion or enrichment, they seem to be grounded in the proven bilingual theories of researchers like Krashen, Cummins, Hakuta and others that believe that best way for non-native speakers of English to master English is to strengthen the learner's own native language skills. Certainly, the Navajo Nation and the various communities are supporting the cause and creating a good atmosphere for the continuance of the bilingual programs. However, questions remain about whether the programs are effective. The data is not conclusive but Julius Pete (formerly of the Navajo Education Department) has assured me that he believes that the dropout rate of those who have participated in the better programs are lower than other students who did not have language and cultural programs and that these students are going on to Dine College and on to universities and this opinion is echoed by Walter Jensen of Dine College who assures me that graduates of his school do have better success rates at universities than students who go directly from high schools on the nation to four-year colleges.

I have visited the Nation with my seminar students or by myself four times in the last ten years and I have always been impressed with the confidence that the students and teacher showed. There seemed to be a lot of bilingual presentations and events. The council sessions we observed were held in both languages and a special show celebrating the opening of the new weaving museum was done bilingually. Local radio stations also are presenting bilingual programs in an attempt to support the rebirth of the Navajo language. So there is much good news that may support a belief that the Navajo language will be able to survive.

Unfortunately, the news is not all good. The previously mentioned request to include more English in the Head Start Program, means the staff will have to change their materials to accommodate English and the total effect of the present immersion program may be lessoned. This new outside pressure seems to be coming from two recent developments outside the reservation, the passage of Arizona Proposition 203 and the passage of George Bush's No Child left behind Education law.

Opposing Forces

No paper on bilingual education in the United States today should be considered complete without some mention of the strong opposition to it by the 'Official English' or 'English Only' movement. There are several groups "English First", "English for the Children" among others that are lobbying to make English the official language of the United States or at least making it the official language of the individual states. They aim to make English the only language of the states and would require all official business to be done in English. This would, of course, include schools. This would affect teaching and even relationships with parents who might not understand English well enough to be able to participate in discussions about their children's school progress or problems. The English only advocates support only limited bilingual educational help and want the LEP's (lim-

ited English proficient) to be placed in mainstream classes as soon as possible. The movement is supported by a large cross section of Americans. On the one end, there are some xenophobic racists who may believe that English Only policies may reduce immigration. On the other end, there are misguided liberals who support it because they believe that quick development of English skills would force new immigrants to learn English and allow them to become more active in politics and thus empower themselves. Some nativists have been concerned that English is under attack and that it might become a minor language in some areas of the country and want the security of a law recognizing English as 'official'. The fact that the 2000 census shows that 92% of Americans over the age of five are proficient in English doesn't seem to lessen the desire to make English 'Official' (Baron, Dennis, p. 11, *The Daily Yomiuri*, March 18, 2004).

The main target of The English Only Movement is bilingual education. It appears that the supporters of "English Only" are convinced that bilingual education isn't working and that the only way to use bilingual education is for short transitional periods of time when the LEP's are first enrolled in a school. The main object is to assist the LEP students to get into the mainstream courses of the school as soon as possible. These English Only backers reject the research of bilingual educators who have proven the value of using the students' native language to achieve CALPs (Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency) and that these could then be applied to English as well as other subjects thought in English. They believe that a quick transfer to English in all subjects will reinforce the need for English and make the students learn English faster in spite of research results proving otherwise. These people are unconcerned about the psychological effect this subtractive method will have on the students and their future academic performance. I believe that the English Only campaigners are really afraid of bilingual education. They perceive the bilingual person to be less loyal to the United States and its ideals. Perhaps it is the mono-lingual, Anglo-American's own sense of superiority or his or her own inability to learn a foreign language that makes them cling to the idea of "English Only" like a drowning man to a life preserver. The United States' efforts to learn foreign languages have been dismal. Even the State Department has dropped its requirement of a foreign language in order to recruit highly qualified people. It is apparent that the brightest of Americans are totally uninterested in foreign languages and/or the cultures that they represent. Bilingual education offers a chance to preserve the native language of the students as well as English in well structure additive language programs and should be accepted as one way to teach or develop foreign languages skills if nothing else.

Whatever its roots and underlying philosophies, the "English Only" movement has been successful in making 24 states adopt some form of English Only Laws. Arizona is one of these and it has enacted the strictest of the laws. Arizona's Proposition 203, which was passed in November 2000, repealed previous bilingual education laws and introduced "sheltered English immersion programs" which were to allow only one year for the child to acquire enough English to be transferred to a mainstream classroom with native English speakers. The law also gave parents of students the right to sue in court if they believed a school or schools were not following the letter and intent of the law.

The proposition naturally aroused suspicion and opposition from the Navajo Nation. The office of the president prepared an opposition letter to the proposition that outlined their concerns. Their position was that the law

Forbids Navajo in the Classroom:

Provide less education

Will be unsuccessful
Will cause low test scores
Denies parental rights
Violates Arizona law
Threatens educators

Clearly the Navajo were concerned that their bilingual language programs would be outlawed, their culture left out of the lives of their children and they would be forced back to an English Only program which had failed them for a hundred years. Also they were concerned that parents would no longer have a voice in their the education of their children and may even have trouble communicating with teachers in English. Likewise, bilingual educators involved in the Navajo language program might be sued and forced to pay court costs for failure to use only English. Prior to the balloting, the proponents seemed to soft peddle the effect the law might have on the Navajo and other Native Americans in the state. For example, Ron Unz, the California businessman who wrote most of the proposal, thought that the Navajo would be protected because "federally recognized tribal sovereignty should allow Native tribes to override proposition 203 "(Education Reporter, December 2000).

In addition to the passage of proposition 203 was the passage of President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program. The new act changes the tittle VII of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Law, the previous law under which bilingual programs were encouraged. The old law, passed in 1968, allocated funds for bilingual programs that fell into the category of enrichment, immersion bilingual or other programs that encouraged the development of bilingual individuals by reinforcing the native language and introducing English. The new law pretty much erases the word bilingual from the law. For example the former Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Affairs has now become Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited-English-Proficient Students. Likewise, funding for projects has been drastically changed too. Previously grants were allocated through a competitive process that encouraged excellence, now there will be grants given out from each state according to the enrollment of those needing English language training. Another interesting factor in the law is the use of the word "scientific." The new law encourages programs that are based on "scientific" research, but the word is not clearly defined and could be used to rule out any program that used a native language to educate students or train teachers (Crawford, Obituary Bilingual Education Act).

One can see then that the passage of Proposition 203 and the passage of No Child Left Behind could have a strong effect on Navajo language programs. It certainly will have a strong effect on programs like that at Leupp Elementary School, which was funded under Title VII. Likewise, the request to include more English in the Navajo Head Start program reported above may well be part of the pressure to follow the English Only rules. I have been told that so far the schools on the Nation are still operating under the Native Language Act and are not affected directly by the state laws or the new education law. However, my recent trip to the Navajo Nation (August 2004) seemed to belie the earlier information. My discussions with educators, administrators and Navajo government colleagues, revealed growing pressure to meet the targeted educational goals of the No Child Left Behind bill. This will result in decreased classroom time on Navajo language and culture. It appears that even the Navajo schools will loose federal funds if they do not meet the 'one-pattern-fit-all-needs' attitude of the law. The law blatantly disregards the Native American Language Act and pushes the Native schools to meet the English language goals. There is a strong need to remind the federal government of its previous recog-

nition of the rights of the Native Americans to pass their language and culture on to their children or it will become just another broken promise by the Anglo majority culture. Does the United States really want to destroy Native American culture by imposing their Anglo-white-American culture on the various remaining Native American cultures? Apparently it does, but this would be such a terrible and needless loss to the nation and to the world. I hope that intelligent people will recognize the folly of this policy and force the government to recognize the value of continuing the bilingual-bicultural education of the various Native Americans Nations.

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