

Students' Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning:

Voices of the Students

by

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ABSTRACT

To determine if Navajo language classes made a difference in students' lives, thirty Navajo language and culture students were selected to be interviewed. The students selected were those who were in the language and culture programs in the elementary, middle and high school. The focus was to find out the students' perspectives on Navajo language and culture instruction.

This study explored if students understood the importance of language revitalization and if the language and culture classes offered by schools was making a difference in their lives. The research was conducted to answer the following questions: What teaching methods did students prefer from their native language teachers? Did students feel that learning their home language in an educational setting has made a positive impact on their Western education? Has the Navajo language program, lead students to participate in cultural events?

Interviewing was used in this study to determine if student success contributed to the participation of the Navajo language and culture classes. Comparison was made between boys and girls to find if the preferred teaching methods varied between male and female. The different grade levels were compared to find which grade level has become more involved in cultural or ceremonial events since participating in the native language and culture program. The comparison was to discover which age group had a positive impact on Western education while participating in native studies.

“Take your culture and language with you.”
Our Elders, Our Teachers, Wilfred E. Billey, Navajo Code Talker

To my daughters who tolerated a missing mother
during the long hours of research and writing.

To my four grandchildren:
Andrew, Kristen, Jasmine and Monika
who, I hope, will understand why
their grandmother did not visit them often.

To my parents
who taught me the Navajo language as my first language.
I cannot thank them enough!
Ahéhee’ Shimá dóó Shizhe’é

To my sisters
who were so very supportive
and took over my chores when it was necessary.

To Dr. Tracy,
who has taken the dissertation journey with me
through every step of the way and has given me moral support.

To our learners:
“We need to listen to our learners.
We need to ‘look inside them’
because *they* can best tell us how they can learn
and how they want to learn their community language.”
(ILI 2002 Working Symposium Participant)

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Ahéhee' t'áá' ánołtsoh, ts'ídá yéégo.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Shikéí, shidine'é, ałtah'áásı́ı́góó...háadida léí' nihizaad, nihisodizin, ádóóne'é niidlínígíí dóó nihe'á'al'ı́'nihiłch'aawóle'sha'álchíní, hosiddoołı́'jı́' (Office of Bilingual Education, 1987). Those words were spoken by one of our leaders, Chief Manuelito, many years ago. The interpretation can best be said in these words: "My kin, my people, all of you . . . never let our language, our prayers, our kinship terms and our culture slip away in the future, my children, never let it happen, to the end of mankind." Those are moving words when spoken in Navajo and have a meaning that will make an individual become involved with the language revitalization effort. It is a concern of everyone involved in language rebuilding that the Diné language is slipping away at a fast rate.

It may be that Navajo is still spoken by thousands of speakers, but most of the youth, those who are in elementary schools today, are mostly monolingual English speakers. The investigator of this research taught elementary students in the native language. She has been a Navajo language and culture teacher for many years. During this time she has witnessed the use of Navajo language become less and less frequent. Only a very small percentage of the hundreds of students who have entered her classes were bilingual speakers of Navajo and English. Katherine Sells, a teacher at Rough Rock Community School, also realized that Navajo

language and culture is threatened: “I worry about my grandchild. I speak to her in Navajo, but she is not fluent” (cited by Olsen & Bhattacharya, 2002, p. 45).

The Navajo Nation is located in the southwestern portion of the United States in the Four Corners area in parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. It is the largest American Indian reservation in the United States. The area covered in the three states has over 27,000 square miles. As of the 2000 Census report, the population was 180,462. The median age of the population was 24. The median household income was \$20,005, and the unemployment rate was 42%. Forty-three percent of the people live below the poverty rate. Fifty six percent of the population over 25 had high school degrees, and 7% have received college degrees (The Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, 2004).

Central Consolidated School District (CCSD) is located partially on the Navajo Nation and partly off the reservation. The school district is the 11th largest district in New Mexico. It covers approximately 3,000 square miles in the Four Corners area. CCSD serves approximately 7,000 students and of those students 90% are Navajo, 9% are Anglo, and 2% are Hispanic.

CCSD serves three communities, which are Kirtland, Newcomb, and Shiprock, New Mexico. In those communities, Kirtland has six schools, Newcomb has four schools, and Shiprock has six schools. There are over 600 certified teachers and 600 non-certified staff members who are employed with CCSD.

The total student enrollment for Central Consolidated School District during school year (SY) 2008-2009 was 6,766 and out of that enrollment, 6,017 students were American Indian (AI) students, 88.9% being AI population (New Mexico Public Education Department [NMPED], Indian Education Division, 2009).

During school year 2009-2010, Mesa Elementary School had a total of 203 students enrolled. These were fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students. The same school year, 2009-2010, TséBit'ai Middle School had a total of 346 seventh and eighth grade students enrolled; and Shiprock High School, a 9-12 school, had 738 students enrolled (New Mexico Public Education Department, n.d.a).

Mesa Elementary, TséBit'ai Middle, and Shiprock High School all participate in Free & Reduced Lunch Program. The three schools had the same percentage amount of 86% AI students (New Mexico Public Education Department, n.d.a).

The District Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report for school year 2009-2010 reported that Central Consolidated School District's Overall Designation did not meet AYP and is in Restructuring 1 (R-1). Math and Reading Designation is also R-1. These scores are derived from the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment.

Mesa Elementary School

Mesa Elementary did not meet AYP during school year 2008-09 in which the school designation was Restructuring 2 (R-2). Mesa did not meet AYP again

during school year 2009-10, and the designation for the school was again R-2.

Table 1 and 2 indicate the designation for Mesa School from the School Accountability Report from school year 2009-10 (New Mexico Public Education Department, n.d.b).

Math scores from Mesa Elementary during school year 2009-10 has shown the AYP goal of 47%, and the all-student score was 30.8%, which indicated that Mesa had not met the AYP goal; there needed to be a 16.2% gain. Out of 208 students, 67 were considered English Language Learners (ELL), and their percentage was 13.0% in which they would have had to gain 34% to have met the AYP goal of 47%.

Mesa School has taken action to raise test scores to meet AYP, but has failed each time. The school has used the strategy of Response to Intervention (RTI) to improve general education among students. RTI incorporates ongoing universal screening, strategic or progress monitoring, and prescriptive assessments to drive instruction in the Universal Core Program (Central Consolidated School District [CCSD], 2010).

Table 1

2009-10 School Accountability Report in Math for Mesa Elementary

	Number enrolled in AYP Grades	Number participated	Percent proficient	AYP goal	Percent not proficient
All students	208	207	30.8	47	69.2
American Indian	208	207	30.8	47	69.2
English Language Learners	67	66	13.0	47	87.0
Students with disabilities	38	38	16.1	47	83.9
Economically disadvantaged	208	207	30.8	47	69.2

Note. From *New Mexico Public Education Department, School Accountability Report*, by New Mexico Public Education Department, July 22, 2011. Retrieved from <http://webapp.ped.state.nm.us/aypd/DocLibrary.aspx?Year=2011 &LibraryType=NMSBA>

Table 2 illustrates the reading scores from the 2009-10 New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) testing. The AYP goal then was 59%. The 208 Mesa students scored 39.0% proficient, showing they needed to make an improvement of 20% to have met the AYP goal. The 67 ELL students needed 36.8% to have met the 59% AYP goal. The all-students score and the 208 Mesa student scores were identical, which indicates that all students were American Indian students.

Table 2

2009-10 School Accountability Report in Reading for Mesa Elementary

	Number enrolled in AYP Grades	Number participated	Percent proficient	AYP goal	Percent not proficient
All students	208	208	39.0	59	61.1
American Indian	208	208	39.0	59	61.1
English Language Learners	67	67	22.2	59	77.8
Students with disabilities	38	38	22.6	59	77.4
Economically disadvantaged	208	208	39.0	59	61.1

Note. From *New Mexico Public Education Department, School Accountability Report*, by New Mexico Public Education Department, July 22, 2011. Retrieved from <http://webapp.ped.state.nm.us/aypd/DocLibrary.aspx?Year=2011 &LibraryType=NMSBA>

Tsé Bit'ai Middle School

The overall rating for Tsé Bit'ai Middle School during school year 2008-09 and 2009-10 was Restructuring 2 (R-2), showing the school had not met the AYP goal during both school years. Table 3 indicates that out of 350 students 349 students were American Indian students; one student was classified as Hispanic, and all 350 students were categorized as economically disadvantaged. The AYP goal in math for all students was 41%, showing all students were 3% short of making the AYP goal.

Table 3

2009-10 School Accountability Report in Math for Tsé Bit'ai Middle School

	Number enrolled in AYP Grades	Number participated	Percent proficient	AYP goal	Percent not proficient
All students	350	350	38.0	41	62.1
American Indian	349	349	37.8	41	62.3
Hispanic	1			41	
English Language Learners	181	181	22.5	41	77.5
Students with disabilities	43	43	10.5	41	89.5
Economically disadvantaged	350	350	38.0	41	62.1

Note. From *New Mexico Public Education Department, School Accountability Report*, by New Mexico Public Education Department, July 22, 2011. Retrieved from <http://webapp.ped.state.nm.us/aypd/DocLibrary.aspx?Year=2011 &LibraryType=NMSBA>

In reading, which Table 4 indicates, the AYP goal for Tsé Bit'ai Middle School students was 60%, and the all-student proficiency was 56.4%, showing the student gain needed to have been 3.6% to have met the AYP goal. ELL students needed a 26.2% gain to have met the AYP goal. Students with disabilities would have needed a gain of 73.6% to have met the AYP. This is by far the most percentage needed to have met the AYP goal.

Table 4

2009-10 School Accountability Report in Reading for Tsé Bit'ai Middle School

	Number enrolled in AYP Grades	Number participated	Percent proficient	AYP goal	Percent not proficient
All students	350	350	56.4	60	43.6
American Indian	349	349	56.6	60	43.4
Hispanic	1			60	
English Language Learners	181	181	36.9	60	63.1
Students with disabilities	43	43	13.2	60	86.8
Economically disadvantaged	350	350	56.4	60	43.6

Note. From *New Mexico Public Education Department, School Accountability Report*, by New Mexico Public Education Department, July 22, 2011. Retrieved from <http://webapp.ped.state.nm.us/aypd/DocLibrary.aspx?Year=2011 &LibraryType=NMSBA>

Shiprock High School

The overall school rating for Shiprock High School during school year 2008-09 has been Corrective Action. A year later, during school year 2009-10, the overall school rating was Restructuring 1 (R-1). Table 5 indicates the number of students enrolled in AYP grades in 2009-10 was 181 students, but only 170 students participated. The AYP goal for that school year was 46 in math. SHS students needed 25.9% to have met the AYP goal. The lowest percentage, which is shown, is the students with disabilities who had only 8.0%, in which 38% was needed to meet the AYP goal.

Table 5

2009-10 School Accountability Report in Math for Shiprock High School

	Number enrolled in AYP Grades	Number participated	Percent proficient	AYP goal	Percent not proficient
All students	181	170	20.1	46	79.9
American Indian	181	170	20.1	46	79.9
Hispanic	1			46	
English Language Learners	85	79	2.6	46	97.4
Students with disabilities	27	21	8.0	46	92.0
Economically disadvantaged	181	170	20.1	46	79.9

Note. From *New Mexico Public Education Department, School Accountability Report*, by New Mexico Public Education Department, July 22, 2011. Retrieved from <http://webapp.ped.state.nm.us/aypd/DocLibrary.aspx?Year=2011 &LibraryType=NMSBA>

In Table 6, the illustration indicates the AYP goal for Reading at SHS for school year 2009-10 was 60% in which the 171 students scored 37.1%, making it a difference of 22.9% to gain to meet the AYP goal. There were 85 ELL students who scored a 17.1% and needed an extra 42.9% to meet the AYP goal of 60%. Students with disabilities scored an 8.0% and needed an extra 52% to meet the 60% AYP goal. Again, all 181 students were designated as economically disadvantaged.

Table 6

2009-10 School Accountability Report in Reading for Shiprock High School

	Number enrolled in AYP Grades	Number participated	Percent proficient	AYP goal	Percent not proficient
All students	181	171	37.1	60	62.9
American Indian	181	171	37.1	60	62.9
Hispanic	1			60	
English Language Learners	85	82	17.1	60	82.9
Students with disabilities	27	23	8.0	60	92.0
Economically disadvantaged	181	171	37.1	60	62.9

Note. From *New Mexico Public Education Department, School Accountability Report*, by New Mexico Public Education Department, July 22, 2011. Retrieved from <http://webapp.ped.state.nm.us/aypd/DocLibrary.aspx?Year=2011 &LibraryType=NMSBA>

Educational Plan for Student Success

The Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) is a continuous Improvement Strategic Plan which every school in New Mexico submits to the New Mexico Public Education Department yearly. During school year 2009-10, Mesa Elementary indicated that the students’ percentage in Reading would increase from 30.6% to 63% as measured by NMSBA. For Mesa School 2009-10 school year, EPSS also expressed the Native American population will show an increase in proficiency from 39% to 61%. The ELL population results would show an increase in proficiency from 29% to 47%. The special education

population result at Mesa will show an increase in proficiency from 25% to 43% (CCSD, 2010)

At the time, the strategies indicated to help improve percentages in reading was to implement a tiered intervention system with increased reading blocks and the use of Pacing Guides from the New Mexico Standards. Other strategies implemented was to align strategies within grade levels using English as Second Language (ESL)/Differentiated Instruction per Student Assistant Team (SAT) recommendation as the appropriate intervention.

During the same year, 2009-10, Mesa Elementary School EPSS indicated the percentage of students who score proficient in math will increase from 20% to 54% as measured by NMSBA. The strategies indicated were identical to that of reading strategies. Other strategies included an establishment of weekly recognition of math achievements, an alignment of core program assessments to NMSBA test format. The Mesa School EPSS also stated an implementation of standardized problem-solving strategies across grade levels. Another strategy listed was an implementation of summer school using differentiated instruction to improve math skills.

The Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) for Tsé Bit'ai during school year 2008-09 indicated that all students in Reading/Language Arts would increase their scores from 54.10% to 60.0% as measured by the 2008-2009 New Mexico Standards Based Assessment.

The EPSS for Shiprock High School, during 2009-2010 school year indicated that the percentage of student scores as measured by the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment will be increased by 28.4% from 35.6 to 64%. It has also indicated that Students with Disabilities will increase their percentage by 46.7% from 13.3% to 64%. ELL students would increase their score by 31.8% to meet 64% AYP goal as measured by NMSBA. EPSS plan was to have all students including ELL and SPED students score 70% or higher on quarter assessments (CCSD, 2010).

To help improve reading scores, differentiated instruction was included in the instruction. Student progress was monitored each quarter and all teachers followed the district pacing guides with fidelity. Teachers assessed quarterly, and adjustment in teaching was made to ensure success for all students. Teachers also kept individual student folders to regularly and systematically use them to chart data progression. Teachers also created a classroom webpage on the school website, which included the mission, goals, and weekly course information.

The math goal in the high school EPSS was that student scores would score proficient or higher in math and will increase their scores by 34.1% from 11.9 to 53% as measured by the New Mexico Standards Base Assessment. All the ELL students would increase their test scores by 39.3% and students with disabilities who score proficient would increase their scores by 38.3% (CCSD, 2010).

The strategies to be used, at the time the high school EPSS was written, were to use the appropriate differentiated instruction to accommodate for the language and cultural needs of the students and to implement multiple high yield instructional strategies. Emphasis of higher order and critical thinking skills was also indicated on the EPSS. Teachers would also strive to use real world applications in their classrooms. Other strategies were identical to those written for the reading portion of the EPSS.

Although the plan for all students at the three schools in CCSD was to make huge gains, the actual NMSBA scores have indicated otherwise. During the 2009-10 school year, Mesa Elementary was rated as Not Met, and has been designated to be in Restructuring 2. Tsébit'ai Middle School did not meet the AYP Goal in the 2009-10 school year and was designated also in Restructuring 2. During school year 2009-10, Shiprock High School's school rating did not meet the AYP Goal and was designated as Restructuring 1.

Native Language Programs

The three schools in which this study had taken place had 90% American Indian students. Although mostly all the students were of Native American blood, the researcher found, during the study, that only a small percentage of students were in the Navajo language and culture classes. With the school district's overall goal to increase the percentages to meet AYP goals in math and reading, there was not much time set aside for native language instruction, which was hurting

the language revitalization efforts. As Jon Reyhner indicated, “Many children cannot even speak their ancestral languages” (1999, p. xiii)

If we just spoke our languages, all of our languages would be healthier, but I know that is not what’s happening. We do not speak our languages and our languages are dying. We are also confronted with a voracious language, English, that gobbles up everything in its way. (Littlebear, 1999, p. 1)

Public schools are accountable to meet AYP goals; even Rough Rock Community School has to be accountable: “Like everyone else we have to go by the state standards, and we’re accountable, so this year we’re trying to decide how to divide them” (Dick, 2002, cited by Olsen & Bhattacharya, 2002, p. 41). In spite of all that is happening with school districts, “Language is, perhaps, the most powerful symbol of tribal identity. And yet, how many Native languages are used today?” (Honda & Linn, 2004a, p. 9).

The medicine men talk about the time when only one language is spoken. They tell us that this will be the end of the earth, that our time will be up when only one language is spoken. That our prayers and stories and songs that is very sacred to our people that can be told in Navajo. We were given our language, our prayers, our songs. Mother Earth heard our foot sounds. Mother Earth heard our prayers. We were made to get up before sunrise to say our prayers to the holy people and to Father Sky. This is how we communicated and this is how we were recognized by them—through our Navajo language. (Sells, 2002, cited by Olsen & Bhattacharya, 2002, p. 37)

Navajo language and culture programs have been in the Central Consolidated School District for many years, but only as pull-out programs mainly concentrated on ELL students. Some schools have treated the language and culture classes in the same category as physical education (PE), music, library, and art classes, which are usually considered by schools as specials. If the

language and culture programs are one of those “specials” classes, then students will go to those classes only once a week.

Since accountability to meet AYP has a huge role in the decision of determining whether a school should have 45 minutes a day for a Native language program, principals cannot make the decision to enforce it. The key to having that type of language program rests on the number of teachers certified and endorsed to teach Navajo. During school year 2009-2010, all students at Mesa school participated in the language and culture program. Students attended the Navajo language and culture classes daily, which was a 45-minute pull-out program. According to school records, Mesa School had five teachers who have taught Navajo language in their own classes or students at their grade level.

The Oral Diné Language Assessment (ODLA) indicated, the majority of the students only learned Navajo words and simple sentences but not enough for communication with a Native speaker of the Navajo language. As shown on Figure 1, the total number of students in the Diné Language program among the elementary students in CCSD totaled 1,385. Out of that number, 1,147 students, or 82.8%, were non-proficient in their tribal language; 233 students were limited speakers, which is 16.8%; and 5 students were fluent speakers of Navajo, only 0.4%.

Among the middle school students, 196 students were in the Navajo language program. Out of that number, 151 students were non-proficient in Navajo, a total of 77%; and 45 students were limited speakers, totaling 23%.

According to the ODLA test results there were no fluent Navajo speakers at the middle school level.

There were 310 students in the Diné Language program at the high school. Out of that number, 245 students, or 79%, are non-proficient in Navajo according to the ODLA. The limited speakers were 54 in number, or 17.4%, and 11 fluent Navajo speakers, or 3.6%. Although, *The Navajo Times*, Newspaper of the Navajo People, indicated that 73% of the Diné people who reside on the reservation still speak Navajo, the ODLA scores indicate otherwise (Yurth, 2012).

TBA and SHS treated the Navajo language and culture program as an elective. Interested students took these classes and went to those classes daily. The class time for both schools was approximately 55 minutes. Not all students attended the Diné language classes, which has been the same for many years. At the Tsé Bit' ai Middle School, the classes offered are Navajo 1 and 2. SHS offers Navajo 1, 2, and 3. Each class offered is a full credit class at both schools. For students to enroll in Navajo 2 or 3, they must have had a pre-requisite class of Navajo1 or 2 and must have passed the course with a grade of C- or better. Plans are underway for students who have exceeded Navajo 3 classes and want to continue.

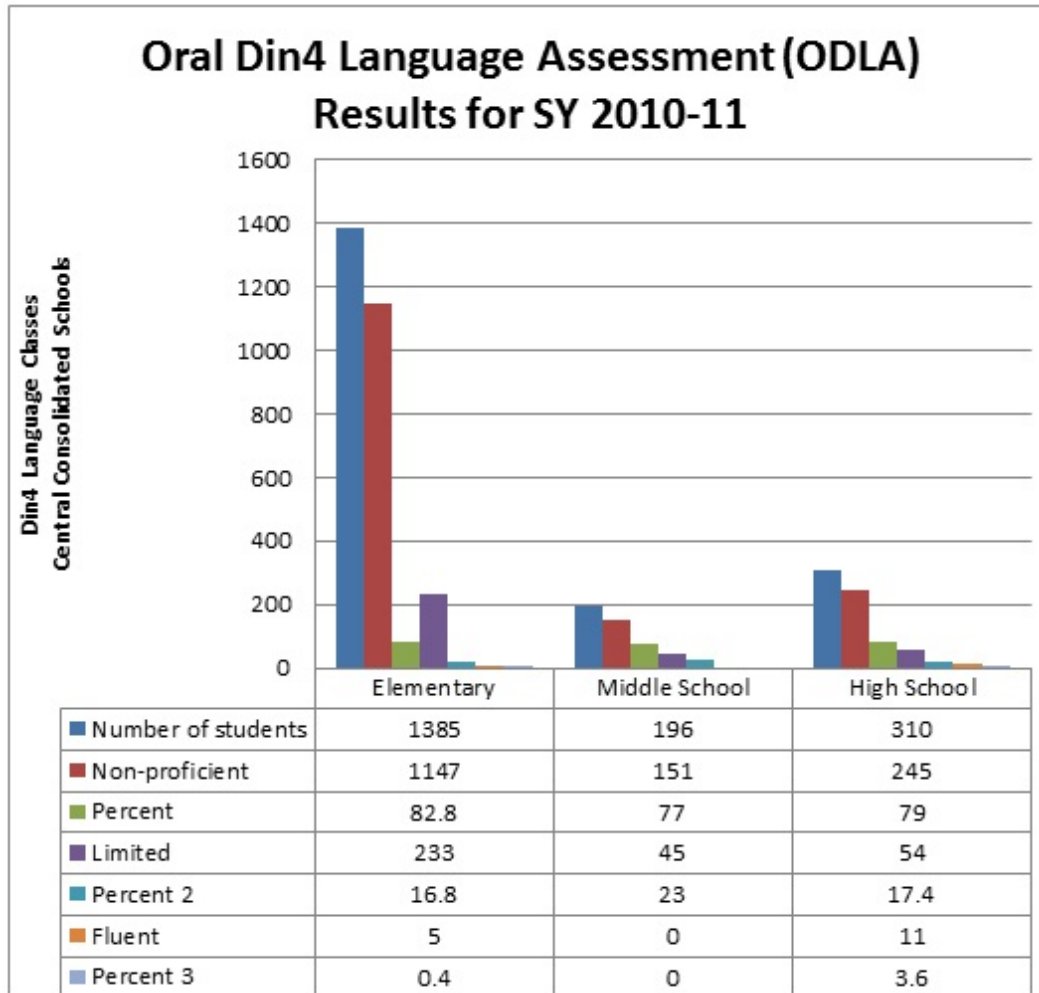


Figure 1. Oral Diné language assessment results. From *Oral Dine Language Assessment*, by Marlena Shepard, 2010-2011, Department of Dine Education, Window Rock, Arizona. [unpublished raw data]

Division of Diné Education

According to the Division of Diné Education in the Navajo Nation, “The Navajo Nation is an essential element of the life, culture, and identity of the Navajo people. The Navajo Nation recognizes the importance of preserving and perpetuating that language for the survival of the Nation” (Navajo Nation Standards and Benchmarks, 2000, p. ii). According to the Navajo Nation

Standards and Benchmarks, the Navajo language would be available for students in all grade levels to reinvigorate the Navajo language. Instruction in the Navajo language would include speaking, reading and writing skills. To develop an understanding and respect for the Navajo culture, the Navajo Nation Standards and Benchmarks included Navajo culture, history, government, and social studies. The local school board, parents, students, and community members determined appropriate course content and developed the Navajo culture curriculum. This curriculum standard guide was developed to drive the Navajo language and culture programs throughout the Navajo Nation.

Recently the Navajo Nation (NN) and Central Consolidated School District have partnered and signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) where the two entities agreed to work together for the best interest of all students at CCSD. The agreement indicates that cultural perspectives and educational needs of Navajo students are essential and unique (Navajo Nation [NN], 2011). CCSD and NN agree they have a strong interest to ensure that all students succeed and are provided the best educational opportunities, and both parties desire to work together as partners on behalf of all the children (NN, 2011)

Language Program Model

The Heritage Education Center, a part of Central Consolidated School District, has been implementing the Heritage Language/Revitalization Program model for quite a few years now. It was chosen from several other models to assist students acquire language skills to become bi-literate in English and the

home/heritage language (CCSD, 2010). After ELL students are determined by assessment, parents are notified of their child’s participation in the Home Language Program. There is a process which is followed to admit students into the Bilingual Multicultural Education Program or the Navajo Language Program (see Figures 2 and 3).

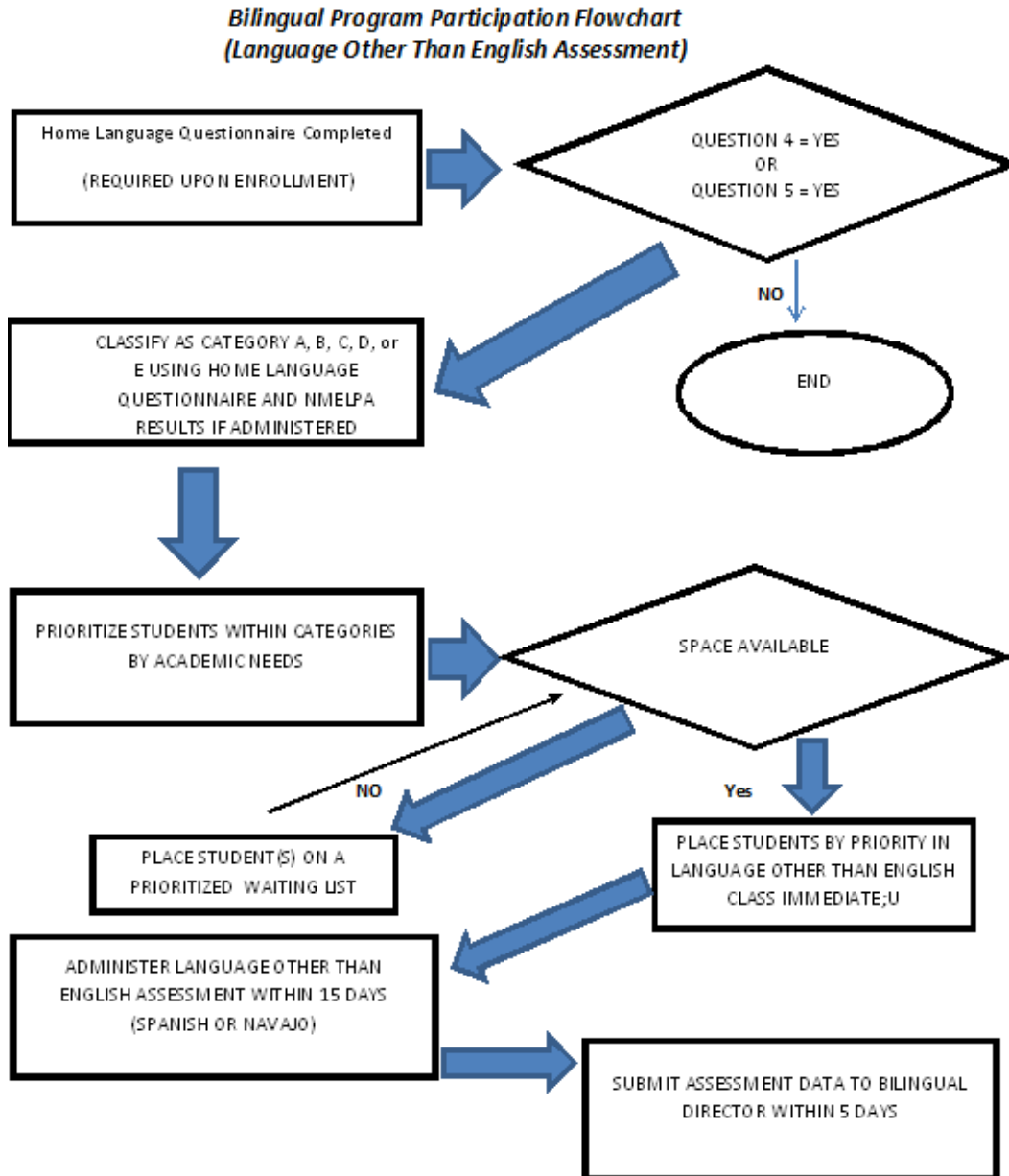


Figure 2. Bilingual Program participation flowchart: Language Other than English Assessment

Categories	Language Proficiency
A (ELL)	Monolingual in a language other than English (ELL/LEP students)
B (ELL)	Partial speakers of English (ELL/LEP students)
C (ELL)	Bilingual students with academic needs: Students scoring at proficiency level in the English Language Proficiency assessment, but scoring at or below the 45 th NCE total score of the Reading, Language Arts and Math subtests of the State approved academic achievement assessment.
D (FEP)	Bilingual students who are achieving academically in the curriculum: FEP students scoring above the 45 th NCE Total Score of the Reading, Language Arts and Math subtests of the State approved academic achievement assessment.
E (Non-PHLOTE)	Other students who may wish to participate: Non-PHLOTE students meeting the following criteria: Home Language Survey English; Parent Approval, and if funds are available at PED after first meeting the needs of ELL students.

Figure 3. Bilingual program categories, English language proficiency categories. From *Oral Dine language assessment*, by Central Consolidated School, 2011, Shiprock, New Mexico.

In the elementary level, students have to qualify to be admitted into the Navajo language program, but at Mesa Elementary all students had the opportunity to attend the Navajo language program. The number of bilingually endorsed teachers at a school made a huge difference to make that type of decision. During the school year 2009-10, Mesa had five bilingual/Navajo language-endorsed teachers. The elementary students' parents did not have a choice to decide if they wanted their children to be enrolled in a heritage language

program. All students participated in the Navajo language program, then. Once in a great while parents requested to have their child removed from the heritage language program.

When all students participate in the Home Language Program, do they wonder why they are in learning Navajo? Do they even think that their tribal language is in dire need of revitalization? These questions led the investigator to the next question. What must we do to get the youth interested in revitalization of their heritage language if they are not interested?

The results (see Figure 4) from the National Indian Education Study (NIES) in 2009 has indicated American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) fourth grade students are *never* or *hardly ever* exposed to their Native language in schools. In fourth grade, 77% of the students have responded *never* or *hardly ever* being exposed to their heritage language. Low density or schools that have low AI/AN enrollment has the highest percentage of students having *never* or *hardly ever* been exposed to Native language. The higher density and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) students show having being more exposed to their Native language (see Figure 4).

Grade 4

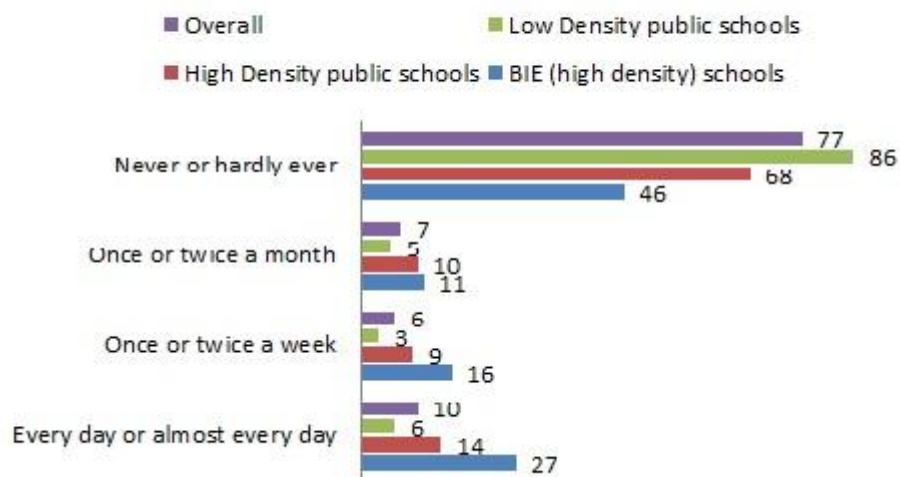


Figure 4. Students' exposure to AI/AN language in school (Grade 4). From *National Indian Education Study—Part II: The Educational Experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native Students in Grades 4 and 8*, by N. G. Mead, 2010, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

The national study of this eighth grade population of American Indian/Alaska Native students has also indicated that 82% of them have *never* or *hardly ever* been exposed to Native languages (see Figure 5), which is 5% higher than the fourth grade students. The low density Native student populations indicate 91% of the students having *never or hardly ever* being exposed to American Indian languages. The higher density Native student population and BIE schools show some exposure to Native languages. These results clearly show that Native American languages are headed towards the endangerment of extinction as indicated by McCarty and Wyman (2009). When a language disappears, all that goes with the language disappears also. This is one account of an elderly Chamicuro grandmother, “I dream in Chamicuro, but I cannot tell my

dreams to anyone, because there is no one else who speaks Chamicuro. It's lonely being the last one (Sangama, 1999, cited by Honda & Linn, 2004a, p. 1).

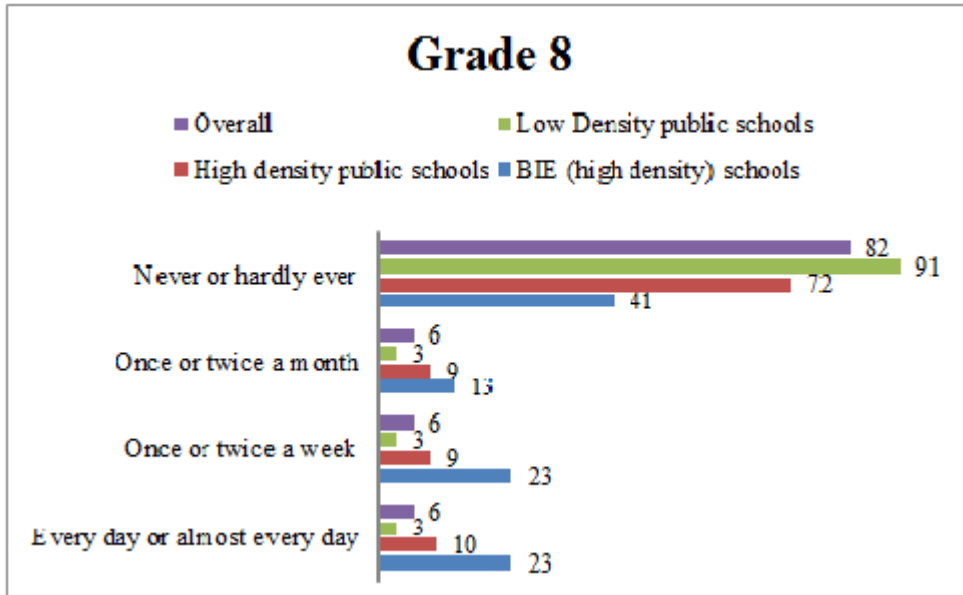


Figure 5. Students' exposure to AI/AN language in school (Grade 8). From *National Indian Education Study—Part II: The Educational Experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native Students in Grades 4 and 8*, by N. G. Mead, 2010, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

The 2009 NIES also explored students' exposure to AI/AN culture outside the school. Among the fourth grade students, the high density AI/AN student population had 52% of the students who indicated they participate in cultural activities. The high density public schools had the next highest number of students with a percentage of 46% who participated in cultural or ceremonial events. The low density public schools had the lowest number of students with a percentage of 37%. Overall, 41% of the students indicated they participated in cultural gatherings outside of school (see Figure 6).

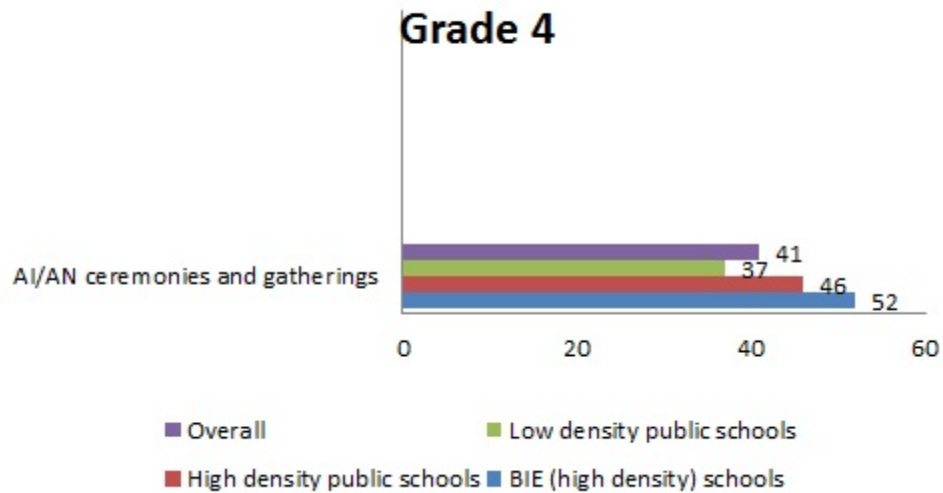


Figure 6. Students’ exposure to AI/AN culture outside of school (Grade 4): From *National Indian Education Study—Part II: The Educational Experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native Students in Grades 4 and 8*, by N. G. Mead, 2010, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

The eighth grade students in BIE (high density) Native population schools had a higher percentage of students who participated in cultural ceremonies or gatherings. The high density populations always had a higher percentage of students who participated in cultural events among the three categories listed. As with the fourth grade students, the high density BIE schools had the highest number of students who participated in cultural gatherings. Again, the high density public schools had the next highest number of students, and the low density public schools had the lowest number of students who took part in cultural events (see Figure 7).

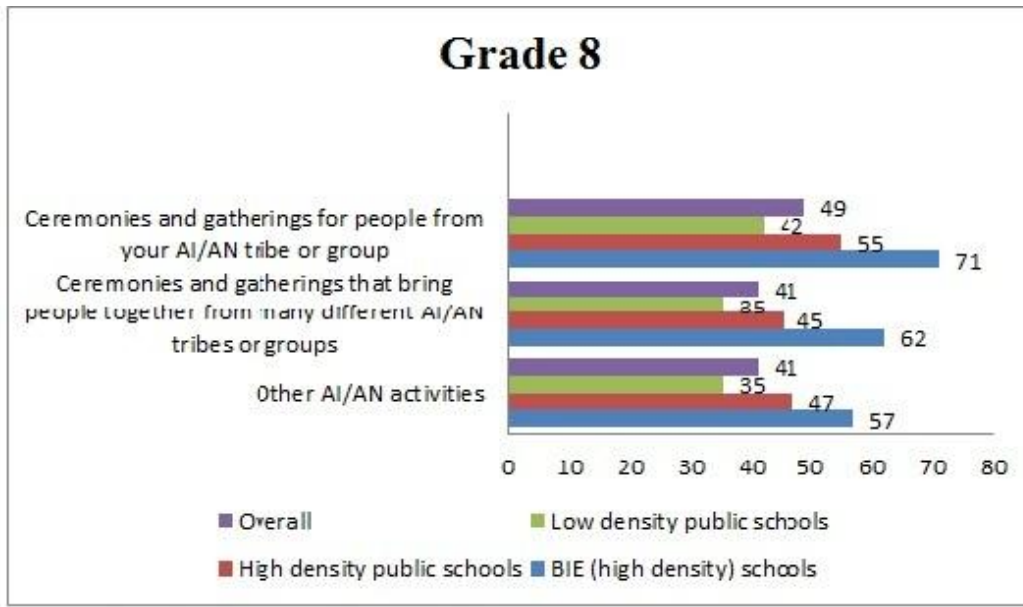


Figure 7. Students' exposure to AI/AN culture outside of school (Grade 8): From *National Indian Education Study—Part II: The Educational Experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native Students in Grades 4 and 8*, by N. G. Mead, 2010, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

In the past and even today, Indian people blame the government and other organizations that language loss was due to the Boarding School era. “We must get beyond the self-victimization stage and quit pointing fingers at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the mission schools, the media, and the public schools as the causes of the loss of our languages,” says Richard E. Littlebear.

Even though we are right when we blame the loss of our languages to these organizations, the start fact remains that they are not going to help us restore, revive, or preserve our languages. They have no stake in these language preservation efforts. In fact, they nearly succeeded in accomplishing where they had a stake: killing our languages. (2003, p. xv)

Little Bear is to be admired for his thoughts and choice of words in the above quotes, but as it has been shown by the 2009 National Indian Education Study, the high number of students who attended the BIE schools had a high percentage of students who have been exposed to their ancestral languages, and it clearly shows

the BIE students had participated more in their cultural ceremonies and gatherings. More native students in a particular setting such as in a BIE school or high density public schools did have more exposure to language and cultural activities as indicated by the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine, through student voices, what the methods of teaching students prefer in their heritage language classes. The study also answers questions as to whether the native language and culture program made a difference in students' participation in cultural or ceremonial events. Do students feel that learning their native language has developed a positive impact on their Western education?

Research Questions

The investigator has been led to seek answers to these questions:

1. What preferred teaching methods do students believe helped them learn their native language and continued to make improvements?
2. Which grade level became more involved in cultural or ceremonial events due to participation in the native language and culture program?
3. Do students feel that learning their home language in an educational setting has made a positive impact on their Western education?

Significance of the Study

For many years, the researcher's profession has been teaching the Navajo language and culture at the elementary level. Her Diné language class consisted of

students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in a 45-minute pull-out program. The students came to her class every day during a scheduled time. Teaching a true bilingual student was very rare because most of the Navajo students were very limited Navajo speakers or did not speak Navajo at all. It became very alarming to her to witness many of today's youth being limited Navajo speakers or who did not speak Navajo at all. As Laura Redish (2001) said, "Once the majority of the young people in a community don't understand a language anymore, its usage declines rapidly" (p. 2). Many of the elders do not want their ancestral languages to disappear forever.

I met Marie Smith, who is the last speaker on earth of the Eyak language. It was truly a profoundly moving experience for me. We talked for about three hours. I felt that I was sitting in the presence of a whole universe of knowledge that could be gone in one last breath. That's how fragile that linguistic universe seemed. It was really difficult for me to stop talking to her because I wanted to remember every moment of our encounter. Because of that experience, I do not want any more of our languages to have that experience of having that one last speaker. I want all of our languages to last forever, to always be around to nurture our children, to bolster their identities, to perpetuate our cultures. (Littlebear, 1999, p. 5)

Do students understand the severity of heritage language loss? The findings of this study will help more native people such as today's youth understand if they do value their heritage language and do want to learn to speak their native language, the time is to learn it now. It is the "use it or lose it" concept by J. Reyhner (1999, p. xix) or "just speak your language" by R. Littlebear (1999, p. 1). Furthermore, the findings will assist those who are working towards revitalizing indigenous languages, especially those who are working with the Navajo language.

Methodology and Delimitations

- The time of research was from November 2010 through March 2012.
- The location of the research was in Shiprock, New Mexico, with three schools in Central Consolidated School District.
- The sample of the research: Data collection was taken from Navajo language and culture students from elementary, middle, and high school.
- Thirty students in the Shiprock schools within CCSD were interviewed.
 1. Ten students enrolled in the Navajo language and culture classes at Mesa Elementary School from school year 2010-11 were interviewed. The population consisted of five boys and five girls. All students selected were in the fifth grade.
 2. Ten students were selected from the Tse Bit'ai Middle School. Students who assisted in the research consisted of five boys and five girls. The grade level of these students ranged from sixth through eighth grades.
 3. Ten students from the Shiprock High School were selected for the study. The grade level of these students ranged from ninth grade to twelfth grades.
- Students were interviewed at school during their Navajo language classes. Students were taken out of their classes for interviews in a nonthreatening open area with minimum distraction. Students were escorted back to their classes upon completion.

- Only a small percentage of Navajo language and culture students participated in the interviews. Students who participated in the interviews were students who had prior approval from their parents and teachers to participate in the study.
- Students told of their experiences with the language and culture classes. They expressed their feelings toward their language and culture teacher as well as their experiences in learning their native language.

Assumptions

- There were different methods of teaching students named or described that made a difference in their school grades.
- Improvements were made in Western education among students who have participated in the Navajo language and culture classes.
- Students became culturally involved in ceremonies or gatherings outside of school.

Definitions of Terms

These words were used in study as the investigator prepared her research paper.

Diné: another word to use in place of “Navajo.” Diné means “the people.”

Diné is a more appropriate word to use, according to this southwest tribe.

Endangered: a language which has very few speakers.

Preservation: recording a language by the last few native speakers and saving the recorded instrument for future use.

Reinvigorate: to bring back, revive, to become flourishing again.

Revitalization: the rescue of a dying language (Redish, 2001).

Organization of the Study

This study was divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is organized with an introduction, purpose statement, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, assumption, and definitions of terms. Chapter 2 consists of the literature review on language revitalization, student voices, history of American Indian education, as well as Navajo history. There is also a review on immersion schools, their philosophies as well as the Navajo philosophy of learning. Chapter 3 consists of a description of the methodology used in the study. Included in Chapter 4 are the analysis and the summary of the data collection. Chapter 5 contains the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The researcher reviewed the literature that was relevant to the study located in different on-line college and public libraries. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of what could and needs to take place so the youth would become reawakened and begin to relearn their heritage language. In the 1980s, 90% of Navajo youth were Navajo speakers in the Navajo Nation. Ten to 15 years later, 90% of the kindergarten children were English-only speakers (Lee, 2009, p. 1). The language shift from Navajo to English happened so quickly that it is quite alarming. According to Harry Walters, a retired Navajo Language and Culture Specialist from Diné College, “Within fifty years, the Navajo language will become so endangered that only the elite will speak the language.” (Walters, personal communication, October 21, 2004).

As with many Indigenous languages, Navajo language is becoming an endangered language. Navajo linguists and scholars have developed, and many are now developing, materials to be used in classes such as Diné language classes. Although it has been indicated by Laura Redish that the Navajo language was “once on the brink of extinction, is in good health” (2001, p. 2) students who are now in elementary, middle, and high school level understand or speak very little Navajo or none at all, as the ODLA results indicated in the previous chapter. Navajo language is diminishing quickly with each generation and now most young people speak mostly or only English.

The Boarding School Era

For many generations, since the beginning of the Creation, according to the Diné people, Navajo language has always thrived, but progress has brought with it the introduction of boarding schools, and use of Navajo language has been on a decrease. “Speaking any language other than English was strictly prohibited as was any attempt to adhere to any Native spiritual practice” (Keohane, 2008, p. 4).

There are numerous stories from individuals who have experienced government workers that came to their homes to take school-age children to boarding schools. Young children, as young as five years old, were taken away from their parents. An individual tells his story of how his mother hid him from the government workers who came to his home to collect him. He said his mother would tell him to be ever so quiet as she piled sheep skins and other beddings on him. There would be a knock on the door. Upon answering the door, a stranger stood at the doorway of the Hogan. The stranger would ask the mother if there are any children of school age in the house. The answer would always be, “Nidaga’, t’áá shí t’éiyá sédá (No, I am the only one here).” Unconvincingly, the stranger would leave, only to return another day until the child was taken from the home (Benally, personal communication, September 27, 2011).

In 1878, when the Cheyenne and Kiowa Indians were imprisoned in Florida, Reverend Eleazer Wheelock schooled the Indian children. The school was so successful that when the Indian’s three-year prison sentence was over,

some Indian students remained behind, of their own free will to continue their education. Although, Wheelock began the idea of removing Indian children from their homes, it was Captain R. H. Pratt who was given credit for putting the boarding school idea into practice (Acrey, 1979, p. 125).

Education of Indian children had two goals, to “civilize” and Christianize” the Indians. The philosophy of Captain Pratt was “To civilize the Indian, put him in the midst of civilization. To keep him civilized, keep him there” (Acrey, 1979, p. 125).

Not only were students traumatized by being taken from their homeland away from their parents, but they were also punished for remaining “Indian.” Indian children endured harsh punishments for speaking their language and for practicing their culture and traditions. Multiple abuses were endured by the children, such as psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual abuses. Boarding schools taught the Indian children to be shameful, feel anger, be fearful, and feel guilty of being a Native American. Students even denied having Indian blood (La Belle, 2008).

In spite of the world changing around us and among Native people, the elders have protected their language through memorizing and retelling stories, which includes moral teachings and oral history. Navajo people who embrace traditional values believe that storytelling is a core practice; and if children are taught the important principals of life, they will live well (Eder, 2007):

It is the origin story that I learned when I was a small child listening to my parents and grandparents instruct me as to the beginning of the Navajos. I

believe it is essential if a person is going to face the next millennium with confidence and pride. (Mitchell, 2001, p. vi).

Stories are a way of life for Navajos to instill in their children their origin, their kinship, and their identity.

Heritage Language

In the beginning there was no source of light, only darkness. “Then by some mysterious and holy means, sky and water came together. When they touched, that’s when everything began. That was the First World, which was like an island floating in a sea of mist” (Morris, 1997, p. 3). According, to the Navajo elders, this is the beginning of Diné people’s emergence stories. With the help of the Holy people and animals, Navajo people have entered and left two other worlds, and are now in the Fourth World, called the White World. Some say we are in the Glittering World. The holy people and the beings in the emergence stories were accompanied by hardship. Throughout history, the Diné have gone through hardships but endured. “Now the Diné people are facing another hardship. In this century, Diné and other Indigenous people everywhere are losing much of their heritage language and culture” (Shepard, 2006, p. 3).

The majority of students today have not been exposed to the moral teachings and oral history through storytelling. Home is the place where these teachings should take place, but parents are no longer teaching their children their heritage language, and stores such as the origin stories are not told. Schools are now the central location to teach Diné language and culture to students in the Navajo communities. With language loss accelerating, do students realize that

their heritage language will no longer be in existence if they do not begin to relearn it? According to Tiffany S. Lee (2009) in her article,

Native youth and young adults are cognizant of the nature of language shift and language loss in their communities. They have expressed their concern with their language vanishing, and they are negotiating what it means to be a Native person in today's society with or without their language. (Lee, 2009, p. 308)

The researcher wanted to find out if students in elementary, middle, and high school also feel the same way as Ms. Lee's article indicated. Furthermore, the researcher believed that through interviewing students, researchers and others could learn more about what students really think of school, their teachers, and their learning. It is important to listen to student voices as they will be the leaders of tomorrow and their assistance is needed in language revitalization. If Native language is to be revived and passed on to the next generation, "We need to listen to our learners. We need to 'look inside them' because they can best tell us how they can learn and how they want their community language" (Honda & Linn, 2004b, preface).

Related Literature

Indigenous Language Programs

T'áá hwó ájít'éegot'éiyá ádooníł. The English meaning merely translates to "Just do it," but much more meaning is attached if spoken in Navajo. This phrase is used in Navajo when the going gets tough. It could be anything that would either be physically or mentally exhaustive. A deeper meaning would be: "It will take all your effort from deep within to make a difference and to change

your course of life for the better.” It is going to require this type of thinking to save a language. It will mean a group of dedicated people who would put their heart and soul into the language revitalization effort. Darrell R. Kipp, an activist for language revitalization has, in that sense, put much effort into beginning a language immersion school, The Piegan Institute of the Blackfeet Nation. To begin a language immersion class, he says, “Don’t ever beg. One room, one teacher, ten kids, and you are off and running. Teach kids the language” (Kipp, 2000, p. 17).

About the same time The Piegan Institute had begun, on the Navajo Nation Dr. Dan McLaughlin began to set the motion to develop an immersion school in Rock Point, Arizona. The need was to develop a program which would be successful in reversing the language shift from English to Navajo. The community of Rock Point and Dr. McLaughlin (1995) began to take action to revitalize the Navajo language.

To develop a bilingual program, McLaughlin (1995) knew that parents, teachers, administrators, and school board members had to support language revitalization. The initial step was figure out what type of program the community wanted. To find out, a survey was taken within the community and surrounding area. The consensus among the community members was the Navajo Immersion Program. The strategy was to hire local Navajo people to avoid staff turnover. Salary scales were leveled out between teachers and administrators, also class hierarchy was taken away. Adult education was set up to teach parents to read and

write in Navajo. Most importantly, the community members of Rock Point were involved in developing the Immersion Program. Rock Point School has been operating as an immersion school for many years now.

Years earlier before the implementation of the Navajo immersion program at Rock Point, Arizona, there was a movement towards bilingual education in the Navajo Nation. A growing power and influence of the Navajo boards and Navajo parent participation had increased. School board members consisted of Navajo members who served as liaisons between the schools and parents. Navajo people began to take an interest in education. New ideas were tried and some successful programs of the past were under new names. Progress has been slow, but they were real. At that time, Rock Point and Borrego Pass were two schools which were in the process of becoming community-controlled schools.

Bilingual and bicultural kindergartens were also established on the Navajo Nation. With these kindergarten programs, the initial learning was in the Navajo language. As the children adjusted to school, English was introduced gradually, but Navajo was still the primary means of instruction. The teachers were convinced that the kindergarteners had a greater sense of security and could relate to their own culture and environment. That was considered a bridge between the Navajo and English languages (*Older Programs in Navajo Area Progressing, New Ones Promising*, 1971).

As the bilingual headstart programs were implemented and had been in progress for sometimes, researchers decided to take a look at these programs to

find out if they were indeed true bilingual programs. Studies were undertaken to determine if Diné language was predominately used during instruction. One study in particular study took place among the five agencies in the Navajo Nation with the Navajo Headstart Programs. Among the 682 children observed, the study indicated that 54.3% were monolingual English speakers. There were 27.9% Navajo-English speakers, and 17.7% of the children were monolingual Navajo speakers. The information was gathered from observation and interviews with teachers at each site. The findings indicated that preschoolers spoke predominately English.

The preschools on the Navajo Nation during the time of this study were considered bilingual preschools.

Although the staff members were Navajo-English bilingual speakers, the instruction were totally immersed in English. It was also reported that parents of the preschoolers spoke more English than Navajo. The findings also reported that there was lack of Navajo-produced materials for Navajo instruction in all the preschool sites visited (Platero, 2001).

Student Voices

Studies have indicated that children are predominately English speakers today, which is a threat to the Diné language and culture. These studies were crucial in determining how much of the Diné language was used in formal education, but student voice was missing in the studies. Most of the articles reviewed, with the exception of the Lee article (2009), did not reflect student

participation or student voices in any of the planning, implementing, or if students thought formal education in Diné was important to them (2009).

The Lee (2009) article indicated, “Native youth recognize in their communities about the importance of retaining cultural and linguistic knowledge for cultural sustainability” (p. 308). Students were well aware of the importance of retaining their heritage language, but they also understood for the sake of achieving success in life, formal education in English is important. Both are crucial for students, and can become very complex when a decision can be made between language identity and achievement in Western education. Students receive mixed messages from their communities or families when English education is favored more than their ancestral language when they know learning their own language and culture is important.

According to a Navajo educator, he explained that there is a contradiction between Western education and the purpose of Navajo education. He says that

traditional Navajo beliefs, education is the means to mastering life, not bodies or subjects of knowledge as in Western educational methods. Growing up and becoming an adult is a long and slow process, and education should guide that growth. Western education deals more with achieving personal control and making choices for oneself; it is the primary means for acquiring jobs. (Lee, 2007, p. 3)

Navajo Philosophy of Learning

The same concept was voiced by Dr. Herbert John Benally in a presentation (2011, Figure 8). Dr. Benally identified four elements in life guiding principles by their placement in a circular position beginning in the East direction. In the East direction is Dawn, which is associated with bik’ehgo da’iináanii

(principles which guide and direct life). The position to the South is Day is associated with nihigáál (principles of self-reliance, industry, and prosperity). The direction to the West is Evening; the association with that is aha'aná'hoo'niif (principles of family and social relationship). To the North direction, we are reminded of Night, and the association with that is haa'áyijh dóo hodilzin (rest and reverence for creation).

According to Dr. Benally (2011), an individual must have all four of these elements if one is to survive and function in harmony with world. If even one of the elements is missing, the individual's life will become unbalanced. These elements must be present in the home for a student to have harmony and balance so as to have a positive outlook on life (Figure 8).

If one of the four elements is or becomes missing, the family would become dysfunctional. The individual would no longer live in harmony and would turn away from the four elements listed above.

Figure 8
Life Guiding Principles

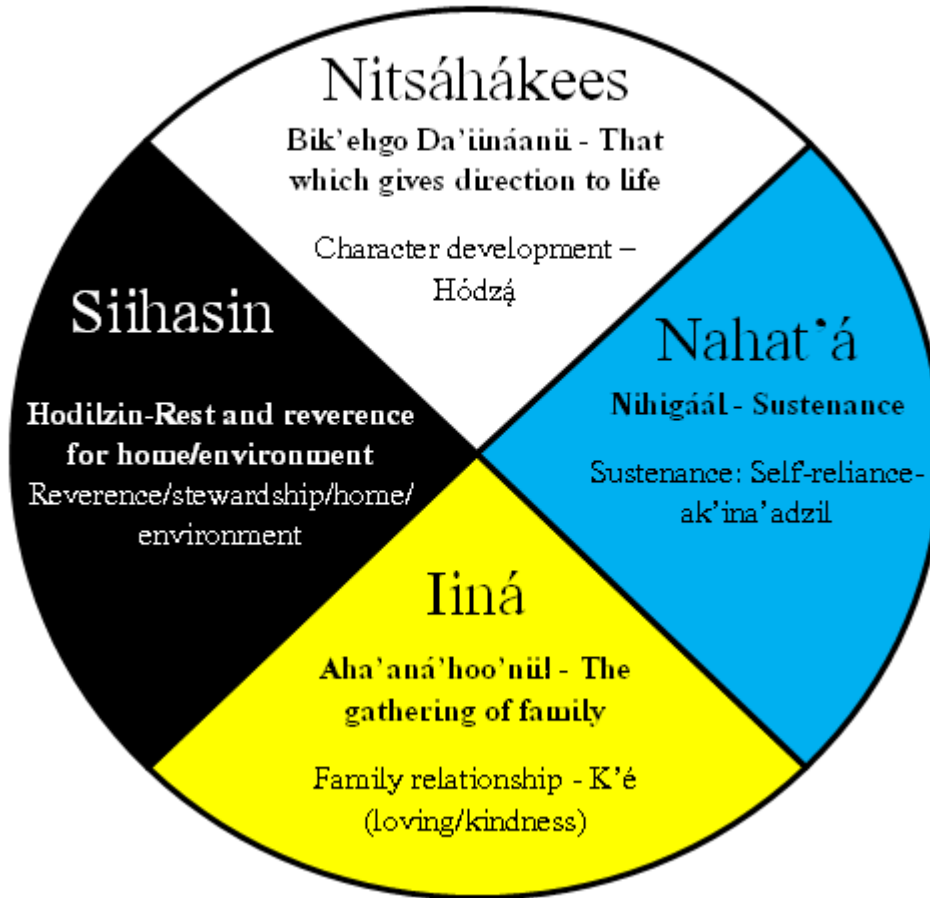


Figure 8. Life guiding principles. Taken from *Navajo Balancing Construct: Framework for Learning*, by H. J. Benally, Aug. 10, 2011. [PowerPoint Presentation]

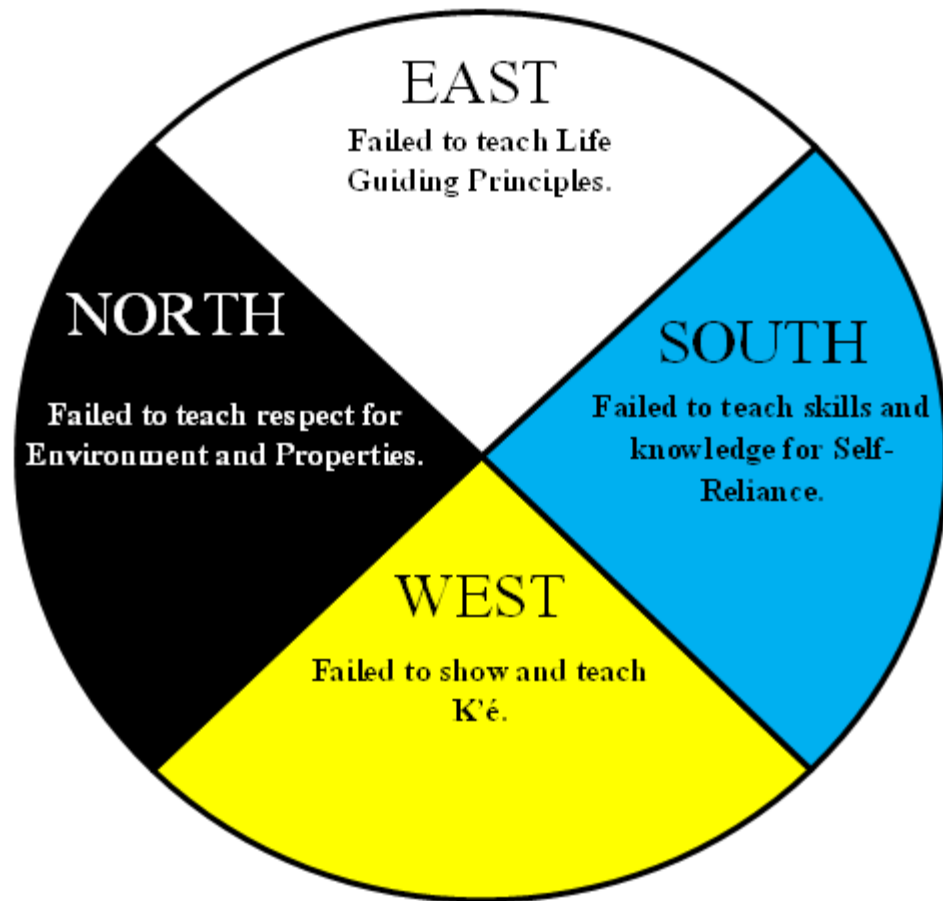


Figure 9. Imbalance (dysfunctional family): Taken from *Navajo Balancing Construct: Framework for Learning*, by H. J. Benally, August 10, 2011. [PowerPoint Presentation]

Dropout Rates Among Navajo Teens

A study was conducted by Brandt (1992) in the early 1990s to determine why Navajo students have a higher dropout rate than other students in the United States. A School Characteristic Survey questionnaire was used for the study among 259 schools in the Navajo Nation and surrounding areas. From the responses on the questionnaires, four school types were considered for the study: contract schools, mission schools, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, and

public schools. The information requested included attendance by grade, sex, transfers, dropouts, and reasons for dropping out. Navajo census was a unique identifier which helped in identifying students who transferred to other schools without notifying the previous schools.

The study was designed to provide answers as to the extent of Navajo student dropout rates on the Navajo reservation and surrounding areas. Another question was to determine how many and why Navajo students dropped out of school. The third reason was to address the needs and circumstances of Navajo student dropouts and potential dropouts and make recommendations.

When the study was completed, the field interviewers found that over 50% of the students who were considered dropouts had either transferred to another school or in, fact, had graduated. The hypotheses, which were confirmed, were that proficiency in both Navajo and English were related to persistence, and small schools had a lower dropout rate than larger schools. The hypotheses that indicated insufficient data were (a) students who attended headstart programs were more likely to persist than those who did not, and (b) schools with bilingual programs had a lower dropout rate than those that did not have such programs. In brief, the study indicated that students either transferred, or indeed, did graduate and had not fallen “between the cracks” as previously thought. Neither did these students have some sort of dysfunctional family life to have dropped off school

attendance records. The conclusion was that schools did not follow up on students' absenteeism (Brandt, 1992).

According to the 2010 Census data for Native Americans, 77% percent of Native students have received their high school diplomas or equivalent to diplomas. Thirteen percent of American Indians have received at least a bachelor's degree. This is an indication that a high percentage of Native students do indeed graduate from high school and have not been dropping out of school (Yurth, 2012).

Student Focus Groups

A student focus group was held by the Indian Education Committee (IEC) and the CCSD Heritage Education Center (HEC) during school year 2009-10. The meetings were held in all middle and high schools in CCSD, with a total of 84 students involved. The Johnson O'Malley (JOM) application required a needs assessment to determine student needs, which is the reason behind the student focus groups. Students were hardly ever asked what their needs were, so the student focus group addressed that as well. The questions consisted of five main groups of questions, which were academics, attendance, personal well-being, personal identity and equity.

Questions about personal identity received some rather interesting answers such as learn the language, listen to elders, play the shoe game, and learn to make fry bread. Some student answers related to who a successful Navajo was. Some believed a successful Navajo was Joe Shirley, their own family members, Chief

Manuelito, Code Talkers, and their grandparents. Student answers as to what made them successful included things they taught, support of their families, set and focus on a goal, follow their dreams, choose the right path, used no drugs, just said “no,” and did not get distracted (2010). Another question posed to students was what made them feel good about themselves. Some wanted to finish high school, motivate themselves, attend school every day, not get distracted, and not give up. What students wanted to learn about the culture was to forget the negative, learn the history, learn to speak Navajo, learn the games and stories, learn about ceremonies, learn to cook Native food, and have elders tell stories to them (Indian Education Committee, Heritage Education Committee, 2010).

The students who participated in the focus groups did have good ideas in which the staff at the Heritage Education Center acted upon. Language classes were supported, families have been taught about culture, shoe games were taught, and guest speakers on various aspects of the culture have been presented to the community members and continue to this day.

Another study took place on January 2011, where student voices were used to determine if there would be a need for a Youth Development Specialist for middle and high school students with Central Consolidated School District. Throughout the course of two months, focus group meetings were held in seven middle and high schools of CCSD. These meetings were held by the Indian Education Committee and the CCSD Heritage Education Center staff (2011). The

intent was to find out what students thought about school, their physical and mental health, their families and friends, and their heritage.

With all schools combined, the highest rating given by the students was the grade for teachers being approachable and offering assistance. The next for being the most approachable was the school nurses, then the support staff, and finally the school counselors. The lowest grade given by students was the school lunch, and the next lowest grade was not having enough time to complete assignments. The third lowest grade was about not having a course outline available for classes and not having extracurricular activities that supported the school mission.

The best part of school for the students was to be with their friends. Students liked to be with friends and many did want to be in school to be exposed to new learning. Many students listed Navajo classes as the most interesting classes. Some students expressed that classes were not that difficult academically, but teachers with thick foreign accents made classes difficult for them, causing the students to have difficulty understanding them. Students also indicated that the activities that would make school more interesting would be hands-on activities. They preferred to have activities that would be more relevant to their real life situations.

In the personal identity discussions, students indicated they were proud to be Navajos, and some have voiced they were proud to be Navajo, but did not know what to be proud of. “Most did state it was the responsibility of their parents

and grandparents to instill the sense of pride and obligation in their community” (Indian Education Committee, Heritage Education Center , 2011). None of the students knew about the significance of landmarks in the surrounding area in which they lived. They also did not know the history of their communities or the stories associated with the landmarks.

Most of the students have expressed they were stressed. Some were quite overwhelmed and help was not readily available when they needed to talk to someone. Most of them go to family members for help. In spite of the stressful situations, most students wanted to do well in school. Their friends motivated them to do well, and the thought of graduation also kept them in school.

Much of what students feel and think about has been expressed in these focus groups. The coordinators of these group meetings have been given much information about the world of young adults. Most often students are left out of the conversations about their educational experiences. Many students do have valuable insights about their learning and gave valuable information that could make improvements to benefit their needs.

These focus groups were conducted in a professional manner where students were given the opportunity to express their true feelings about their language and culture. In other cases, students, because they had been downgraded, embarrassed, or demeaned, become defensive when asked why they did not speak their language or know much of their heritage. According to the study, a number of students have been spoken to in a demeaning way by adults in

their communities or even from their chapter representatives. Sometimes even parents would get angry with their children when their children did not understand Navajo when being spoken to them in Navajo. Such as the case with a college student who became resentful and hesitant to even risk trying to speak Navajo after her father became upset with her for not understanding Navajo.

Another situation was where two students went to their local Chapter to ask their Chapter representative why there were not enough scholarships for students, and the response they received was, they should learn their language first.

According to IEC and CCSD staff focus group meetings, students have also indicated they did not go to chapter meetings because they felt adults did not want them at the chapter meetings. Students felt their leaders need to be more supportive and should be given more opportunities to learn their heritage language. A student voiced that “if they want Navajo to be learned, then they should require it in all schools” (Lee, 2007, p. 6).

A firsthand knowledge came from a young person who had also experienced being demeaned and downgraded for not understanding her native tongue. She was scolded for not knowing her native language. She responded it was not her fault for not learning, but was never taught the language. She further replied, “Then teach me so I can learn” (Henderson, personal communication, 2011).

These are a few accounts where young people were humiliated for not speaking the language, but were willing to learn if they were given the opportunity, but only if they were given opportunity without being degraded. These were the students' true feelings; and by listening to them, administrators and community leaders could begin to identify strategies and solutions to assist students and thus, aid in the language revitalization effort.

A number of students “expressed a desire to reclaim their language and their identity for themselves and their community” (Lee, 2009, p. 313). The findings from student interviews showed that students had great respect for their language and culture. One student believed that teachings were more meaningful if the Native language is used in the instruction. Other students expressed their respect for their heritage and language in connection with the elderly. Some students indicated that their heritage language should not be forgotten so they could learn to speak the language in order to speak with the elders.

Students indicated that fluent speakers believed young people did not want to learn their home language, but students think otherwise. Young people do want to learn their native language. They are all too aware that their ancestral language is not spoken by many tribal members; and if this trend continues, language loss will happen all too quickly. Students also associated language with ceremonial events, such as prayers, singing and dancing. They felt using the native language during ceremonial events would be more meaningful. For these reasons, young

people wanted to learn their native language in spite of the difficulty they may face learning it.

Other students expressed they wanted to learn their native language so they can rediscover their identity and regain their connections with family members. A number wanted to gain the respect of their family members. Some hoped to become fluent native speakers of their Native language. There were some who had been putting off learning their native language, but indicated that now is the time to learn since they realized their language is hardly spoken by young people.

Navajo Immersion Program

In a race against time, another school in a small town on the western portion of the Navajo Nation required a grant to begin an immersion program, because, like other parts of the Navajo Nation, of the realization that younger members of the tribe knew very little Diné or Navajo language. There was an urgency to reverse that trend. After all, “Language, of course, is the primary vehicle through which we express poetry, literature, genealogy, history, philosophy, and religion. . . . It is through language that we define who and what we are, and our unique place in the universe” (Fillerup, 2000, p. 22).

After *Wiineeshch’ı̄ı̄dii* successfully gained entrance into the White World, all the people emerged from *Hajíínéí*. When all the people emerged, everyone had a pleased look on their face. This seemed to be the world they were looking for. But there was one problem, water was everywhere. The reflections from the water seem to make the world glitter, so the people called this new world *Glittering World*. (Mitchell, 2001, p. 13)

Stories such as these have been retold over and over by the elders, so their grandchildren will in turn tell these same stories to their children. The cycle has been continuous until the Western way of life took precedence over the Navajo ways. There are those that have worked effortlessly to help reverse the trend, such as Mike Mitchell, who has retold the origin story of the Navajo. He recounts,

It is the origin story that I learned when I was a child listening to my parents and grandparents instruct me as to the beginning of the Navajos. I believe it is essential if a person is going to face the next millennium with confidence and pride, he/she needs to know who he/she is and be proud of that fact. The Navajos have a beautiful and powerful history of their early days. It is one that not many Navajos know and yet it is one that every Navajo ought to know. (Mitchell, 2001, p. vi)

Some areas of the Navajo Nation do want their children to relearn their Native language, such as the community of Leupp. In 1997, after being awarded a Title VII grant from the United States Department of Education, The Leupp Project began to develop a bilingual program in their school system. Much planning took place to make this project become successful. Key components that would supplement the Navajo initiative were recognized and listed. Other initiatives were implemented to improve literacy among students. A Navajo immersion class was implemented. The Navajo theme for the Navajo Immersion Curriculum was “hozhó” that means peace, harmony, and beauty, which parallels life in a tranquil state.

Much planning took place with the Leupp project. The curriculum was designed so students would develop intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially. The thematic unit was developed to concentrate on global themes. The

state and district standards were implemented in the unit activities. The theme was integrated in all subject areas. Equal opportunities were provided for students, in that they could work on their homework after school in the library. High expectations were set for the students.

The landscaping outside the school buildings were enhanced and made pleasing to indicate and correlate with the bilingual school setting. A Cultural Center, which served as a global resource center and cultural arts center, was developed where it was used as a student and community learning center. This was the place where cultural activities took place and students provided tours for visitors.

A spinoff from the Leupp immersion school came the birth of Puente de Hozhó Tri-lingual Magnet School. Puente de Hozhó translated in English would read, Bridge of Beauty, which is just that, a bridge of beauty, a school that teaches in three languages. The school provides its students the “Power of two,” (Fillerup, 2009, p. 3) where students are taught to have the “ability to speak, read, and write proficiently in English and another language, either Diné or Spanish” (Fillerup, 2009, p. 3).

Although Proposition 203 was passed in the State of Arizona, many families in Flagstaff supported the tri-lingual magnet school. This school was still accountable to meet Adequate Yearly Progress so the program design for the Diné language model was the one-way program model. This model was where kindergarten students were immersed in Diné language 90% of the time, and 10%

English. This allowed for students to be taught language arts in English to account for the No Child Left Behind mandate.

The curriculum developed for Leupp Diné Revitalization Program was utilized at Puente de Hózhó. Four main themes were incorporated into language, content, and culture. The main themes are health, living things, family and community, and earth and sky, which are shown on Figure 10. The four themes are then webbed into other units.

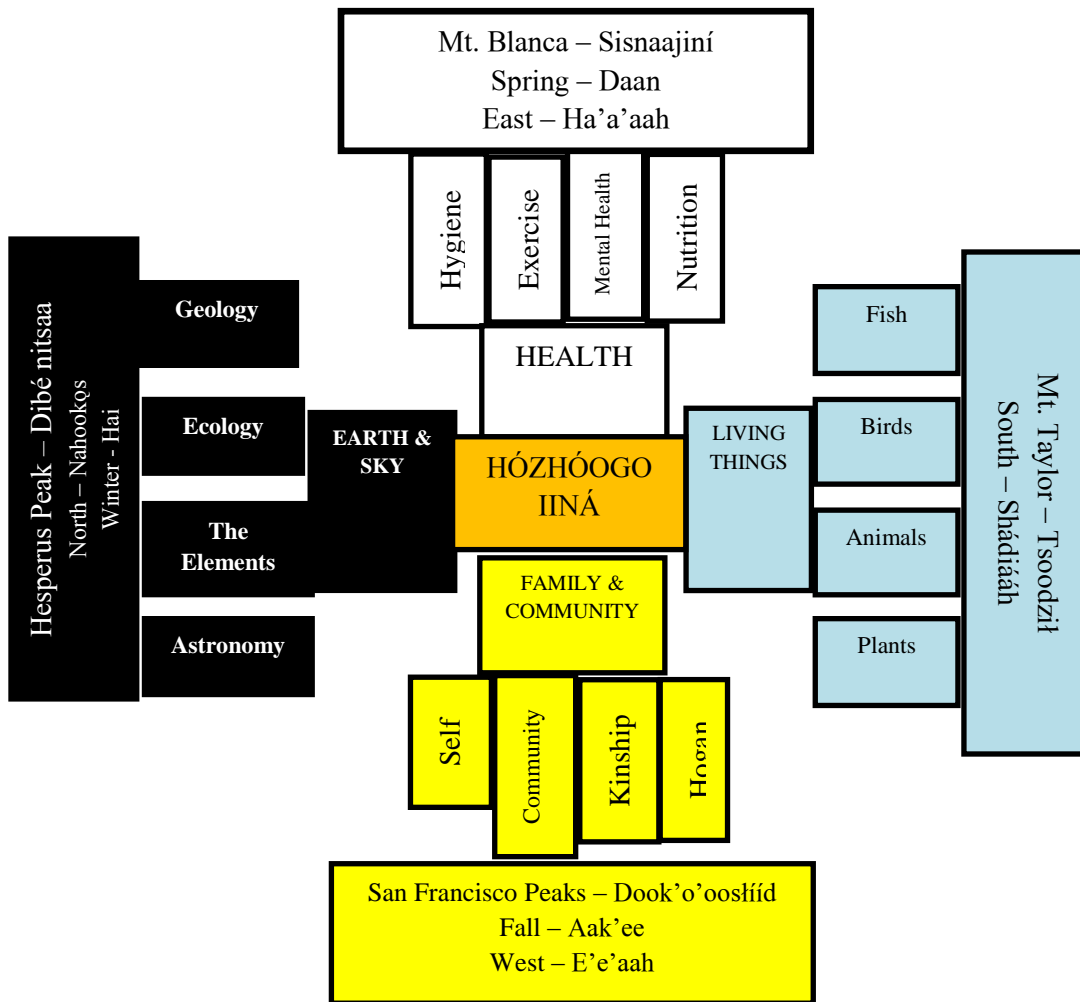


Figure 10. Puente de Hózhó thematic unit

The bilingual magnet school has been in operation for ten years to date and has been very successful. There is a waiting list of student names wanting to enroll in this school.

The AIMS Math and Reading scores tell the story of how successful Puente De Hózhó has become since opening this school in 2001. Table 7 shows that the comparison between Grade Levels 3 and 4 with 5 and 6; the third and fourth grade Puente students' AIMS Math scores exceeded those from the rest of the students in the district. The fifth and sixth grade Puente students, however, did not exceed other students, but have maintained good scores.

Table 7

AIMS Math Scores 2008, % Meeting or Exceeding Standards: Native Americans

Grade	District	Puente
3	68	76
4	61	63
5	60	43
6	55	44

Puente de Hózhó Tri-lingual Magnet School, 2009

Looking at the AIMS Reading scores, Table 8 shows Puente students in third and fourth grade students have exceeded other students in the district. The fifth and sixth grade students did not exceed the rest of the students, but have again maintained good standing.

Table 8

AIMS Reading Scores 2008, % Meeting or Exceeding Standards: Native Americans

Grade	District	Puente
3	57	71
4	54	75
5	48	43
6	53	44

Puente de Hózhó Tri-lingual Magnet School, 2009

The AIMS Math scores below, Table 9, for ELL third and fourth grade students show the third grade students did not exceed other ELL students in the district. The fourth grade students, however, did exceed other ELL students. The fifth and sixth grade students, again, did not exceed other ELL students in the district.

Table 9

AIMS Math Scores 2008, % Meeting or Exceeding Standards: ELLs

Grade	District	Puente
3	52	50
4	46	58
5	37	33
6	29	22

Puente de Hózhó Tri-lingual Magnet School, 2009

Table 10 shows the comparison between the Puente ELL students and other ELL students in the school district. The reading scores of ELL students at Puente exceeded those of other ELL students in the Flagstaff Unified School District.

Table 10

AIMS Reading Scores 2008, % Meeting or Exceeding Standards: ELLs

Grade	District	Puente
3	39	48
4	40	63
5	19	23
6	19	22

Puente de Hózhó Tri-lingual Magnet School, 2009

Overall, the students at Puente de Hózhó were able to meet Adequate Yearly Progress. The students at Puente also met the attendance requirements from the state and federal government. The report also indicates 50% of Puente ELL students were reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP). Puente de Hózhó Tri-lingual Magnet School was given a Performing Plus rating during the school year 2008-09.

Relearning Navajo Through the Use of Technology

Technology plays a tremendous role in the lives of people in this century. No doubt, that is another answer to reclaiming Indigenous languages. Since

former President Bill Clinton made an agreement with the Navajo Nation over ten years ago, much change has taken place in the Navajo Nation. One change took place when former Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley took a trip to Tunis, Tunisia in Africa to assist in “taking the first step in helping undeveloped countries in the world join the computer age” (Donovan, 2005, A-3). Traditional non-English speaking elders now carry cell phones. Selected communities in the most remote areas of the Navajo Nation now have students attending classes through the Internet via Virtual Learning.

“Technology gap may be bridged so that members of a minority group can take advantage of technology for language teaching, preservation and maintenance in a manner appropriate to their cultural and linguistic realities” (Villa, 2002, p. 1). Indigenous people have realized that technology can assist in the efforts of language revitalization and have tapped into that resource.

What will happen if technology is integrated into a Navajo studies classroom? That question was addressed by two college professors, Claudette Bradley, of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, and Herb Clemens, of the University of Utah, who in partnership with school administrators and community members, implemented a program called Ndahoo’ aah (Relearning and New Learning) in 1994 at Monument Valley High School in Monument Valley, Utah. The objective of the program was to teach the students computer literacy skills and at the same time create geometrical designs in Navajo rugs, baskets, and beadwork. Math and computer teachers participated by instructing students on the

use of a computer program called LOGO, a graphic design program. Technology was integrated with Navajo knowledge to create designs for arts and crafts.

Through the project, students learned Navajo language, arts and crafts, Navajo oral history, and technology skills. According to Mose, “If you’re going to teach Navajo language and culture, you have to keep up with technology. It is the way of the world today, so why not use technology to preserve the language and culture?” (Mose, personal communication, March 2006).

The Ndahoo’ah program was so successful that Monument Valley High School has implemented the program into their Navajo culture and language classes. Other projects that have branched out from the Ndahoo’ah program was an amphitheater for performances, a museum, a library of Native American books, a Churro sheep project, an ethno botany area, a Hogan for Native American classes, and workshop and cultural activities. The principal of Monument Valley High School declared, “We are trying to fuse the traditional life with modern technologies” (Clemens & Seltzer, 1994, p. 2).

Other indigenous people, such as the Hawaiians have embraced the use of technology in revitalizing their language. They realize that the technological age will not go away. More and more “technology has become the ways of the world and we should take advantage of it” (Mose, personal communication, March, 2006).

In 2002 Internet users has reached to 5.5 million users, however, today in United States alone, there are 272.1 million Internet users. Most Internet users

have used English for global communication but most are turning toward their own languages for communication. Speakers of Maori in New Zealand, Hawaiians in the Pacific and Navajos in American Southwest have already begun to work on language revitalization through the use of technology.

The Navajo people have been collecting information from the elders through videotaping and voice recording through various programs. The students in the Teacher Education Programs have created short stories and programmed them on DVDs as well as have them on school district websites. The Navajo Nation Department of Education has committee members who work on various projects to record and develop materials and test instruments through the use of technology. The latest developed is the DVD, Rosetta Stone in Navajo. Individuals also have websites which students can access to use to relearn their heritage language.

Concerned community members and professional educators in the Navajo Nation are working hand in hand towards language revitalization. Navajo students are relearning their language and culture through the use of computers. The word Ndahoo'aah best describes the situation, where relearning will take place and new learning will also take place at the same time through use of technology.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter discusses the methodology used for the research. It presents the research design, methods used, study area, data collection, and description of the interviews. The primary purpose of this study was to find out students' opinion on Navajo language and learning. Students have important insights and can make relevant suggestions to improve learning in the area of language revitalization. Students also brought to surface their true feelings on language learning. Dialoguing with students helps increase their self-esteem, efficacy, and importance in their schools. Student voices can be a powerful tool in finding ways to improve teaching and its techniques.

Research Design

Using a qualitative research design, student interviews were the source of this research focused on students' views of Navajo education. Student views are a valuable resource for educators to learn from and student voices can help improve education for students of all ages. If student views are heard concerning education in learning a language, perhaps they can shed light on how they would best learn their heritage language. Student voices are invaluable, in that educators can begin to revise teaching methods and existing materials to fit student needs.

Interviews took place in three different schools in Central Consolidated School District. The three schools were an elementary school, middle school, and a high school. All students interviewed were students in the Diné Language

Program and were in the language program for more than one year. There were an even number of students in each school and student numbers were even in gender. Their grade levels varied, but they were categorized by elementary, middle, and high school students.

The purpose of this study was to explore students' preferred learning styles in language and culture instruction. The intention was to also find answers as to whether the Native language and culture classes have prompted students to begin to participate in cultural events. Another question sought by the researcher was if students' Native language and culture classes contributed to having a more positive impact on the rest of their core classes in school as indicated by Dr. David Harrison who remarked, "The bi-lingual brain is smarter, it knows more. If we value knowledge—and we ought to because we live in a knowledge economy nowadays—we should value the diversity of ways of thinking that different languages provide us with" (Harrison, 2011, p. 3).

Population and Sample

The students in this study were from three different schools in Central Consolidated School District, were in the Navajo language and culture programs at Mesa Elementary School, Tse Bit'ai Middle School, and Shiprock High School. An equal amount of five male and five female students, a total amount of ten students, were selected from Mesa. Students were selected from two criteria; first, they were in the Navajo language and culture class one or more years; and secondly, their parents granted permission to participate in the study.

Ten students at the middle school level from Tse Bit'ai Middle School were chosen to participate in the research. As with the elementary school students, the middle school students were selected according to their years of participation in the Navajo language and culture program and that permission was granted from their parents to participate.

From Shiprock High School, ten students, five male and five female students, were selected to participate in the study. These students had been in the Navajo language and culture program for a year or more. Again, permission was granted from their parents prior to their participation in this research.

In all, 30 students were selected to participate from fifth grade, middle school, and high school. Prior to the selection, all students were given a questionnaire with a few questions to determine student eligibility for the interview (See Appendix A). Based on responses on the pre-interview forms and signed parent permission forms, the 30 students were selected for the research.

Instrumentation

The researcher met with each principal at the school sites selected for the study to request approval. After approval was made for the researcher to conduct her study, the researcher contacted the Navajo language teachers by email. The researcher explained to the teachers about her study in detail, who she intended to study, when her study was to begin, how the study was to be conducted, why she was conducting the study, and where it would take place. The researcher made

classroom visits after the teacher responded to the email and a meeting date was agreed upon.

During the classroom visits, students were given a short questionnaire to determine the selection of participants. When the selection of students was made, the researcher returned to the school with the student and parent permission forms to be given to the selected students. Students were assured that confidentiality would be kept and names would not be used in the research.

The researcher had prepared predetermined questions shown in Appendix B to use during the interviews. In collecting data, the researcher used a combination of interviews and a “type of questionnaire instrument as the script for conducting the interview” (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. 112). The researcher used a structured interview to collect data. The interviewer read each question to the participant in the order as they appeared on the survey questionnaire. The student then answered each open-ended question about their Diné language classes and their education.

The interviews took place during the participants’ Navajo language class. Upon receiving permission from the language and culture teachers, students were allowed to leave the classroom with the researcher to the school library to conduct the interviews. The interviews were between 20-30 minutes, about half of a class period. The interviews took one month to complete, from April 2011 to May 2011.

Data Collection Procedures

The pre-selection questionnaire, shown in Appendix A, determined the selection of participants. The selected participants were then given parent permission forms for parent signature (see Appendix C). Interviews took place after parent permission forms were returned. Before each interview, students were given a Child Assent (see Appendix D) form to sign agreeing to be interviewed. Information letter (see Appendix E) for students age 18 and over was available, in case there was a student who fit that criteria. All interviewees were asked the same questions to ensure the validity of the research. Using a structured interview format allowed the teacher researcher to ask all the participants the same series of questions. The researcher kept in contact with the Navajo language teacher throughout the duration of the data collection. Interviews took place throughout the months of April and May with no scheduled interview date. One of the determinates was the permission forms which gave the researcher permission to interview students. The other determinate was the time frame in which the student or students would be available to interview. Interviews were categorized when data collection was completed.

All documents which the principal investigator compiled in digital image or hard copies have been destroyed as indicated on Appendix F. Upon completion of the interviews, the teachers and students were thanked and for appreciation teachers were bought lunches and students were given free movie passes.

Trustworthiness

To Ensure validity of the data collection through structured interviewing, the researcher abided by the criteria set forth for interviewing and questionnaires.

- Before questions were used in interviews, pilot the questions with respondents of similar groups.
- Used open-ended and closed questions in a structured interview.
- Select a private place for the interviews.
- Make a careful selection of participants.
- Before administering the questionnaires, proofread the questions.
- Make the survey nice and attractive and use large print, if necessary.
- Make sure the questionnaire is not lengthy.
- Be sure questions are not repeated and unnecessary.
- When making a variety of possible responses use structured items to avoid different interpretations.
- Decide whether participants will write their name or if numbers will be used in the surveys.

Limitations

Time constraints were unavoidable, because data collection took place towards the end of the school year—not an ideal time for collecting data from a public school setting. Students were either on spring break, taking state exams, or taking their final exams. The researcher had to make special arrangements for interviewing in between times when students were available for interviews.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the research. As stated in Chapter 1, the researcher collected data from three different schools in a public school district in the northwestern portion of New Mexico. The majority of the students in this school district are Native American.

Decisions are made in the best interest of the children, but many times we do not ask the students, themselves, what they really think of their education, and in this case, their education about their heritage language and culture. This research explored students' perspectives on Navajo language and culture.

The questions that guided the study were as follows:

1. What preferred teaching methods do students believe helped them learn their native language and continued to make improvements?
2. Which grade level became more involved in cultural or ceremonial events due to participation in the native language and culture program?
3. Do students feel that learning their home language in an educational setting has made a positive impact on their Western education?

A total of 30 students were interviewed from one school district in Northwestern New Mexico. There were 15 female and 15 male students who participated in this study. Their grade levels ranged from elementary to high school. There were 10 fifth grade students, 10 middle school students, and 10 high school students who participated. Boys and girls were compared to find out if

preferred teaching methods varied between males and females. Comparisons were made between grade levels to find which grade level became more involved in cultural or ceremonial events since participating in the heritage language and culture program. Students also were compared by age groups to determine what similarities and differences existed regarding participation in their school's native language and culture program. Throughout the interviews, the same questions were asked of each student at the three different school sites. The interview questions related to the three research questions to allow for more prompts for the students' responses.

Research Question 1: Question 1a

The first research question covering the below subquestions asked, "*What preferred teaching methods do students believe helped them learn their native language and continued to make improvements?*"

Question 1a: asked, "*Do you think you learn from your Diné language teacher?*"

Gender: Elementary School Female Students

Four out of five female students in the elementary school indicated that they do learn from their Diné language teacher. Some of the responses were "She teaches me new things in class, like I did not know there was a poem for each month, but now I know." Another response was "She helps us write Navajo and speak Navajo in the class." One student responded by saying, "Not really, because sometimes we can't understand her when too much people are talking." She was

the only student who did not think she learned much from her Navajo language teacher, and indicated why.

Gender: Middle School Female Students

Among the middle school female students, four out of five students indicated they do learn from their middle school Diné language teacher. The middle school responses were “Sometimes she doesn’t really teach us how to do our work, and the next day she helps us out again.” One girl indicated, “Yes I think I do. She speaks it (Navajo) to me all day in class or the hallways.” Another girl said, “Just a few words, but I want to learn more.” This girl wants to learn more and a few words are not enough.

Gender: High School Female Students

All of the high school girls expressed that they do learn from their Navajo language teacher: “Yes I do, because without her I wouldn’t have learned Navajo,” declared one girl. Nearly all of the girls, except for two, expressed that they learned Navajo from their Diné language teacher.

Summary

Out of the 15 female students who took part in the study, there were 13 of them who felt they learned from their Diné language teacher. They thought their teachers taught them new things, such as books written in poetry about Navajo months and seasons, getting help when needed, and teachers speaking in Navajo to students outside of class.

Gender: Elementary School Male Students

Three out of five male elementary students said, “Yes” they learned from their Navajo language teachers. One student indicated, “Yes, because she teaches us a lot of Navajo and it is fun.” Another said, “My teacher told me about Navajo plants.” One of the boys responded, “No, because we learned this stuff in second grade up to fifth grade.” Another did not respond whether he learned from his Navajo language teacher or not.

Gender: Middle School Male Students

Out of the five middle school male students, four indicated they learned from Navajo language teachers. One student replied, “Not really, because it’s just mainly about out work.” Two other responses were “She explains a lot to us,” and “I say I learn a lot from my teacher and she was a good teacher all year except she was mean.” The middle school male students were in agreement that they learned from their Diné language teacher, except for the one who did not think so.

Gender: High School Male Students

The high school male students were divided as to whether they thought they learned from their Diné language teacher. Of the five male students, two students thought they did learn from their Diné teacher, they indicated, “Yes, I think I learn from my teacher because she speaks Navajo all the time and I am slowly starting to get the hang of it.” Another boy, answered, “Yes, I learn much from my Diné language teacher. She speaks to you in Navajo for you to talk and understand it.” Only one high school male students responded negatively, “No,

because all that's done in my classroom is learning how to say words, spelling and talking, but not as much as learning about culture.” Two of the high school boys neither indicated “yes and no.” “Yes and no, sometimes the teacher will tell stories that won't have to do with Navajo class, but it doesn't really happen all the time,” and “Sometimes confusing.”

Summary

Among the 15 boys who responded to question, nine boys indicated they learned from their Native language teacher. Two of the male participants were unsure if they learned from their Navajo language teacher, and one boy indicated he did not learn from his language and culture teacher.

Comparisons: Gender and Grade

In comparison, the elementary boys and girls agreed that the Navajo language teachers taught a lot of Navajo as well as new things. Both genders also indicated that they wrote sentences in Navajo. A girl said the language teacher was a great teacher, and a boy commented that he learned about Navajo plants. Not all elementary students agreed, however. One boy indicated he learned “this stuff” in lower elementary and a girl commented that she was not really learning due to the noise in the classroom. However, the elementary students' responses were mostly similar and showed only slight differences.

The boys and girls in middle school all responded that they had learned from their Diné language teacher, but most of them gave different reasons as to what they had learned. The responses from the boys were “She is a good teacher,”

“I learn a lot from her,” “She explains a lot to us,” and “Not really, it’s mainly about our work.” The girls responded, “She doesn’t help us until we really need help,” “I learn a lot,” “She speaks to me in Navajo outside of class,” “Just a few words, I want to learn more,” and “Yes, I do.”

The boys and girls in middle school each responded differently, but all believed they learned from their heritage language teachers, with two exceptions, one boy and one girl responded, “Just a few words” and “Not really.” Overall, the responses from the middle school boys and girls were positive and they did learn from their Native language teacher.

Among the high school students, all the female students expressed that they did learn from their Navajo language teachers. The boys, however, had a mixture of opinions. The girls indicated they learned much and that without the teacher, not much Navajo would have been learned. On the other hand, the boys responded that they learned much and their teacher spoke Navajo all the time in the class. Others said that it was confusing and another was not sure. One boy thought they learned words and spelling; and even though they had spoken Navajo, they had not learned much about the culture. The boys had differences of opinions; whereas, the girls were unanimous in their responses.

Research Question 1: Question 1b

Question 1b asked, “*What lessons taught in Diné do you remember the most?*” When asked about the type of lessons they remembered the most in their Navajo language classes, the students remembered different lessons. The

elementary female students remembered coloring, counting, lessons in second grade, and writing Navajo words. Middle school girls remembered labeling animal body parts, reading stories, learning letter sounds, color words, songs, and stories. Female students in high school remembered lessons on kinship, such as clans, stories, guest speakers, being proud of being Navajo, the value of language, and the significance of the Four Sacred Mountains. Examples of their comments are as follows:

Gender: Elementary School Female Students

- “I really don’t remember.”
- “I remember coloring a lot of Navajo stuff, like rugs, designs, and mostly talking some.”
- “The lesson I remember the most is how to count in Navajo 1 to 50.”
- “What I learned Diné, in second grade, so that’s how I started talking a little bit of Navajo.”
- “By writing the date and the month every day, all year long.”

Gender: Middle School Female Students

- “The most I remember is labeling the parts on the animal’s body parts and how some stuff are.”
- “Do not point to other people because three are pointing back at you.”
- “I was taught about reading a sentence, story, the sounds, colors, some songs, maybe more that I don’t know of.”
- “I remember how to say all my numbers to hundred, it was exciting.”

- “The lessons taught are in stories that we read, such as taming an animal takes time.”

Gender: High School Female Students

- “None”
- “The lessons taught to me in Navajo was about life and school.”
- “The lessons taught in Diné that I remember the most is about our clans and how others are related to us.”
- “I would have to say the stories we have read and all the background and also the speakers that come in from different schools. To be happy we’re Navajo and the language is very important to us.”
- “The lessons that I remember most from Navajo is the significance of the Four Sacred Mountains.”

Gender: Elementary School Male Students

Male students at the three levels of schools were also asked what lessons they remembered most from their language classes. Their responses were quite different from the girls. Male students in the elementary level remembered different lessons in their Navajo language classes. One student remembered a lesson about the First Man and First Woman; whereas, others had a recollection of vocabulary lessons, coloring, and Navajo. Boys in middle school had a recollection of being instructed on “be who you want to be,” plants, home safety lessons, and one remembered “everything.” High school boys remembered lessons on the uniqueness of Navajo culture and language being taken for granted,

learning words and months, disagreement on words, naming animal parts, and colors. Examples of their comments are as follows:

Gender: Elementary School Male Students

- “I remember about the First Man and First Woman.”
- “Vocabulary”
- “Navajo”
- “Novice”
- “I remember when I was coloring.”

Gender: Middle School Male Students

- “The lessons that Diné classes taught me is to be who you want to be.”
- “I kind of remember it the most, but not all of it, just remember doing plants.”
- “When at home, do not play with fire.”
- “The lesson taught in Diné I remember the most is the plants.”
- “I mostly remember everything in Navajo class.”

Gender: High School Male Students

- “Our culture and language are something Navajos take for granted and how we are blessed to have a unique culture.”
- “I don’t know.”
- “Arguing between how to say cow in Navajo.”
- “The words and months.”
- “The lessons taught in Diné is naming animal parts and colors.”

Comparisons

The responses made by the elementary students of both genders on the lessons they remembered were varied. The boys and girls both reported they remembered coloring pictures. This was the only response that was alike in comparison. Both genders remembered different lessons except for the coloring.

The middle school students also had different responses on the lessons they remembered most. The only similarities the boys and girls had were the lessons learned on safety and etiquette. It appeared the girls remembered the usual type of learning school offers such as writing, numbers, learning sounds, and reading; whereas, the boys remember other types of lessons such as safety and goals in life.

The boys and girls in high school remembered more of the important lessons to take with them throughout the rest of their lives. The girls remembered lessons on life and school, kinship such as clans, and the meanings of the Four Sacred Mountains. The boys remembered the uniqueness of Navajo culture and language, names of months, and naming parts of animals. Although the girls' responses were different from the boys' responses, overall, the lessons they learned were lessons to use throughout their lives. These are all important lessons

for Navajo youths to obtain to have balance and harmony with everything around them.

To find out more on student voices concerning the variation of teaching methods, students were asked in what ways teachers could teach them so they could learn more.

Research Question 1: Question 1c

Question 1c asked, "In your opinion, how do you think teachers can teach you better so you could learn more?" The responses made by elementary female students on what teachers could do to help students learn more about their heritage language and culture were to stay after school and talk more Navajo to their pupils. Others suggested assisting students, having summer school programs, and even Navajo tutoring.

Girls in middle school suggested that teachers not be texting and visiting other teachers during class time. Others said having an oral language contest, giving a quiz first, then the test, teachers and parents teach equal amount of times, and teachers should teach more vocabulary and their meaning. A female student at the middle school also thought more field trips would be nice so they could learn more about their tradition and culture.

The high school girls suggested more encouragement to speak Navajo and learn more through games, songs, and ask more questions of students. Another suggestion was to have more conversations in Navajo between the students and the teacher. One high school female students indicated Navajo could be learned

through songs, media, and stories. It was also suggested by one student that more explanations take place if students need more assistance.

The girls from all the three different levels of schools made suggestions that they thought would benefit them more in learning their native tongue. All suggestions were important and would, indeed, benefit students in learning their native language.

Gender: Elementary School Female Students

- “By having me stay after school and teaching me.”
- “They can always talk Navajo to us and try to tell us to understand them.”
- “I think teachers can teach me better by helping with the stuff I don’t know.”
- “My teacher can give me a summer school program to learn more Navajo.”
- “By having Navajo tutoring, saying a word in Navajo, then say it in English.”

Gender: Middle School Female Students

- “I think they can teach me more by not texting on their phone or talking to other teachers.”
- “I think teachers can teach better by having a battle (contest) between the boys and girls and see if which group speaks the best Navajo.”
- “I think they should go over one lesson first, then give a quiz, then after about two or three lessons give them a test on what they learned.”

- “Yes, they do. But parents teach their kids too, so it’s 50/50.”
- “I think that they should be nicer and let us go on field trips more to learn about our tradition and culture. I think they should teach us more words often and what they mean.”

Gender: High School Female Students

- “I think the teacher should encourage people to speak Navajo language not only during Navajo class.”
- “I think they could improve by playing a game, singing, and asking questions in Navajo.”
- I think teachers can teach me better so we could learn more by teaching and practicing to carry on a conversation in Navajo.”
- “I would have to say by songs, through media, them really going into detail and learning amount of words per week and stories.”
- “I think teachers could explain things more to a student if they didn’t understand anything.”

The male students in the three schools were also asked to give an opinion about teachers’ instructions on how they would learn more about language and culture. The boys in the elementary school indicated they be taught more Navajo, be spoken more to in Navajo, to study more Navajo and be taught more on what is happening now.

The middle school boys suggested they would learn more about the Navajo language and culture by reading more, use flashcards, better explanations,

speaking more Navajo, continuing subjects at a regular pace, and to hire good and better teachers.

The high school male students suggested being taught by interested teachers who would seek meanings in life, speak more Navajo and play Navajo games. Other suggestions made by students to learn more Navajo was to speak Navajo all the time and not to use pacing guides, make lessons more understandable, and to have clues on worksheets that would help students make sense of what the teacher is speaking about. Examples were as follows:

Gender: Elementary School Male Students

- “By teaching us more about Navajo.”
- “Teachers talk to me in Navajo.”
- “Teach us new things that are happening now.”
- “Study more Navajo.”
- “By teaching me Navajo.”

Gender: Middle School Male Students

- “Make flash cards with words of the Navajo language and let the students read more Navajo language words.”
- “How they can teach me better is to talk to me and explain things even better.”
- “They could concentrate on one subject for two days and then go to the next subject.”
- “To speak Diné to me or us.”

- “By hiring good and better teachers.”

Gender: High School Male Students

- “By having a teacher that’s into her/his job. One that enjoys the Navajo history and the teaching about it and seek meanings in life.”
- “Speak Navajo and play Navajo games.”
- “Speak the Navajo language all the time, no English whatsoever.”
- “Not rushing through lessons. Make assignments more understanding.”
- “In my opinion, I think they should give the students worksheets that give them hints to what the teacher is saying.”

Comparisons

The boys and girls in the elementary school all indicated the need to learn more Navajo and suggested ways for their teachers to teach them. The girls went a step further to suggest they have summer school or have a Navajo tutoring program. Both genders also indicated they wished their teachers spoke to them more in Navajo and would like to receive more assistance when warranted. The elementary students all had similar suggestions for their teachers.

The middle school students gave sound suggestions for their teachers in teaching the Navajo language. The boys wanted to read more, have better explanations, more speaking, and to have teachers use flashcards. The girls suggested having contests, taking a quiz before the exam, and more field trips. The girls also had a couple of other suggestions for their teachers, such as not texting and visiting other teachers during class. A girl also indicated that teaching

students is the job of both teachers and parents, fifty percent of the time for each. Boys and girls in the middle school all gave sound suggestions; an indication that learning Navajo language and culture was important to them.

When comparing students in high school, all had different recommendations for their Diné language teachers. All the suggestions made by both boys and girls were ways to learn more of the Navajo language. The boys wanted an interesting teacher who enjoyed teaching Navajo history, using games to teach the language, to slow down on the lessons, and to have clues when working on worksheets. The girls wanted more speaking in class, more vocabulary and explanations, and more games and stories. The recommendation made by both boys and girls were to use of games in teaching. The one different from all the rest was the suggestion made by a girl who indicated she wanted the teacher to use more media or technology in teaching the language. The recommendations made by high school students were of sound and quality. All the students suggested different ways they thought teachers could teach them to learn their native language, and they were unanimous in their interest to learn the Navajo language and culture.

Research Question 1: Question 1d

Question 1d asked, “*What are the recommended ways of teaching you would suggest that would help you learn in the Diné program?*” The girls in the elementary school recommended they needed more writing and speaking in Navajo and more recitation to learn Navajo. The middle school girls’

recommendations included that teachers pay more attention to students, have more vocabulary and reading, more lessons to work on, and that teachers give incentives and encourage students to do their best. The female high school students recommended their teachers teach them through immersion and have more interactions. Included in the recommendation were to use games for learning, read Navajo stories, practice speaking Navajo, more vocabulary and stories. One of the high school girls recommended that teachers have more explanation and speak Navajo continuously. Some of their comments were as follows:

Gender: Elementary School Female Students

- “By having me write in Navajo and speak in Navajo.”
- “Saying lots of Navajo words together and practice writing a lot all day.”
- “I recommend they help us speak our language.”
- “Speaking Navajo, learning it, write it down, and singing it.”
- “Is letting us speak it and write it.”

Gender: Middle School Female Students

- “I suggest that some teachers would pay a lot more attention to students than their phones.”
- “Doing a lot of vocabulary and reading books.”
- “Some ways of teaching would suggest to me that would help me learn in the Diné program would be giving more things to do.”

- “I think that we should have awards for those who have done well in the Navajo classes.”
- “I think they should let all the students participate in what they’re doing and do their best.”

Gender: High School Female Students

- “Through immersion and interactions.”
- “The recommended ways of teaching would help me by playing games in Navajo.”
- “Read the Navajo stories that are in the books so we can practice speaking Navajo.”
- “The vocabulary and date we do each day and every week. Also, the stories we have been reading.”
- “Keep talking Navajo daily and explain what they are saying so students can learn quickly and respond to commands that are given in Navajo.”

Male students in the Shiprock area schools also made recommendations to teachers on learning their tribal language. The male elementary students suggested more speaking in the native language and continue to practice speaking. They also recommended they write in Navajo. The middle school boys advised the teachers to have more conversations with students, teach about ceremonies, more language modeling, and for students to listen and follow directions. The boys in high school recommended they learn more about the Long Walk, place

names in Navajo, have conversations with students, speak only in Navajo, and have students attend peyote meetings and other ceremonies.

Gender: Elementary School Male Students

- “I think it is speaking Navajo more and keep practicing.”
- “Writing it.”
- “Speaking it and writing it.”
- “Speaking it.”
- “Writing the Navajo words.”

Gender: Middle School Male Students

- “The ways I think that is most helpful to me to learn the Diné language is having a conversation with the teacher because I understand it more with someone speaking the Diné language to me.”
- “Is teaching the way of ceremonies.”
- “The teachers showing us and speaking to us in Navajo for us to understand.”
- “To practice cultural ceremonies.”
- “By listening and doing what the teacher tells you to do.”

Gender: High School Male Students

- “Talking about the Long Walk and more of the Navajo history and names of places.”
- “Speak Navajo, ask questions in Navajo, have students talk to each other in Navajo, repeat words, and read stories.”

- “It seems to help me now, but it would be nice to speak the Navajo language all the time, no English whatsoever.”
- “To keep writing Navajo. More conversations in the Diné in the classroom.”
- “I would recommend students go to things like peyote meetings, enemy way ceremonies and receptions.”

Comparisons

The boys in the elementary level had similar comments when they were asked about the recommended method of teaching which would help them learn better. Their responses were to speak and write more Navajo. The girls’ responses were identical to the boys’ responses, but more was added to the girls’ suggestions. The girls wanted more recitations and learning through songs.

The differences in the responses of middle school students were the boys wanted their teachers to teach more about Navajo ceremonies and to practice them. The boys also indicated they would learn more by listening and following directions. The girls had other responses, such as having teachers pay more attention to their students, give incentives or rewards, and encourage students to do their best. The rest of responses made by both genders were speaking more Navajo, have more vocabulary words and reading, and more assignments. Both genders have indicated they would learn more through those recommended ways of learning.

The high school students had more to offer on the suggested ways to help them learn the Diné language. The male high school students believed they would learn Diné by learning place names, Navajo history, continue to write in Navajo, and attend ceremonies and peyote meetings. Their female counterparts suggested more interaction and having an immersion program, more games, repetition, for the teacher to speak only in Navajo, and teach students to respond to commands. The similarities that both genders suggested were to have conversations in Navajo and to read Navajo stories.

The male and female students in elementary, middle, and high school had different suggestions on the types of methods teachers should and could use to teach the Navajo language so students would learn much more of their heritage language, but all were yearning to learn more.

Research Question 2: Question 2a

Research Question 2 asked, *“Which grade level of students has become more involved in cultural or ceremonial events since participating in the Diné language and culture program?”*

Research Question 2 looked for responses as to whether the students felt the effects of learning the Diné language and culture might have prompted them to begin delving much deeper into the language and culture by beginning to participate in cultural events such as ceremonies. The 30 participating students were asked two questions to assist in determining which grade level became more

involved in cultural or ceremonial events due to participation in the native language and culture program.

Research Question 2a asked, “*Do you participate in cultural events or ceremonies outside the school?*”

Gender: Elementary School Males and Females

All the elementary students responded “Yes” to the question on whether they participated in cultural events or ceremonies away from school. The students indicated the type of cultural events they participated in were dances, prayers, pow-wows, and parades. All the student participants at the elementary level were aware of the different cultural events that take place in their communities and had witnessed some of those events, and some had even participated in the events.

- “Yes, I go to ceremonies, dances and prayers.”
- “Yes I do. I do ceremonies and I go to them to get my prayers.”
- “Yes, when I was small.”
- “We pray in Navajo and dance and lots of stuff.”
- “Yes.”
- “Yes, because I went to a ceremony.”
- “Dances.”
- “Yes, pow-wows and parades.”
- “Yes, pray and dancing.”

Gender: Middle School Males and Females

Most of the students in middle school indicated they participated in cultural events such as the shoe game, squaw dance, yei bi cheii, kinaalda, song and dance, peyote meetings, and protection ceremonies. The middle school students did name cultural events or ceremonies which do take place in their communities. A couple of students responded they did not participate in cultural events and one had a “no” response.

- “Yes, my dad is a medicine man so I sometimes, if I want, I will go with my dad.”
- “Yes, when Mrs. Benally was here, she took us outside and went around places.”
- “Yes, I do participate in cultural events like ceremonies outside the school.”
- “Not really.”
- “No, I do not.”
- “Yes, I do, with my parents. We go to shoe games, squaw dances, yei bi cheii ceremonies, kinaalda, and song and dance.”
- “Yes, I do, my dad takes me to peyote meetings with him.”
- “Yes, I do participate in cultural events or ceremonies outside the school.”
- “Yes, I do participate in peyote meetings. I was raised like that.”
- “Yes, I like squaw dances and protection ceremonies.”

Gender: High School Males and Females

The high school students' responses were divided. Five students indicated they did participate and four answered, no, that they used to, and that they did sometimes. There was one student who did not respond to the question. The boys and girls in high school did not elaborate as to which ceremony they participated in except for a couple who indicated they participated in peyote meetings. Other answers were knowledge bowl and butchering. It appears, as students get older and more mature, they can choose to participate in cultural events or not.

- “Yes, as always.”
- “Yes.”
- “Yes, I do participate in cultural events or ceremonies outside of school.”
- “Yes, most of the time I go to peyote meetings.”
- “No, I do not participate in cultural events or ceremonies at our school. The only event I usually participate in is the Navajo Knowledge Bowl.”
- “No, not really, just butchering and when my friend is having a peyote meeting, which was only once.”
- “I used to.”
- “Yes, I do participate in cultural events and ceremonies.”
- “Sometimes.”

Comparisons

Of the three groups of students, the middle school students named more cultural events or ceremonies in which they participated (see Table 11).

Table 11

Students' Participation in Cultural or Ceremonial Events

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Prayers	Shoe game	Peyote meetings
Dances	Squaw dance	Knowledge bowl
Pow-wows	Yei bi cheii	Butchering
Parades	Kinaalda	
	Song and dance	
	Peyote meetings	
	Protection ceremonies	

Students' Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of the Students

Research Question 2: Question 2b

Question 2b asked, *“How do you feel when you participate in the cultural events?”*

Gender: Elementary School Males and Females

There was a mixture of feeling among the elementary student participants when participating in cultural events. The elementary students indicated they had a mixture of feelings when they participated in cultural events. They felt happy, good, strong, not shy, scared, and excited. One student felt a little bored, but also excited. Another student had felt scared. A student also responded that the good feeling was due to the hopes that the student's father would get better. That could only mean that this student attended a type of healing ceremony, as most of the ceremonies take place to spiritually heal the patient.

- “I feel happy, a little boring and exciting sometimes.”

- “I feel good because I would like my dad to get better.”
- “I feel strong and not shy.”
- I feel fine and sometimes bored.”
- I feel scared because you never know what might happen. But it is really fun.”
- “I feel at a cultural event—happy.”
- “Fun.”
- “I feel happy and fun.”
- “Excited.”
- “I felt scared.”

Gender: Middle School Males and Females

The students in middle school admitted feeling good, had a calling to do something other than English, felt like a true Navajo, and felt like doing the right thing. A student felt self-pride, one felt great to be Navajo, and another understood the culture even more. One student did not participate in cultural events. Most of the middle school students’ responses were positive about being Native American and they did identify with their culture.

- “I feel good. Sometimes I think I am lucky to have a dad like him.”
- “I feel like I was meant to do something in the world other than the English way.”
- “I feel good to participate in cultural events.”
- “I never participate.”

- “I feel like a true Navajo, even though I’m still part White and Cheyenne.”
- “I feel like I’m doing the right thing.”
- “I feel proud of myself that I am learning them, participating in them.”
- “I feel great to be a Navajo, and I feel good when I participate.”
- “I feel like I know my culture even more than when I was little.”

Gender: High School Males and Females

The male and female students at the high school level responded that they felt happy, good, tired, proud, and one said it’s a feeling of being left out, because of not being able to speak Navajo. Another student indicated the interest is very much there, but it’s a feeling of being out of place in cultural events. A student also felt a difference could be made to help other students become better Navajo speakers and have a better grasp of the native language. These students all spoke about their feelings when participating in cultural events. Their responses were different, but the feeling of being proud of their language and culture is present. The students understand the role they must play in helping revitalize their native language.

- “I feel like we as Navajos should be happy about who we are and where our culture come from.”
- “I feel good when I participate in the cultural events.”
- “I feel good because it is helping the person it’s for.”
- “I feel like I could make a difference in helping our generation become use to speaking and understanding Navajo better.”

- “I would say I’m so very interested and a little bit out of place because I am part White.”
- “I feel tired and bored.”
- “I feel very proud when I participate in cultural events because I enjoy doing things like that.”
- “Interesting.”
- “I sometimes feel left out because I can’t speak Navajo.”

Comparisons

Of all the students, with the exception of two, indicated they participated in ceremonial events in one way or another. Some participated in the dances or prayers, and others participated as part of the audience. Student feelings are shown in Table 12. Most of the responses signified that student participants had a positive attitude towards their participation in the cultural events. Only three of the 30 participants expressed a less-than-positive attitude towards participation.

The indication in Table 12 demonstrated that the middle school students participated in more different types of ceremonies than did the elementary and high school students. The elementary and high school students expressed boredom at some point, whereas the middle school students did not. Overall, the middle school students became more involved in ceremonial events while being enrolled in Navajo language and culture classes.

Table 12

Student Feelings during Participation in Cultural Events

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Happy	Good	We should be happy
Boring	Lucky	Good
Exciting	Meant to do something more	Feel like I could make a difference
Good	Feel like a true Navajo	Interested, but I feel out of place
Strong	Feel like I'm doing the right thing	Tired and bored
Not shy	Proud	Proud
Fine	Great	Interesting
Scared	Feel like I know my culture	Feel left out
Fun		

Students' Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of the Students

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, *“Do students feel that learning their home language in an educational setting has made a positive impact on their Western education?”* The students were also categorized by age groups in the elementary, middle and high schools. The elementary student ages ranged from 10 to 12 years of age. There was one student who was age 10; seven students, age 11; and two students, age 12. The middle school students' ages ranged from 12 to 14. There were four 12-year-old students, two 13-year-old students, and four 14-year-old students in middle school who participated in the study. The high school students' ages ranged from 14 to 18 years old. There were three 14-year-old students, two-15-year-olds, two 16-year-olds; two 17-year-olds, and one 18-year-old student.

The third research question was to discover which age group had a positive impact on Western education while participating in the Navajo studies program. Comparisons were made between the age groups by elementary, middle, and high school age groups. Students were asked if they thought the Diné language was valuable to them.

The teaching of the Navajo Framework for Learning indicates an individual must have Hozhóogo Iná or having personal balance with everything around him be in balance with Bikehgo Da'iináanii, Ak'ina'adzil, K'é, and Hooghan hazánígi. These are rules, responsibility, social warmth, and having respect with everything around him or her. All four of these elements have a part in nurturing a young individual in becoming a sound citizen, which will enable him to progress well in school and to have self-pride and self-identification. If an individual has all those, there is no doubt he or she will value his or her language and culture.

Research Question 3: Question 3a

Research Question 3a asked, “Do you think language is valuable?”

Age Group: Elementary Ages 10-12

All the students mentioned that Diné language was important to them. One student explained more by saying, “You should know your clan and where you come from.” Others indicated the need to learn more of their native language for communication where they could understand what is being said to them, or to express themselves in Navajo. Another student indicated, “It helped the Code

Talkers win the war.” All the students in elementary school in this study were aware they are Diné and why Navajo language is important to them.

- “Yes, because you should know your clan and where you come from.”
- “It’s valuable because it is our language which we need to know.”
- “It is valuable because kids and adults can learn new things if they took the time to learn about it.”
- “So we can hear what people are saying and what they’re talking to us about.”
- “I think it’s important because it helped the Code Talkers win the war.”
- “It is important because you can learn new things.”
- “We are Navajo.”
- “Because I will know which medicine will make me feel better.”
- “Navajo language is important because when somebody talks to you in Navajo.”

Age Group: Middle School Ages 12-14.

The students in middle school were more aware of why their native language was valuable to them. Some students understood the need for the youth to continue to learn the Navajo language. Others explained why Navajo language was valuable. One student understood the value of Diné and suggested it is time to relearn the language. The elementary and middle school students all believed the value of their native language, and explained more in depth why Navajo was important to relearn.

- “Because we need to keep our culture alive and not make the White (English) take over.”
- “I think Diné language is valuable because the Native people are losing their language.”
- “I think it’s valuable because little kids can learn at a young age and not talk English too much.”
- “I think it is valuable to me by the way my grandma tells me stories and learning about what happened in the Long Walk and how they used to deal with things when there were problems.”
- “It is valuable because you learn all sorts of things. It is also time for you to learn your own language.
- “Yes, because I don’t want our language to die. I want it to go on for generations and generations to come.”
- “Yes it is. Most Navajo kids don’t even want to learn it.”
- “Why I think it is valuable is because it will carry my culture on.”
- “I think the Diné language is valuable because it was used in the war and the language was never broken by the enemy.”

Age Group: High School Ages 14-18

All of the high school students explained why they thought Navajo language was valuable. They expressed different reasons from self-identification, communication, the uniqueness of Diné, and how Navajo is sacred and a part of them. One student expressed how “privileged it is to be able to understand

Navajo.” This individual also mentioned young people are forgetting “the importance of Navajo.”

- “I think it’s valuable because a little bit of people get to learn it.”
- “It helps me know who I am.”
- “Yes, the Diné language program is valuable because we students learn things that almost none of the schools in Shiprock teach.”
- “I think Diné language is valuable because it teaches you how to speak right to others. The language is sacred. It identifies us as Navajos.”
- “Yes, it is valuable. Most other tribes don’t get the unique language we have and the teachings that come from our ancestors long time ago.”
- “Because Diné language got us through it all. It helped win the war. It’s one of the most difficult languages to speak and it is a part of us.”
- “Because I want to be part of a conversation between my mother and my aunt and to be able to understand what is being said.”
- “Young people are starting to forget the importance of Navajo and I feel privileged to be able to understand Navajo.”
- “It’s my culture.”

Comparisons

All the students from age 10 to 18 indicated Navajo language was valuable to them. All gave reasons why Diné was valuable. A couple of students expressed young people did not want to learn Navajo and had forgotten the importance of the language. All students gave clear and factual reasons why Navajo was special.

Research Question 3: Question 3b

Research Question 3b asked, *“Do you think learning Diné language is helping you get better grades in your regular (core) class or classes?”*

Age Group: Elementary Ages 10-12

Among the elementary students, six students expressed they do get better grades; whereas, three students indicated they do not think so. One student pointed out Navajo language class is vastly different than the students’ core classes. The rest of the students did not offer any explanation.

- “No, it does not, because it really is nothing like what I am doing in my classes.”

Age Group: Middle School Ages 12-14

The middle school students indicated needing Navajo language for the outside world. Other students responded, some teachers speak in Navajo, I hear the language, I can learn two languages, Navajo is different from other classes, and once you learn a language you will always understand it. One student who answered the question expressed that Navajo language is making a difference in the other classes. The student continued to say, “It makes things easier.”

- “I have to say a little bit, but I need it for the outside world.”
- “No, not really.”
- “Yes, because some of my teachers say something to me in Navajo, so I do it.”

- “Yes, in just Navajo, I am getting better at speaking and saying the word. Inside my other classes, I just hear Navajo here; and there, not much.”
- “Yes, it does help me.”
- “Yes, I could learn both languages in different classes.”
- “Not that much but I’m learning.”
- “Yes, I think it does. It makes things easier.”
- “No, because it’s a way lot different from other classes.”
- “Yes, because once you learn a new language you can know the language.”

Comparisons

Comparing the elementary and middle school students, two students replied, “Navajo class is much different from the classes taught in English.” Six elementary students agreed that the Navajo language class had made a difference in their English-speaking classes and three did not. Of the middle school students, again six indicated that Navajo language had made a difference, and three expressed that it did not actually make a whole lot of difference, maybe slightly. The answers from the elementary and middle school students are similar, in that 12 students in both groups agreed that the Navajo language had made a difference in their grades, and eight students from both groups did not think so, or it made a slight difference.

Age Group: High School Ages 14-18

The high school students varied on their opinions about whether participating in Navajo language classes did make a difference in their other core classes. Some students agreed that participation in the Navajo program did make a difference and they did get better grades. Others were not so sure if there was a difference. A couple responded there was no difference. In fact, one student pointed out that Diné language class “is the same as any other class.” As with the middle school students, the high school students were honest with their opinions and gave legitimate responses.

- “Yes, because I know about our Navajo History.”
- “Yes, it’s helping me.”
- “Yes, it’s helping me get better grades because it inspires me to do my work.”
- “I think learning Navajo does help me get better grades in my regular classes because it makes you think. It helps you to sound out letters in words you don’t know how to say.”
- “No because my other classes have nothing to do with Navajo or the culture.”
- “I would say somewhat, but I am also taking another language class. And most of my teachers are not Navajo.”
- “No, I think it is the same as any other class.”

- “Yes, because I feel that things I learn in Navajo are also applied to other classes.”
- “No.”
- “If teachers are Navajo and speak it sometimes.”

These students have been involved in the Navajo language program for more than one year; whereas, some had been in the program since they were in elementary school. Because these students had been in the program for more than one year and having to juggle other classes along with the Navajo language class, the researcher wanted to find out how they rated themselves as Navajo speakers. The intent was to find out if the students were actually learning how to speak the native language.

Research Question 3: Question 3c

Question 3c asked, “*Being in the Diné program for the length of time you have been, how do you rate yourself as a speaker of Diné language: novice, intermediate or advanced?*”

Age Group: Elementary Ages 10-12

The elementary boys and girls were divided equally in their answers on their ability as Navajo speakers. Five students indicated they were at the novice level in their speaking ability and five responded they were intermediate. Most of the elementary students responded with one-word answers, with the exception of two who responded with more than one word. A student responded, “If I could/would rate myself I’d rate me as a novice,” which indicated, that possibly

this student has not had enough experience to make choices and decisions since the student is still at the elementary level.

- “Novice.”
- “I am an intermediate.”
- “If I could/would rate myself I’d rate me as a novice.”
- “Intermediate.”

Age Group: Middle School Ages 12-14

The middle school students rated themselves at different speaking levels, but most of them believed they were intermediate when it came to speaking Navajo. One believed to be at the novice level; whereas, another said to be between a novice and intermediate, and only one indicated being an advanced Navajo speaker.

The comparison between elementary age and middle school age students demonstrated that the older students have a better grasp of Navajo language than the younger students. The older students also explained the reason for their answers and all were frank and open with their responses. The replies made by the students indicated that most of students had a positive attitude on learning Diné.

- “For my rate, I say I am an advanced student in Navajo class, because I took Navajo class ever since kindergarten.”
- “Novice.”
- “I am probably at intermediate because some words I can’t really pronounce them good.”

- “I would say intermediate because I don’t know most of the Navajo words, but I do know quite.”
- “Between 1 to 10, I’d have to go with 6.”
- “I rate myself at an intermediate.”
- “I think I’m intermediate because I’m still learning like everybody else.”
- “I would rate myself in between novice and intermediate. More of intermediate.”
- “How I rate myself is intermediate, because I speak a lot of Navajo at home.”
- “Intermediate, because I can speak it and understand it.”

Age Group: High School Ages 14-18

Most of the high school students believed they were intermediate level Navajo speakers. One high school student indicated between novice and intermediate level, just as one middle school had indicated. Two students responded they were at the novice level with speaking and understanding Navajo. None of the students indicated they were advanced speakers. Being in high school and having had more exposure to the native language than the younger students in elementary and middle school, most of the high school students were expected to rate themselves as advanced speakers. This was not the case. Most of the high school students did, however, sound quite positive and optimistic on learning their native language.

- “My rate on speaking Diné language is between novice and intermediate.”

- “Intermediate.”
- “I would grade myself at intermediate.”
- “I would rate myself intermediate because before I joined Navajo class; I could already speak or understand some Navajo.”
- “I rate myself at intermediate.”
- “Intermediate because I have really improved a lot. I learned more Navajo than before.”
- “I think I am novice, but we started off with a sub for about half the semester; but if we started with a real teacher, I might have been an intermediate.”
- “I would rate myself as intermediate.”
- “Intermediate.”
- “Still a novice, but I’ll get to advanced one way or another.”

The participating students in elementary, middle, and high school were asked how Diné language was going to help them in the future. Their answers suggested the depth of their concern on native language and culture that would transfer to concerns for their core subject classes.

Research Question 3: Question 3d

Question 3d asked, “*How is Diné language going to help you in the future?*”

Age Group: Elementary Ages 10-12

The younger students responded differently, but each, with the exception of one student, expressed the importance of their home language and culture. Most believed communication was important and indicated they would use their native language to communicate with others and abide by the cultural rules. One student did not know how Navajo language was going to be of help. Another student stated, “By teaching my kids in the future and telling them to speak Navajo and tell them it’s our language.” By stating this, the student already understood Navajo is important and cared enough to teach his or her children the heritage language in the future. Most of the students, although in elementary school, realized Navajo is important.

- “Because you need to know where you come from and your clans just so you don’t marry someone that’s your relation.”
- “If they only talk Navajo, I can understand them or I can use it as codes.”
- “It will help me by—when someone talks to me, I would know what they are going to be saying.”
- “So, if I talk to anyone in Navajo I can tell them to go that way or this way.”
- “By letting us being a good Navajo teacher to other people.”
- “It is going to help me because in the future we might speak Navajo.”
- “Helping me talking to my mom, my auntie, and cousin.”

- “By teaching my kids in the future and telling them to speak Navajo and tell them it’s our language.”
- “Don’t know.”

Age Group: Middle School Ages 12-14

The middle school aged students also indicated the importance of communication with family and community members. Some students expressed becoming role models and teaching younger children the importance of keeping the language and culture alive. As with one student in the elementary group, only one student from the middle school did not know how the Navajo language would be of help in the future. With the exception of one student, all the other students did care to keep their native language from dying. They expressed how Navajo was going to help them in the future.

- “To be a better person and help elders out.”
- “I don’t really know.”
- “It’s going to help me by knowing all the words so I can live around people who talk in Navajo.”
- “Speaking, and when people need help and who only speak Navajo, I can understand them and answer them back.”
- “It will help me speak to my elders or grandparents.”
- “It is going to help me in the future by knowing and telling kids about what I learned.”

- “I think it will help me by the language going on for generations and generations. I think I’ll teach it to my kids.”
- “It’s going to help me, in case I come across a problem where I have to help an elder with directions, I would speak to him in Diné. Also to feel proud of myself.”
- “How it is going to help me is talking Navajo to my family and carrying on.”
- “To let my kids know that their Diné language is very important to them because it is a part of their culture.”

Age Group: High School Ages 14-18

These students at the high school level expressed the importance of communication as did the elementary and middle school students. These students also wanted to learn Navajo well enough to communicate well with the elderly and be able to teach younger children the language so Diné language could continue to thrive. The students also felt the continuation of the language and culture is vital. They signified that they would do their part to help with Navajo language revitalization by encouraging others to learn and use the language.

- “Diné language is going to help me in the future by speaking and understanding Navajo.”
- “To speak it well and fluently.”

- “It’s going to help by when elders are talking to me. I will understand what they are saying and what to do if one of my family members gets really sick.”
- “It will help me in the future by reading and writing Navajo.”
- “It’s going to help me encourage other people to keep the Navajo language growing and not to regret it. Also, teach kids where their elders are from and more about our culture.”
- “By if someone asked for help and all they know is Navajo, I would be able to help them. And learning and knowing what people say to me. Also for my clans and knowing who is related to me.”
- “I can translate for people in the future.”
- “It is going to help me in the future because it will help me understand Navajo and it will also help me speak it fluently.”
- “To keep the culture.”
- “I just want to communicate with my grandparents in Navajo for the first time.”

All the students who participated in the study voiced their opinions and did so with sincerity and with pride. Even the students in elementary school answered questions to the best of their ability and did so with grace. It did not really make a big difference whether the students were elementary students or middle school or high school students; their responses were quite similar when it dealt with communication and the need for the language to be successful.

Overall, the students realized and understood the importance of the existence and continuation of their heritage language, the Diné language. They expressed through their voices, their feelings of the Navajo language and why it must continue to flourish.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a brief overview of the study. It summarizes the voices of students which was the bases for this study. It discusses the recommendations for further research for future researchers.

Summary of the Study

“We must bring our language back to our homes and to our communities. That’s giving life to language” (Honda & Linn, 2004a, p. 19). The purpose of this study was to bring to view students’ thoughts on Navajo language and learning. Students are who we depend on to carry our language forward. Just as the quote indicates, it is in their hands to reinvigorate our heritage language and in doing so we would give life back to our language.

The best way to hear students is to listen to them. Through student voices, they can best tell their audience how they can learn and what they want to learn about their heritage language. Student voices are of value and would assist school personnel in designing the Navajo language program which can be effective. Since the student participants were in the Navajo language classes, who better to ask than the students, themselves, on the type of methods they would prefer when learning their tribal language so improvements would be shaped?

The school district where the study was conducted has over 90% Navajo students. These schools did not meet the Adequate Yearly Progress and were designated either Restructuring 1 or 2. If students had a positive attitude towards

learning their native language, perhaps their attitudes towards their core classes in the English language would also display improvements as John Reyhner (2000) indicated.

Navajo language students from Central Consolidated School District in the elementary, middle, and high school participated in this study. Thirty students in all took part in this study. Student voices were pertinent in this investigation and structured interviews were used to collect data. The students were asked questions pertaining to their ancestral language. Three questions guided the study and comparisons were made among the students by gender, grade, and age.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The first question was to discover which preferred teaching methods aided students to learn their tribal language and was there continued improvements. Comparison was made by gender in the three schools to determine if there existed any variations in their replies. Secondly, the grade levels were compared to find out which grade level became more involved in cultural events since becoming exposed to the Navajo language class. The last question was to determine if the Navajo language classes made a difference in the students' core subject classes.

Review of the Methodology

Prior to collecting data, approval was received from the CCSD School Board (See Appendix G) and from four different Navajo Nation Chapters (see Appendices H, I, J, & K). The researcher agreed to maintain all information gathered from the research confidential (see Appendix L). Applications were

submitted and approvals were granted to begin the study from the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix M), Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board (see Appendix N), and the Navajo Nation Historical Preservation Department (see Appendix O). Parent and student permissions were also approved. As all approvals were granted, the next step taken was to visit each school and make arrangements with the Navajo language teacher for student interviews; student interviews took place in the school libraries.

Structured interview was the qualitative designed study used to collect data. The intention was to find ways to help students learn their ancestral language in an educational setting. The student selection process consisted of Navajo language students in the three schools of CCSD. The students were selected from those who received parent permission and those who were in the Diné language program for more than one year. The rationale was to select an even number of students and an equal amount of boys and girls to have a more accurate database.

The Navajo language teachers of student participants were communicated with through email, and were given detailed explanations on the research. The teachers were very cooperative with the researcher. The students were cooperative as well and answered most questions asked of them. Only a very few questions went unanswered. The students were reassured their names would not be used in the research. To ensure validity of the research, a criterion for interviews and questionnaires were applied. An even number of boys and girls were selected for

the interviews. Selection of participants was carefully made. A quiet place was selected for the interviews; the researcher was allowed use of the school library.

Summary of Major Findings

Most of the students indicated they learned from their Diné language teacher. Only a few believed they did not or were not sure if their Navajo language teachers taught them anything. The students remembered lessons from their early elementary classes and all remembered lessons from coloring to learning about kinship and the significance of the Sacred Mountains. The students made suggestions to teachers about what they wanted to learn and the methods the teachers should implement towards their instruction. The comparison between the boys and girls demonstrated that both genders had much to contribute. There were some variations where the girls' responses were about the importance of their success as an individual; whereas, the boys expressed the importance of lessons to remember throughout their lives.

The students were aware of the different types of cultural ceremonies and many indicated they did participate in the events. Most of the students felt positive about participating in cultural events. A few of the students indicated a less-than-positive feeling about their participation. From their responses, the middle school students appeared to have participated in more ceremonial events than the elementary and high school students.

Among the different age level of students, most of them expressed their Navajo language classes influenced them to do better in their core subject classes.

Students also continued to respond on the importance of Navajo language. Majority of the students believed they were intermediate Navajo speakers and stated their native language was valuable. The different grade levels indicated they wanted to learn to speak Navajo to communicate with their family members, elderly, or other community members. They felt understanding and speaking their tribal language would help them in the future.

The students do care about their language and culture and expressed the need to reinvigorate it to the point that they wanted to teach their children. They believed that learning to speak their native language and having knowledge of their culture does ensure self-identification. Majority of the students at the different schools did feel proud of their heritage and felt they were unique in that they were enrolled in the Navajo language and culture classes. They were yearning to learn more of their native language and advised the language and culture teachers the teaching methods they preferred. The students did have much to say on Navajo language and learning, and by hearing their voices they understood that their heritage language must continue for generations and generations.

Findings Related to the Literature

Native languages in the Americas have gone from once flourishing languages to diminishing and in some cases to danger of extinction. The Navajo language is facing a similar crisis, although there are still fluent speakers. Many of the students in this study expressed they did not speak their ancestral language

fluently, although they were learning Navajo from their language classes. If Navajo language is not relearned in the next generation or two, Navajo language and culture will cease to exist and conversation in Navajo will be a thing of the past.

The results of the Oral Diné Language Assessment from 2010-11 SY has shown that out of 1,891 CCSD students, 1,543 students were non-proficient in Navajo, 332 students were limited Navajo speakers, and only 16 students were fluent in the Navajo language. Although Redish (2001) indicated that Navajo language is still in good health, the DLQA results from SY 2010-11 and this study has indicated that if students do not relearn their tribal language, it will be on the brink of extinction in the next generation.

Students in this study have indicated they want to learn to speak, read, and write their Native language and learn stories about their culture. Students want to practice more of their culture through games, songs, and practice more speaking of the language. From the interviews, these students expressed they were interested in learning their heritage language for communication. Most of them indicated the need to communicate with the elders in their communities, such as their grandparents. They wanted to learn it enough to be able to teach their own children.

CCSD has a majority Native American student population where students are more exposed to their heritage language. In the 2009 National Indian Education Study (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009), the results

indicated that the schools that had more Native American students enrolled, whether it would be a public or a BIE school, there would be more Native students exposed to their Native languages. If the number of students is less, then students would never or hardly ever be exposed to their heritage languages.

The students in CCSD are more exposed to Diné language and language and culture classes, which are offered to students who want to enroll in those classes. The exposure is more evident where the majority of the students have indicated to be intermediate Navajo speakers. They have stated their Native language was valuable. The students felt understanding and speaking their tribal language would help them in the future. They felt that knowing their heritage language ensured self-identification. Most of the CCSD participants declared they were proud to Native American, proud to be Navajo. The Needs Assessment Focus Group students from 2010 and 2011 have also expressed their pride of being Navajo.

In this study, the majority of the students were aware of the different cultural ceremonies practiced by the Navajo people. When students were asked if they participated in cultural ceremonies or events, most of the students expressed they participated in cultural events of some sort. A few did not, and others indicated they used to or they only participated sometimes. The elementary and middle school students participated in cultural events or ceremonies more than the high school students. The high school students may not have participated as much due to possibly extra-curricular involvement or whether they had a choice to

attend the ceremonies or not. The students in this study were aware of the different cultural events and ceremonies, more so than the students surveyed in the National Indian Education Study.

The NIES conducted a study in 2009 where students responded to the amount of exposure they had to cultural events outside of school. The results from the NIES study indicated if more Native students were enrolled in a particular school, then more students would be exposed to Native cultural activities, such as ceremonies or other cultural events. If there are less Native students in a particular school, then fewer students would have been exposed to cultural events or none at all. The NIES study indicated the BIE schools have more Native student enrollment; therefore, more BIE students were exposed to cultural events outside of school. More of CCSD students were aware of the different types of cultural ceremonies in their area, because these students live in the Navajo reserved land, and the schools have more than 90% Native American student population.

The students who participated in the Needs Assessment Focus Groups have made sound recommendations on the type of Native educational support they wanted their community to receive. The students in this study have also made sound recommendations for their teachers' teaching methods. Their voices also indicated they are yearning to become fluent speakers of their heritage language and want their language to be revitalized. They want to feel in their hearts they belong to a unique group of Indigenous people, and speaking the language would ensure that.

Surprises

Students who participated in this study have mostly expressed their feelings about their Native language. All the students in this study were Diné language students. Students in the three different schools have indicated how proud they were of their language and culture. Most had the desire to hear more of their heritage language. They wanted to learn more of the stories about oral history, more Navajo winter games, more singing, and more recitation when learning the language. The elementary students wanted to hear more Navajo, be spoken more to in Diné, and more explanation about the lessons delivered to them.

Most of the students expressed that teachers be more active in their teaching. They want the teachers to use various types of teaching methods to deliver their lessons. Students want their teachers to use technology when delivering some of their lessons. The students want more encouragements, praises, and they want their teachers to pay more attention to them. They have also expressed they should receive incentives and be encouraged to do their best. Some students suggested that immersion programs be implemented to teach the language. All the CCSD students have good suggestions for teachers when instructing students in their Native language classes.

Conclusions

It is understandable that these CCSD student participants of this study do want to become Navajo speakers and would like the Diné language and culture to

continue with their generation. If they really want their tribal language continue to be spoken, then they would have take it wholeheartedly and begin to do everything in their power to learn or relearn their heritage language. Diné language classes in the elementary, middle, and high school is not enough for an individual to relearn the language to the extent of fluent Navajo speakers. It is also understandable that these students feel left out when Navajo speakers are conversing in Navajo or joking with one another. How they must wish to understand what their family members are laughing about. Sometimes it must seem as though the fluent speakers are laughing about them. That is usually the mistake a non-Native speaker assumes when in a room of Navajo speakers and laughing takes place.

The school districts are at a tug of war between the national and state guidelines and the Navajo Nation— the tug of war between the No Child Left Behind Act and Language Revitalization. Students are the ones who are being tugged in both directions. This study of student voices has indicated that students do want to learn their heritage language. Surely, there must be room somewhere in the school system, home and community, for these students to learn their tribal language. The home and community should become more involved in assisting the schools in teaching their students, their children, more Navajo. More time is spent at home than at school where students can practice the language they learned in school.

More time need not be wasted in revitalizing the Diné or Navajo language. The response in 2010 ODLA has shown that immediate action need to take place to revitalize the Diné language or else, as Walters (2004) has indicated, in a generation or two the Navajo language will become extinct. It may that as Redish (2001) indicated, the Navajo language is still in good health and continues to flourish, but the baby boomers are the last of the fluent Navajo speakers, and they are now in their 60s. After the baby boomers are gone, most of the language will die along with them.

Implications for Action

This study was conducted also to determine if students were aware of the loss of the Diné language and whether they valued the language, if CCSD students want to learn the Navajo language, and what suggestions they had that might assist teachers to adjust their teaching methods. The intention was to discover, through student voices, the type of teaching method that best suited them. It was also to find out if students who take Diné language are motivated and do better in their core language classes. It was to attain information from students whether they participated more in cultural events since being enrolled in the language and culture classes.

Student responses in this study would assist school personnel, such as those who are involved with the Navajo language and culture department, gain more insight as to student needs in their language and culture classes. The information gained would be voiced to the Heritage Education Center on what

students want to learn and the methods they have indicated that help them learn the Diné language better.

The school administration and community members would also be made aware of the student response in this study. Student suggestions on teaching methods would be voiced to teachers and be encouraged to change their methods of teaching in order to accommodate the students. The students who voiced their opinions and suggestions would be recommended to the teachers and administrators.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research on student voices was posed to students who were in the Diné language and culture program. All the students had much to offer in their responses. All were interested in learning their native language and indicated the method of teaching they learn better from. The recommendation for further research in this area would be to interview students who are not in the language and culture classes, to discover if those student responses would be similar as the responses in this research.

The questions used in this research can be revised and edited to explore more on immersion programs. What would students respond to questions about an immersion program in each of these schools? The questions on an immersion program would be suitable to ask since CCSD has already begun an immersion program. The immersion program has not reached the grade level of students interviewed. It would be appropriate and necessary to ask what students think

about an immersion program or even if they understand how an immersion class works.

Native language revitalization is a necessary and important topic to research. There are many different ways one could research about language revitalization. This study was only one way in which the researcher thought necessary to discover what students thought about their heritage language. Through student voices, the researcher was able to collect data and put together what students wanted to learn, how to learn, and if studying their heritage language made a difference in their core classes.

Concluding Remarks

Navajo language is one of the many Native languages in the Americas, which is diminishing as the rest of the other Native languages. This research is only one of the many studies conducted, which may have shed some light as why Navajo language reinvigoration is important. Students have indicated they value the language and it is a part of them. They believe that speaking the language and understanding the culture will ensure self-identification. The students understand they are part of a unique culture with a language that is complex and has been used in the Second World War, in which the code was never broken by the enemy. The students understand that speaking their tribal language and understanding their culture will make them more unique and whole. With that, it is very vital that the Navajo language remain a language spoken by many or all members of the Navajo Tribe, the Diné, The People of Chief Manuelito.

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APPENDIX A
PRE-SELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

PRE-SELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a graduate student in the Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research for my dissertation. The title of my research is "Students' Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of the Students." I will be conducting interviews with thirty students in all, from the elementary, middle and high school level. I will be selecting five boys and five girls from each school. I will select students who have been in the Diné language class for more than one year.

The questions below will be the pre-interview questions which will assist me in determining my selection of students. Although I will not be using your names in the actual research, I would like to use your names only for my records and for school use. Once the interviews are completed, I will shred all records of your names. All documents will be kept confidential.

Name _____ (For my records and school use only)

Grade level: Circle one 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

Gender: M F

How many years have you taken Diné (Navajo) language classes? _____

Are you willing to participate in a study? Circle one Yes No

Will you be available for an interview after school, if necessary? Circle one
Yes No

Will you bring back the parent permission document? Circle one Yes No

Thank you very much for your time. Please return the pre-interview questionnaire form to your teacher.

Ms. Shepard
Graduate Students
Arizona State University

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. Do you like learning Navajo?
2. What motivated you to learn Navajo?
3. What is special about the Diné language program?
4. Is the Diné language program valuable to you?
5. Why do you think Diné language is valuable?
6. How much Diné language is spoken in your language class?
7. Do you think you learn from your Diné language teacher?
8. Do you practice speaking Diné outside the classroom?
9. What was your grade point average during the last quarter?
10. Do you think learning Diné language is helping you get better grades in your regular class or classes?
11. Being in the Diné program for the length of time you have been, how do you rate yourself as a speaker of Diné language: novice, intermediate or advanced?
12. Is Diné language spoken at home? If so, how much?
13. Who talks to you in Diné at home?
14. To what extent is Diné language encouraged or discouraged?
15. What lessons taught in Diné do you remember the most?
16. Do you participate in cultural events or ceremonies outside the school?
17. If so, what events or ceremonies do you participate in?
18. How do you feel when you participate in the cultural events?
19. What other cultural event or activity do you participate in outside the school?
20. In your opinion, how do you think teachers can teach you better so you could learn more?
21. What are the recommended ways of teaching you would suggest that would help you learn in the Diné program?
22. Why are you studying the Diné language and culture?
23. How is Diné language going to help you in the future?

APPENDIX C
PARENT PERMISSION LETTER

**STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON NAVAJO LANGUAGE AND LEARNING:
VOICES OF THE STUDENTS**

PARENTAL LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear Parent:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Dee A. Spencer in the Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to obtain student voices on Navajo language learning and to determine the preferred teaching methods used by current and former teachers in the Navajo language classes.

I am inviting your child's participation, which will involve a portion of your child's time away from his/her regular classes when being interviewed. The interview will take between one hour to one hour and half. The interview will be a one (1) session interview. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to have your child participate or to withdraw your child from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and will not affect your child's grade in any way. Likewise, if your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of the research study may be published, but your child's name will not be used.

Although there may be no direct benefit to your child, the possible benefit of your child's participation will help to determine if changes need to be made concerning teaching methods when teaching students in the language and culture programs. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your child's participation.

Confidentiality will be maintained to protect your child during the study. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your child's name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your child's participation in this study, please call Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board Office, Navajo Division of Health, P.O. Box 1390, Window Rock, AZ 86515, Telephone # 928-871-6650, Fax # 928-871-6259.

Sincerely,
Marlena K. Shepard

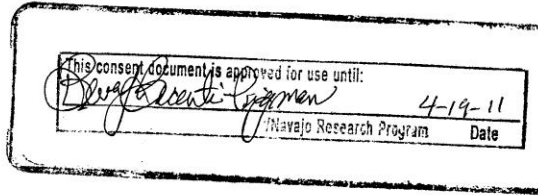
By signing below, you are giving consent for your child _____ to participate in the above study. Please be advised that the researcher will use audio taping to record the interview with your child. The audio tape and all other data collected will be released to the Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board which will then be destroyed in due time at the end of the research.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

If you have any questions about you or your child's rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you or your child have been placed at risk, you can contact the Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board Office, Navajo Division of Health, P.O. Box 1390, Window Rock, AZ 86515, Telephone # 928-871-6650, Fax # 928-871-6259.



APPENDIX D
CHILD ASSENT FORM

WRITTEN CHILD ASSENT FORM

For students 10-17 years old

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON NAVAJO LANGUAGE AND LEARNING: VOICES OF THE STUDENTS

I have been told that my parents (mom or dad) have given permission (said it's okay) for me to take part in a project about a research study to get student opinion on Navajo language learning and to find out what teaching methods work for students.

I will be asked to answer questions about Navajo language learning. The interview will take between one hour to one hour and half. The interview will be a one (1) session interview.

I am taking part because I want to. I know that I can stop at any time if I want to and it will be okay if I want to stop.

Sign Your Name Here

Print Your Name Here

Signature of witness, Title of witness

Printed Name of Witness Date

This consent document is approved for use until:
Michaela L. Lujan 4-19-11
Navajo Research Program Date

APPENDIX E

INFORMATION LETTER FOR STUDENTS 18 AND OLDER

INFORMATION LETTER-INTERVIEWS

For students 18 and older

Students' Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of Students

December 29, 2010

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Dee A. Spencer in the Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to compare thirty (30) students from three different schools in Shiprock, all within Central Consolidated School district. The goal is to discover insights, from student perspectives, regarding what has worked for them in their educational experiences in the Navajo language program. The students' responses will assist in finding successful teaching models, also if participating in the Navajo language program helped students be more culturally involved and if students have had more of a positive impact on their western education.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve a portion of your time away from your regular classes when being interviewed. The interview will take between one hour to one hour and half. This will be a one (1) session interview. The interview setting will be in a safe and quiet room in the library at each school. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your grade in any way.

Any benefits from this study will help to determine if changes need to be made concerning teaching methods when teaching students in the language and culture programs.

Confidentiality will be maintained to protect the participant during the study. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will not be used.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

Data will be stored in audiotapes and transcribed on hard copies. All data will be kept on the investigator's laptop and the audiotapes and hard copies will be kept in a safe. These will be released to the Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board and will be destroyed in due time after the research is completed.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Navajo Nation IRB Office, Navajo

Division of Health, P.O. Box 1390, Window Rock, AZ 86515. Telephone # 928-871-6650, Fax # 928-871-6259 Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study. Please be advised that the researcher will use audio taping to record the interview with you. The audio tape and all other data collected will be released to the Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board which will then be destroyed in due time at the end of the research.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

This consent document is approved for use until:	
<i>Gregory Serenti-Jerman</i>	4-19-11
Navajo Research Program	Date

APPENDIX F
CERTIFICATE OF DESTRUCTION

CERTIFICATE OF DESTRUCTION

Submit to: Navajo Nation Health Research Review Board, Drawer Box 1390, Administration Building #2, Window Rock, Arizona 86515

ID# NNR-11.297

Name of Study: Students' Perspective on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of the Students

Principal Investigator: Marlena Shepard

Organization: Arizona State University, Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation

Address: PO Box 2819, Shiprock, New Mexico, 87420

Telephone: 505-320-8204

E-mail: shepardm96@yahoo.com

Type of Documents: Delete Microsoft word documents on Principal Investigator's laptop, erase recordings from voice recorders, and shred hard copies (paper).

Date, Time and Method of Destruction: Delete and permanently trash documents in Principal Investigator's laptop, erase interviews from voice recorders, and paper copies will be shredded at the end of study.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX G
CCSD APPROVAL LETTER



Business Office • 583 CR 6100 • Kirtland, NM 87417 • 505-598-5834/368-4963, Fax 598-6626
Personnel • 583 CR 6100 • Kirtland, NM 87417 • 505-598-1018/368-4963, Fax 598-1019
Shiprock Administration • P.O. Box 1199 • Shiprock, NM 87420 • 505-368-4984/598-9684, Fax 368-5232

December 17, 2010

Dear Ms. Shepard,

This letter is to confirm the CCSD School Board's action on 12/16/2010 approving support to your proposed research and dissertation on Students' Perspectives on Diné Language and Learning as part of your Doctoral Program with ASU.

We wish you the best of luck in this endeavor and will look forward to hearing your findings when they are completed.

Sincerely,

Gregg Epperson
Superintendent of Schools
Central Consolidated School District 22
PO Box 1199
Shiprock, NM 87420

Gregg Epperson, Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX H

SHIPROCK CHAPTER RESOLUTION APPROVAL



Resolution of the Shiprock Chapter

SHIPROCK, ARIZONA

SUPPORTING MARLENA KELLYWOOD SHEPPARD IN THE ATTAINMENT OF HER DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION AND COMPLETION OF HER DISSERTATION WORK IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY ON STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVES ON DINE' LANGUAGE AND LEARNING.

WHEREAS:

1. The Shiprock Chapter of the Navajo Nation acts on this resolution pursuant to the authority conferred on the Chapter through Navajo Nation Code Title 26, Chapter 1, Section 1, B. Purpose which states: "Through adoption of this Act the Navajo nation Council delegates to Chapter governmental authority with respect to local matters consistent with Navajo Law, including custom and tradition"; and
2. The Shiprock Chapter membership hereby supports research projects intended to raise the educational level of the children of the Chapter residents and surrounding Communities; and
3. That Shiprock Chapter supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard, a Navajo (Dine') Student working towards attaining her doctoral degree from Arizona State University in Educational Administration and Supervision proposes in her dissertation to establish the preferred style of learning from students' perspective on Navajo language and learning and compare them by gender, age and grade level; and
4. That Shiprock Chapter supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard to conduct interviews from Navajo students who are enrolled in the central Consolidated School District # 22, to obtain student voices on Navajo Language and learning and determine the preferred teaching models used by current and former teachers in the Navajo language classes.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Shiprock Chapter membership support Marlena Kellywood Shepard , member of the Navajo Nation and student from Arizona State University working toward attaining her doctoral degree in Educational Administration and Supervision wherein she proposes in her dissertation to determine the preferred learning styles of the students in their Navajo language and Culture classes.


Resolution of Navajo Nation Shiprock Chapter
Resolution No: 11-21-10-015-SHIP

Motion by: Eva Stokely


Seconded by: Beverly Maxwell

CERTIFICATION


We, the undersigned hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly presented and considered at a duly called Chapter Meeting, at which a quorum was present and that the same was approved by a vote of 15 in favor, 00 oppose, and 00 abstentions on the **21st** date of **November, 2010**.



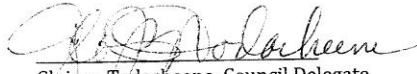
William Lee, President



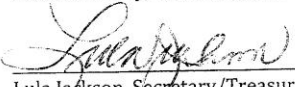
Pete Ken Atcitty, Council Delegate



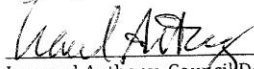
Donald Benally, Vice President



Glojean Todacheene, Council Delegate



Lula Jackson, Secretary/Treasurer



Leonard Anthony, Council Delegate

APPENDIX I

GADII'ÁHÍ CHAPTER RESOLUTION APPROVAL



**THE
NAVAJO NATION GADII'AHÍ CHAPTER**

P.O BOX 1318

SHIPROCK, NM 87420

PHONE: (505) 368-1070 / 1071

FAX: (505) 368-1072

COUNCIL DELEGATE
Mr. David L. Tom

PRESIDENT
Mrs. Elizabeth Harrison

VICE-PRESIDENT
Mr. Harry Descheenie

SECRETARY / TREASURER
Miss Adale Lee

COMM. SERVICE COORD.
Mr. Gilbert Badoni

Resolution of Gadiiahi and Tokoi Chapter
Resolution number# GAD/TOK-FY-2011-011

Supporting Marlena Kellywood Shepard in the attainment of her doctorate in education administration and supervision and completion of her dissertation work in a qualitative research study on students perspective on Navajo Language and Learning

WHEREAS:

1. The Gadiiahi community of the Navajo Nation acts on this resolution pursuant to the authority conferred on the Chapter through Navajo Nation Code title 26, Chapter 1, Section 1, B. Purpose which states: "Through adoption of this Act the Navajo Nation Council delegates to chapter governmental authority with respect to local matters consistent with Navajo law, including custom and tradition;" and
2. The Gadiiahi community membership hereby supports research projects intended to raise the educational level of the children of the chapter residents and surrounding communities including Tokoi community; and
3. The Gadiiahi community supports Marlena Sheppard with a resolution for research through Arizona State University Doctorial degree program, and submits her requests conduct research on the preferred style of learning from students' perspective on Navajo language and school learning and compare them by gender, age, and grade level; and
4. The Gadiiahi community supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard to conduct interviews with selected Navajo students who are enrolled within Central Consolidated School District #22, to obtain voices on Navajo language and learning and determine the preferred teaching models and methods used by former and current teachers in the Navajo language classes.

GRAZING OFFICIAL
Mr. Harry Lee

LAND BOARD
Ms. Carletta D. Lee

COMMUNITY HEALTH REP.
Mr. Kimbro Talk

OFFICE SPECIALIST
Mrs. Michelle Collins

COUNCIL DELEGATE
Mr. David L. Tom

PRESIDENT
Mrs. Elizabeth Harrison

VICE-PRESIDENT
Mr. Harry Descheene

SECRETARY / TREASURER
Miss Adale Lee

COMM. SERVICE COORD.
Mr. Gilbert Badoni

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT;


The Gadiiahi and Tokoi communities approve and agree and support Marlena Kellywood Shepard in the attainment of her doctorate in education administration and supervision and completion of her dissertation work in a qualitative research study on students' perspective on Navajo Language and Learning

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned agree and certify that this matter is adopted by the community membership in a duly called regular chapter meeting with main motion made by Rosie Frank and seconded by Nellie Silversmith, with 22 votes in favor, and 00 were opposed, and 02 remain abstained on this 20th day of February in the year of our Lord 2011.



President, Elizabeth Harrison



Vice President, Harry Descheene



Secretary & Treasurer, Adale Lee

GRAZING OFFICIAL
Mr. Harry Lee

LAND BOARD
Ms. Carletta D. Lee

COMMUNITY HEALTH REP.
Mr. Kimbro Talk

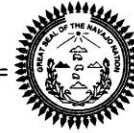
OFFICE SPECIALIST
Mrs. Michelle Collins

APPENDIX J

TSÉ DAAK'ÁÁN CHAPTER RESOLUTION APPROVAL



Resolution of the Tse Daa K'aa'n Community Chapter



TDK 1102-07

SUPPORTING MARLENA KELLYWOOD SHEPARD IN THE ATTAINMENT OF HER DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION AND COMPLETION OF HER DISSERTATION WORK IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY ON STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON DINE' LANGUAGE AND LEARNING.

WHEREAS:

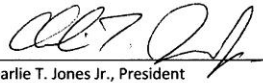
1. The Tse Daa K'aa'n Chapter of the Navajo Nation acts on this resolution pursuant to the authority conferred on the Chapter through Navajo Nation Code Title 26, Chapter 1, Section 1, B. Purpose which states: "Through adoption of this act the Navajo Nation Council delegates to Chapter governmental authority with respect to the local matters consistent with Navajo law, including custom and tradition." AND
2. The Tse Daa K'aa'n Chapter membership hereby supports research projects intended to raise the education level of the children of the Chapter residents and surrounding Communities; AND
3. The Tse Daa K'aa'n Chapter supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard, a Navajo (Dine') student working towards attaining her doctoral degree from Arizona State University in Educational Administration and Supervision proposes in her dissertation to establish the preferred style of learning from students' perspective on Navajo language and learning and compare them by gender, age, and grade level; AND
4. That Tse Daa K'aa'n Chapter supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard to conduct interviews from Navajo students who are enrolled in the Central Consolidated School District #22, to obtain student voices on Navajo language and learning and determine the preferred teaching models and methods used by current and former teachers in the Navajo language classes.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

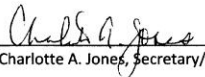
The Tse Daa K'aa'n Chapter membership supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard, member of the Navajo Nation and students from Arizona State University working toward attaining her doctoral degree in Education Administration and Supervision wherein she proposes in her dissertation to determine the preferred learning styles of the students in their Navajo language and Culture classes.

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

We, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was considered at duly called meeting held at the Tse Daa K'aa'n Community Chapter, where a quorum was present and a motion for approval was made by Paul Begay and seconded by Peter John and that the same was passed by a vote of 37 in favor 00 opposed and 00 abstained on this 28th day February 2011.


Charlie T. Jones Jr., President


Frankie Funston, Vice President


Charlotte A. Jones, Secretary/Treasurer

P.O. BOX 1288 • SHIPROCK, NM 87420 • PHONE (505) 368-1599 • FAX (505) 368-1598
Email: tseadaakaan@navajochapters.org

APPENDIX K

BECLABITO CHAPTER RESOLUTION APPROVAL



BECLABITO CHAPTER

Beclabito Express Store
Shiprock, New Mexico 87420
Telephone: (928) 656-3265 Fax: (928) 656-3813

BECL-11-03-10

RESOLUTION OF BECLABITO CHAPTER

SUPPORTING MARLENA KELLYWOOD SHEPARD IN THE ATTAINMENT OF HER DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION AND COMPLETION OF HER DISSERTATION IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY ON STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVES AND DINE' LANGUAGE AND LEARNING.

WHEREAS:

1. Pursuant to Resolution CAP-34-98, the Navajo Nation Council adopted the Local Governance Act and by this act delegated Navajo Nation Chapters the governmental authority to review all matters affecting the community and make sound decisions consistent with Navajo law, custom, and tradition; and
2. The Beclabito Chapter membership hereby supports research projects intended to raise the educational level of the children of the Chapter residents and surrounding communities; and
3. The Beclabito Chapter supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard, a Navajo (Dine') student working towards attaining her doctoral degree from Arizona State University in Educational Administration and Supervision proposes in her dissertation to establish the preferred style of learning from students' perspective on Navajo language and learning and compare them by gender, age and grade level; and
4. That Beclabito Chapter supports Marlena Kellywood Shepard to conduct interviews from Navajo students who are enrolled in the Central Consolidated School District # 22, to obtain student voices on Navajo language and learning and determine the preferred teaching models and methods used by current and former teachers in the Navajo language classes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Beclabito Chapter membership support Marlena Kellywood Shepard, member of the Navajo Nation and student from Arizona State University working toward attaining her doctoral degree in Educational Administration and Supervision wherein she proposes in her dissertation to determine the preferred learning styles of the students in their Navajo language and culture classes.

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Beclabito Chapter at a duly called meeting at Beclabito, New Mexico, San Juan County, Navajo Nation, at which a quorum was present and that same was passed by a vote of 22 in favor, 00 opposed, and 06 abstained, this 21st day of February, 2011.

George Kelly Jr, Chapter President

Frank John Sr., Vice President

Jerry Benally, Secretary/Treasurer

David L. Tom, Council Delegate

Vincent Bekis, Grazing Official

Motion by: Tom Bekis
Second by: Albert Paul

President - George Kelly Jr. Vice President - Frank John Sr. Secretary/Treasurer - Jerry Benally
Council Delegate - David L. Tom Grazing Official - Vincent Bekis

APPENDIX L
CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Students' Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of the Students

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

As a researcher working on the above research study at Arizona State University, I understand that I must maintain the confidentiality of all information concerning research participants. This information includes, but is not limited to, all identifying information and research data of participants and all information accruing from any direct or indirect contact I may have with said participants. In order to maintain confidentiality, I hereby agree to refrain from discussing or disclosing any information regarding research participants, including information described without identifying information, to any individual who is not part of the above research study or in need of the information for the expressed purposes on the research program.

M. Shepard
Signature of Researcher

Marlena Shepard
Printed Name

12/16/10
Date

Sharon Jensen
Signature of Witness

SHARON JENSEN
Printed Name

12/16/10
Date

APPENDIX M
ASU IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Dee Spencer
Marlena Shepard

From: Mark Roosa, Chair, Soc Beh IRB

Date: 01/04/2011

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 01/04/2011

IRB Protocol #: 1012005806

Study Title: Student's Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of the Students

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(1).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX N

NAVAJO NATION IRB APPROVAL



**THE
NAVAJO
NATION**

P.O. BOX 9000 – WINDOW ROCK, ARIZONA 86515

BEN SHELLY
PRESIDENT

REX LEE JIM
VICE PRESIDENT

March 10, 2011

Ms. Marlena Shepard
Arizona State University
PO Box 2819
Shiprock, NM 87420

Dear Ms. Shepard:

This is to advise you that **Study #NNR-11.297 "Students' Perspectives on Navajo Language and Learning: Voices of the Students"** was presented to Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board on February 15, 2011 and considered your initial research proposal. The Board made the following actions:

- The Principal Investigator should be changed to your name on all documents
- Need other Chapter resolutions of support and approval is required before research project is initiated.
- Page 21 – Letter needs to list Navajo Nation Human Research Review Committee (NNHRRB) on the document and you are to submit a Certificate of Destruction on any information gathered to be destroyed;
- Page 14 – Need Consent for participants over 18 years old and to submit Consent Form to NNHRRB and to list NNHRRB as the first contact. The Consent Form needs to be stamped and signed by the Board Chairperson;
- Obtain Historic Preservation Permit prior to beginning research; and
- We have assigned a permanent ID# **NNR-11.297** to use as a reference on all documents pertinent to the study; and
- The Board approved the research study effective from **February 15, 2011 to February 15, 2012** with all standard conditions.

Additional contingencies are:

The Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board has added a very important additional contingency regarding failure to comply with NNHRRB rules, regulations, and submittal of reports which could result in sanctions being placed against your project. This could also affect your funding source and the principal investigator. **Under Part Five: Certification**, please note paragraph five wherein it states: *"I agree not to proceed in the research until the problems have been resolved or the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board has reviewed and approved the changes."* Therefore, it is very important to submit quarterly and annual reports on time and if continuation is warranted submit a letter of request sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date.

The following are requirements that apply to all research studies:

1. The Navajo Nation retains ownership of all data obtained within its territorial boundaries. The Principal Investigator shall submit to the NNHRRB a plan and timeline on how and when the data/statistics will be turned over to the Navajo Nation;
2. Only the approved informed consent document(s) will be used in the study;

• Navajo Division of Health – Research Program • Post Office Box 1390 • Window Rock, Arizona 86515 • 928/ 871 – 6650 •
NAVAJO DIVISION OF HEALTH – P.O. Box 1390 – Window Rock, Arizona – 86515 – Telephone (928) 871-6350 Fax (928) 871-6255

3. Any proposed future changes to the protocol or the consent form(s) must again be submitted to the Board for review and approval prior to implementation of the proposed change;
4. If the results of the study will be published or used for oral presentations at professional conferences, the proposed publication, abstract and/or presentation materials must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program for Board review and prior approval;
5. Upon Board approval, three (3) copies of the final publication must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program;
6. All manuscripts must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program for Board Review and prior approval;
7. The Principal Investigator must submit a dissemination plan on how the results of the study and how these results will be reported back to the Navajo Nation. The Principal Investigator must share specifically how these results will generally benefit or improve the health of the Navajo people. This can be completed by:
 - a. Conducting an educational in-service for the community people and health care providers on the Navajo Nation and present the findings. Provide documentation of these in-services presented.
 - b. Developing educational materials for use by the health care providers and the community people and providing the training on how to use the materials; and
 - c. Presenting and sharing the results of the study at a research conference sponsored by the Navajo Nation for its health care providers and the Navajo people.
8. The Principal Investigator is expected to submit documentation on 7a, b, & c.
9. The Principal Investigator must submit quarterly and annual reports as scheduled.

This approval will automatically expire on **February 15, 2012** unless sooner suspended, revoked or terminated by action of the Board. A continuation of the research project may be requested by submitting a written request at least sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date to the:

Navajo Division of Health – Research Program
 Post Office Box 1390
 Window Rock, Arizona 86515

If you have any questions, please call the Navajo Research Program at (928) 871– 6650 or 6929.

Respectfully yours,



Beverly Becenti-Pigman, Chairperson
 Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board

Cc: Beverly Becenti-Pigman
 NNR-11.297
 Chrono

APPENDIX O

NAVAJO NATION HISTORICAL PRESERVATION PERMIT



**THE
NAVAJO
NATION**

**BEN SHELLY
PRESIDENT**

**REX LEE JIM
VICE-PRESIDENT**

NAVAJO NATION
CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATION PERMIT

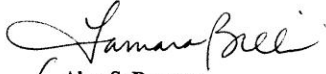
PERMIT NUMBER C1103-E

Pursuant to the authority of Section 302 of the Navajo Nation Cultural Resources Protection Act (CMY-19-88), permission is hereby granted to MARLENA SHEPARD, ASU/DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP & POLICY STUDIES, P.O. BOX 872411, TEMPE, ARIZONA 85287-2411 to conduct INTERVIEWS WITH 30 STUDENTS IN CENTRAL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT #22, STUDENTS AGE RANGE ARE 10-18 YEAR OLD FROM 3 DIFFERENT SHOOOLS WITHIN CCS D SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHPROCK, SAN JUAN COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

1. Name and Title of Person in:
 - A. General Charge: MARLENA SHEPARD, DR. DEE ANN SPENCER
 - B. Direct Charge: MARLENA SHEPARD, DR. DEE ANN SPENCER
 - C. Project Members: AS ABOVE
2. On Lands Described as Follows: SHIPROCK CHAPTERS, SHIPROCK AGENCY, NEW MEXICO
3. Permission is Granted for a Period of: ELEVEN MONTHS BEGINNING FEBRUARY 15, 2011 AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011
4. Standard Stipulations: This permit is granted subject to the Permittee adhering to the following stipulations. Failure to conform strictly to these conditions may result in suspension or revocation of this Permit and may affect the Permittee's ability to obtain similar Permits from the Navajo Nation in the future.
 - A. The Permittee will provide five days advance written notice to the Historic Preservation Officer prior to initiation of any of the activities authorized under this Permit. The Permitted will also provide written notice to the Historic Preservation Officer upon the completion of field work authorized under this permit. **THIS IS NECESSARY ONLY FOR NON-SECTION 106 CLASS C ETHNOGRAPHIC PERMITS**

- B. A copy of this Permit must be in the possession of field workers at all times when they are conducting field work under the authority of this Permit.
- C. The Permittee will exclusively employ Navajos for all positions to the extent that qualified Navajos are available.
- D. This Permit is not a grant of authority.
 - 1. Prior to initiating field work, the permittee must notify Chapter Officials (President, Vice President, Secretary, or Manger) to familiarize them with the proposed field work and the provisions of the Permit.
 - 2. The Permittee must inform any potential interviewee that he/she is not required to consent to interviews or to cooperate otherwise with the Permittee.
 - (a) If the interviewee does consent to be interviewed, the researcher must get the signed consent of the interviewee for publication and other use of the information, use of their name, and how they are to be given credit for providing information. **THIS IS NECESSARY ONLY FOR NON-SECTION 106 CLASS C ETHNOGRAPHIC PERMITS**
 - (b) Reports and publications will follow conditions set by the interviewees on publication of information, use of their names, and how they are to be credited. **THIS IS NECESSARY ONLY FOR NON-SECTION 106 CLASS C ETHNOGRAPHIC PERMITS**

PERMIT GRANTED,


Alan S. Downer
Historic Preservation Officer

APPENDIX P

SHIZAAD SHÍI' NILÍ: I HONOR MY LANGUAGE



I Honor my Language

My language is sacred, my language is faith

My language is sacred, my language is faith

Because of that

I respect my language

Fore,

I speak my language with my tongue, I see with my language

I hear with my language, I am disciplined through my language

My language is my heart

And...

My language is the framework of my life

My language is my thought

My language is my planning

My language is my life

My language is my hope

My language is my prayer

My language is my compassion

My language is my food

My language is my faith, I pray in my language

Also;

My language is my strength

My language is my well being

My language is my material belonging

I am adorned in my language

I greet relatives in my language

I am protected by my language

So;

I am protective of my language

I treasure my language

I care for my language

Because of that...

My voice is heard through my language

My prayers are heard through my language

I will be blessed with beauty and harmony above me

I will be blessed with beauty and harmony behind me

I will be blessed with beauty and harmony all around me

I will receive beauty and harmony through my language