

Stage I: Innocence Stage

The Innocence Stage takes place between preschool grade 3.

During this stage, young Native American children living in border communities might enjoy close relationships with Anglo children who have just moved into the area. They will spend the night at each other's homes, attend common birthday parties, and have lunch and dinner together. The children recognize their features are different but embrace each other in close friendships.

Stage II: Disillusionment Stage

The Disillusionment Stage starts at the beginning of the 4th grade and lasts until the beginning of the 6th grade when all relationships between Native American and Anglo children are terminated. The disintegration is gradual over time. Home visits and sleepovers stop. Birthday parties become gradually segregated by race as Anglo children become acculturated into the racist practices and see the racial conflict in these communities. As one Native American youngster once told a researcher, "We just stopped being friends and I did not know why. I was very hurt."

Stage III: Segregation Stage

The Segregation Stage begins as children enter middle schools and junior high schools. In Stages II and III all border community children have the same teacher all day, eat lunch together and with their teacher, and play at lunch and recess with each other. In middle school and junior high school, segregation becomes the norm. Many Native American children are tracked into special education, vocational education, lower-level classes, and find themselves in mostly segregated classes with only other Native Americans, regardless of their aptitudes, needs, or abilities (Heyhle, 1995). In The Segregation Stage, children no longer eat with their teachers. The cafeteria is neatly separated between Native American and Anglo children: Each distinct racial and ethnic group eats together. There are a few exceptions but as the years move on in their school careers, segregation will become increasingly the norm. In this stage racial conflict will actually begin, with racial fighting, slurs, put-downs, etc., becoming more frequent. In this stage Native American students might begin the long road into a devolutionary life pattern by initial use of drugs and alcohol, skipping school, defiant attitudes, and lacking commitment to teachers who seem not to have any commitment to them.

Stage IV: "push-out," "drop-out," or "wise-up" Stage

Stage IV begins as border community Native American children enter high school and usually resolves itself by the middle of the junior year when they have been "pushed-out," "drop-out," on their own or "wise-up." The Native Americans pushed out of school have been in trouble since their arrival. They might have developed gang, drug, or alcohol habits introduced to them usually by their cousins, are in low-level nonchallenging classes, and think education may not be worth much. These students are suspended again and again until they receive an invitation not to return to school. The dropouts see the handwriting on the wall, have a chance to make a little money with a minimum wage job in town, have little link to school, and have recognized racial conflict for a long time. The "wise-ups" have seen the light, no longer resist, become passive, accepting of this new culture of education, develop bicultural skills, know the value of an education, and resist peer pressure. Beginning in Stage IV it becomes readily apparent to all Native American border community students that in their high schools all of the positions of high power, high prestige, and high privilege, that is, administrators and teachers are in the hands of Anglos, sending a clear message that these positions are not for them (Huff, 1996). They also notice that some, perhaps most, of the positions of low power, low prestige, and low privilege, that is, positions of kitchen aides, classroom assistants, clerks, janitors, and bus drivers, are in the hands of Native Americans hurting their motivation to learn (Huff, 1996). In fact, in many border community high schools, the only adult Native Americans in the facility might be the janitors. The message of racist ideology is not subtle.

Stage V: Bicultural Integration Stage

The Bicultural Integration Stage may have been an on-going process for three types of students: The Gifted and Talented, The Athletic, and The Meek. These three groups were fully involved in school life since mid-school for the first two and totally uninvolved and nonobvious for the latter. Native American students who excel in academics and sports, band, other musical or dance groups, have particular skills needed by the school, are particularly handsome or beautiful, have passionate personalities, etc., are more readily able to overcome the racial conflict in their border community high schools. The Meek play beta male to the alpha male of Anglos and slip through the entire school process without notice, making no waves, not rocking the boat, avoiding drugs, alcohol, gangs, and tobacco, and being unnoticed. Stage V might be called The Survival Stage. The students who "wise-up" arrive in Stage V as tough as they need to be to endure in a racist and polarized community. The survivors all head for advanced education at least for a short time. Some resolve to get out of the community and never come back. Some will take minimum wage positions, which they will keep, for their entire lives. Few will become teachers or school administrators. The Native Americans who reach the final stage represent about half of all Native Americans who started school at the same time at the beginning of their school careers. The ones who make it to high school graduates may be on an evolutionary pathway, while those who do not begin a devolutionary pathway.

Deyhle, D. (1995). Navajo youth and Anglos racism: Cultural integrity and resistance. *Harvard Educational Review*, 65.3, 403-444.

Huff, D.J. (1996). *Institutional racism and American Indian education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press