

**THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE GIFTED
IN A CULTURALLY-DIFFERENT
SEGMENT OF A HIGH SCHOOL**

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A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study was to examine the student population of a particular minority group of Native students in a southern Alberta high school, to determine if there were Native students who could be identified as gifted.

Five classes of students containing one-third to one-half Native students served as subjects. The classroom teacher of each class supplied the data for each subject by completing an instrument designed to test gifted characteristics.

The study attempted to determine the potential for giftedness that existed among the Native students of this school. Exploratory methods were used to explore and diagnose the data. The use of these exploratory methods failed to provide any evidence of any significant difference in the potential for giftedness between the Native or the non-Native students.

The conclusion of the study was that giftedness was a difficult area to research because of the abstract nature of the terminology and the characteristics. The interpretation of the data showed that there were Native students in this school who have definite tendencies of giftedness.

There was very little difference in the percentage of gifted traits between the Native students and the non-Native students. If judged on an equal basis, Native students will demonstrate equal proportion of competence with non-Native students.

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INTRODUCTION

Language used to describe specific traits of human behavior suffers from the lack of precision. Writers and researchers do not always agree in terms of an exact definition of giftedness. Definitions by Fliegler (1961), Marland (1972), and Getzels and Dillon (1978)(cited in Gallagher, 1985) each emphasize one or more of the following: high intelligence, high creativity, high achievement, or a talent (either personal or social). The only consistency that seems to exist is that giftedness comes in many varieties. A person who has a suspected high ability in one area, or a person who has many high abilities "may" be gifted. Not only is it common to disagree with terminology, but it is common practice in the field to use tests/instruments in a manner which does not conform to what is intended and described by the designer. There is a flagrant use of tests/instruments with populations on which they were not normed and for which they were never intended (Alvina, McDonnel, & Richert, (1981). One of the vital questions this raises in the area of the culturally

different is this: To what extent are current practices failing to identify those who are gifted?

Recently many school districts have embarked upon programs designed to challenge the gifted student. At best this is a challenge in the dominant group in the public school. It is much more difficult to identify gifted students from a culturally-different segment of the school population. Language, traditional ethnic characteristics, and attitudes often impede accurate identification of gifted students in a minority group.

Too often the special needs of the gifted and talented which do exist among the minority groups of students are overlooked. Havighurst (1961) states that, "It seems probable that our society discovers and develops no more than perhaps half its potential intellectual talent" (p. 525).

Native children are only one minority group who come from a cultural background and tradition that is quite different from that of the dominant society in Canada. These differences can cause varying degrees of confusion, conflict, and failure for Native students. These problems also begin to surface as soon as a Native child begins his formal education, especially if the school is staffed predominantly by non-Natives, and the educational philosophy follow the dominant society guidelines. As a result, the overall education of minority-group students--Natives, in

particular--is discouraging, and is often referred to as a "national failure" (Kennedy, (1968).

It would be a monumental task to explore all of the causes that have contributed to the failure to discover, stimulate, and make the most efficient use of the neglected source of talent which exists among the culturally different. National intensified efforts in the way of grants and special programs to overcome this failure are based in part on the simple realization that an invaluable natural resource is being wasted daily by a system of education that has shut its eyes and turned its back on the minority group children who come to our schools from the culturally different, culturally disadvantaged, and the lower socio-economic levels of our society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the Native student population of a southern Alberta high school school to determine if there were any Native students in the student body who could be identified as gifted.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer three questions:

1. What are the main reasons teachers cite for the general low achievement of Native students?
2. Are there any Native students in this school that could be identified as "gifted"?

3. Are there any Native students in this school with some gifted traits?

Significance of the Study

The High School of which the writer is a member of the teaching staff, is located across the road from the Blood Indian Reserve, which is the largest Native Reserve in Canada. There is a dichotomy of cultural values between the children of the student population--80 percent of whom belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) faith, and the Native population in the school. This cultural conflict, combined with the religious factor, has prompted very militant reactions from the Native population--both students and parents--in recent years. "Discrimination" and "Mormon prejudice" are words commonly used by some irate parents whenever conflicts arise that demand parent consultation.

Conversely, members of the non-Native population have adverse feelings toward the integrated education offered in this school at all levels of schooling. Some non-Native students, parents, and even teachers, have expressed concern that the rate of achievement on government-administered tests, and the general quality of education is lowered somewhat for the "majority" student population in order to accommodate the Native students. They cite reasons such as: disinterest shown in achievement by many Native students;

the lack of regular attendance at school; and the additional repetition and attention needed and given to the Native students by the teachers.

There is a Federal all-Native school on the Blood Native Reserve within ten miles of the aforementioned non-Native school, but many Native parents prefer to send their children to the local public schools. They have been quoted as saying that " . . . a superior level of education is available at the Provincial schools" (personal interview with Nielson, 1986). This does not alleviate the feelings that do exist, however, and the school records show a much lower level of achievement amongst the Native students in comparison to the non-Native students. For example, the percentage of Native student dropouts compared to the non-Native student population is 20:1 (Nielson, 1986).

Further, for every 100 Native students entering Grade One in this school division, the statistics show that only eight will eventually graduate from Grade Twelve. However, great strides have been taken to learn of the cultural differences that do exist between the two dominant student populations since the first Native students entered this school division in 1948. In that year only four Native pupils were enrolled, and enrollment has fluctuated to reach a peak in 1973 of 807 students. There were 620 Native students enrolled in the Division in 1986-87 compared to 3093 non-Native students. The principal of the high school

(interview, 1986) revealed that of 115 Grade XII students who were eligible to graduate in 1986, 18 of them were Native students. However, only 13 of the 18 Native students actually received their high school diplomas (72%), compared to 93 of the 97 non-Natives received their diplomas (96%). Only one Native student has received an advanced diploma during the nine years the writer has taught in the high school. To date, not one Native student has been enrolled in the school's gifted program, which has been in existence for the past two years. This was surprising when the principal (interview, 1986) revealed that in 1983 when all the Grade IX students were given an IQ test, the student receiving the highest score was a Native student.

It was of interest to this writer to research the possibility that giftedness did exist amongst the Native students in this high school. From a review of the literature, the writer was able to hypothesize that giftedness was equally distributed amongst the Native students, as well as the non-Native. This study was designed to try to verify this hypothesis.

Definitions

Gifted

There is a great diversity in the criteria used for making judgments about the term "gifted"--ranging from

different talents emerging in different generations or periods of time, to the different talents emerging in different cultures. For example, criteria used to define "giftedness" during one period might be entirely different from that of another period. For example, gifted traits would vary considerably among the bushmen of Africa and the Mensa group of our continent.

Marland's definition (Gallagher, 1985) of "giftedness" is relevant. Therefore, for purposes of this study, the writer shall define the term "gifted" as:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas:

1. General intellectual aptitude
2. Specific academic aptitude
3. Creative or productive thinking
4. Leadership ability
5. Visual and performing arts (Gallagher, 1985, p. 14)

This definition implies that children who can be identified using this definition require differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. This applies to all children--whether they are culturally different or from the dominant society. The difficult task is in the assessment.

Culturally Different

The definition of the term "culturally different" is even more nebulous than the term "gifted." The author initially interpreted the term "culturally different" to be one that refers to a group of people who have different cultural values and practices from those of the dominant society in which they live. However, the literature (Gallagher, 1985) alludes that any minority group is both culturally different and culturally disadvantaged if its two cultures do not coincide with each other. Thus, the writer found that these two terms are generally used interchangeably throughout the literature while, with some exceptions, some authors used only the term "minority group".

For purposes of this study, the term "culturally different" will be used to refer to the Native population in this school because their cultural background is different from the majority non-Native population of the school. Because of it being a value-laden term, caution must be exercised in using the term "culturally disadvantaged" in this school. One must be careful not to prejudice a culture or subculture that does not conform to the value system of the majority group. Some authors, such as Barnes (1971), supports this premise when he states:

Certain behaviors in minority groups may be both healthy and justified because life conditions differ markedly from those of the dominant culture. The extent to which a group or subgroup is handicapped may be only in the "eye of the beholder" (p. 272).

Limitations of the Study

The major limitations of this study were:

1. Many of the classes in this school had only 1-4 Native students enrolled. In order to have enough Native students in classes to make this study significant, the classes chosen for this research were limited to those who had at least one-third to one-half Native students enrolled in them. This was a limiting factor in itself, and only seven classes in this high school were eligible for comparison according to these stipulations.
2. The sample had to be selected from those teachers who agreed to participate in the survey.
3. Only five of the seven teachers consented to participate in this study, all of which taught non-academic subjects.

4. Due to the high-school age of the sample students, the results are restricted and useful only to high school students in a particular location.
5. No account could be taken of the prejudices of the teacher in assessing the "gifted" or "normal" traits, because some teachers would be more liberal in making their assessments than another.
6. In order to maintain confidentiality, the students names were not used on the Student Rating Charts of this particular study. However, if this were to be done by a school for inclusion in gifted classes, names would have to be used.
7. Because of the lack of a precise definition of giftedness, congruence with the research findings of this study was difficult to achieve.
8. The results of this study have been interpreted within the context of the definition of "giftedness."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the literature on Native education is related to problems regarding the lack of academic achievement amongst Native students, with little apparent research on the means for identifying the gifted and talented. From personal interviews with the superintendent of the school division and principal of the high school where this study took place, valuable demographic data pertinent to this study was obtained which provided a guide to the review of the literature.

The review will be organized under two headings: educating the culturally-different gifted student, and; involvement of Native students within the sample school system.

Educating the Culturally-Different Gifted Student

Perhaps the most renowned study of interest to researchers, educators, school boards, and teachers was the report by the Kennedy-directed committee: "The Failure of Native Education--A National Tragedy" (Kennedy, 1968).

This failure of Native education has been well documented by an additional three American national studies (Coleman, 1966; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; and McNemar,

1982); and by numerous other regional studies in the United States. From a review of the literature, the writer did not find any comparable Canadian Government studies done on Canadian Natives, but from some studies that have been done, (Gold, 1966; Guenther, 1975; Hawthorn, 1969); Kleinfeld, (1973); Leithwood, et al. (1976); and Sheffe, (1977), there is substantial evidence that our Canadian educational institutions--both provincial public schools and federal Department of Indian Affairs schools--are very similar to those in the United States and they are not providing Native students with an education comparable to that of other citizens of this country.

A research study done by Chadwick, Bahr, and Stauss (1981) relating to correlates of academic performance of Natives in the Seattle School Division, together with those by Bernal (1974); Chen and Goon (1976); and Renzulli (1973), concluded that the lack of academic achievement of Native students in the city was due, not to lack of intelligence, but mainly to cultural differences, achievement motivation, negative self concept, and other similar causes. Furthermore, no evidence was forthcoming from any of these studies that suggested that the potential for giftedness did not exist among the "culturally different" students in our schools.

Traditionally, Native students are not usually identified or described as either "gifted" or "talented".

Their formal educational needs and wants are usually assumed to be only in the basic skills areas, and their adjustment to school and learning almost always involves strict discipline (Gruber, 1975, pp. 47). Gruber (1975) also suggests that their cultural or language differences, plus their lack of exposure to mainstream Canadian culture, usually combine to obscure from society the gifted children among them. These gifted minority and culturally-different children typically proceed unnoticed through school until they drop out or, with luck, graduate.

Renzulli (1973), who is noted for his research among the culturally different, has been a prominent advocate of the use of behavioral approaches, such as case studies, in the identification of the gifted. He states that ". . . giftedness has come to be viewed as a concept that is much broader than solely high intelligence" (p. 414). He states further that there is great potential among these masses of "culturally different" groups, and society as a whole have failed to recognize this.

There can be little doubt that our nation's largest untapped source of human intelligence and creativity is to be found among the vast numbers of individuals in the lower socio-economic levels, and in the culturally different segments of our population. The by-products of this waste are evident in unprecedented urban turmoil, in unemployment and underemployment, in rising crime and delinquency rates, and most importantly, in the human despair that accompanies thwarted expression and creativity (Renzulli, 1973, p.411).

Renzulli (1973) also contends that linking together the words "culturally different" and "gifted" still produces dissonance in the minds of many educators. Most importantly, however, educators have not realized that programs for the culturally different should also accommodate gifted students in a systematic way. If gifted children from the dominant ethnic group have not in general fared well at school, then it is unlikely children from the non-dominant Native group in our schools, or from any other minority group will have received any recognition.

Jaramilio (1974) argues that the educational system must be changed to reflect the growing recognition of the value of the many cultural groups in our society. She stresses that the gifted classroom teacher and the culturally-different child both have important contributions to make in molding this new educational system. Further, there is a growing need for teachers to realize the possibility of cultural conflicts between themselves and some of their students, to try to understand different cultures, and to use these differences to enrich the education of all their students.

Chen and Goon (1976) did some research very similar to this writer's study in that they identified the gifted from among the culturally-different Asian children in a New York City school. They used the 6th grade classes with more than 10% enrollment of Chinese pupils and a criterion of

giftedness two years above grade level in reading and 1.5 years above in the Metropolitan Achievement Test in the mathematics section. About 19% of the students received a "gifted" rating compared with the normal expectation of 4.75% from the teachers ratings.

A number of studies (Cox, 1974; Fitzgerald, 1973; Sheffe, 1979. et al.) were designed to investigate the development of strong programs that assure a fuller development of the talents of gifted culturally-different children and youth. Sheffe, (1979) advocates that the development of these types of programs is ". . . held to be one of the best investments America can make at this point in time" (p.121). Sato, (1974) calls for more research with an emphasis on fulfilling the special and different needs of the culturally different gifted child. Yet another, Stock (1970), did a follow-up study of the the success of culturally-different students in the Georgia talent search project.

All of these authors agreed that it was of vital importance for teachers, counselors, and students to set attitudinal and aspirational goals that take into account the affective life of the child. They also stressed that parental participation in the education of their children, be they culturally different or culturally alike, is considered to be an essential element in the development and implementation of any school program.

Since many of the negative relationships in this school division between the Natives and the educational administration are linked indirectly to the different cultural values, as well as the "Mormon" factor, great lengths were undertaken to find literature related to this particular subject. Searches revealed three which were only relatively applicable. Parry (1977) published an article involving the same school division in which this project was based, wherein his research revealed that:

At least one school administrator has recognized that this tendency to role fusion (church and school administration positions) can create problems. Yet a substantial overlap of personnel amongst the church, the school administration, and the school board would seem to be inevitable in an essentially Mormon community, even if it were unsought. Without clergy, the L.D.S. Church depends at the local level upon the unpaid, part-time services of its lay members. Since Mormons place great stress upon education, which is tied to religious values, many teachers and other professionals are numbered among the officers of the church (p. 237).

While the material presented in Parry's study pertains very largely to the educational sphere, he approaches it from a standpoint which is not specific to that sphere. He has taken the position that, at the level of individual action, ". . . ethnicity is only one of the values which mediate a response to that complex of factors. At the level of the regional socio-political system, those factors have enhanced the viability of a Mormon/non-Mormon alternative to the Indian/white mode of alignment" (Parry, 1977, p. 236).

Another article by Bunker and Johnson (1975) compared the Mormon and non-Mormon ethnic attitudes towards education, and attempted to assess whether Mormon attitudes toward Natives, Negroes, and Mexicans are at variance with attitudes toward these groups as expressed in the "general culture." However, their conclusion suggests that Mormons, as compared to others in the general population, are neither more nor less tolerant in their attitudes toward Negroes, are somewhat more favorable in their attitudes toward Jews and Polynesians, and are somewhat less tolerant--one study shows--in their attitudes toward Natives. Unfortunately, they state that there are several weaknesses in the past research and very little research with respect to the Native cultures. One interesting finding was that Utah Mormons tended to be less tolerant in all three areas than California Mormons.

Controversy rising over the Mormon "Indian Placement" education program was the reason prompting the third related article by Lee (1978). In this program, Native children are accepted into the homes of participating Mormon families as "foster" children, where they will have access to excellent educational facilities. The Native child goes to school and enters into every civic, community, and Church activity on an equal basis. Foster parents write to the natural parents, sending pictures. Caseworkers visit every child

and family regularly and visit schoolteachers and principals often and assure themselves that harmony and understanding prevail. Results of the program reveal that " . . .Native children have proven themselves to be alert, brilliant, responsive, and successful academically. They often take the lead in their classes, being elected to school offices and they graduate with honors. They are going out into employment and are doing well. No Native child is placed in a home which is not an exemplary one" (Lee, (1978). The controversy arose when certain concerned Native parents assumed this was a permanent arrangement and wrote to the government indicating they wanted more control over such programs. If any conclusion can be drawn from this article, which bears weight for this study, it would be that it seems an educationally-rich environment seems to bring out the desired results in children of all cultures--Native or non-Native.

Need for the Study

A study of the literature review points out the need for providing programs for the culturally-different gifted students in our society. It is especially evident in this particular school division. Personal interviews with the administration revealed the progress that this school division has made in providing a facility for the Native

students to attend to gain an education. Before providing a suitably gifted educational program, there is a need to identify potentially gifted students. The literature review reinforces and substantiates this claim. It is the intent of this study to explore the possibility of this identification.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research project was designed as a descriptive study whose purpose was primarily concerned with the identification of the gifted among the culturally-different Native students in a particular southern-Alberta high school. An exploratory method in the form of a survey will be employed to collect descriptive data to determine the potential that exists among the Native students to have gifted behaviors.

The Teacher Sample

It seemed reasonable that there would be some gifted Native students among the 113 Natives enrolled in this school, even though none of them had ever been identified as such. To verify the general consensus elicited by the majority of teachers that most Native students are low achievers, an initial survey was conducted of the entire staff of 24 teachers in the high school. They were asked to choose three reasons why the Native students in the school, and in their particular classes, are "generally" rated as low achievers. Although the term "giftedness" was never

used, the writer postulated there would be a definite potential for giftedness among the Native students.

The primary purpose of this survey among the teacher sample was, then, to examine the data between what teachers suspected as to the behaviors and abilities of their Native students, and what was actually evident as to their behaviors later when each student was actually rated.

The Teacher Instrument

A Teacher Survey Chart was developed to collect data from 24 teachers regarding the Native students in their classes and the reasons why they are sometimes categorized as low achievers. This instrument listed 23 different reasons selected from the literature which characterized culturally-different students, which may account for poor achievement amongst these students (Bernal, 1976; Chadwick, Bahr, & Stauss, 1981; Gallagher, 1985; Guenther, 1975; Renzulli, 1973; et al.). For verification of the instrument, it was submitted to Professor M. Freehill for his assessment of it (see Appendix A). The instrument also contained a line with "Others" listed, if the teachers had additional reasons of their own.

Research Procedure Regarding Teachers

The teachers chose from this list the top three reasons they felt most applicable to their students, with the option

of writing their own reasons on the "Others" line. This survey was administered prior to a staff meeting, so all 24 teachers participated and returned their surveys. The results of this simple survey were tallied and the top three items are listed later in this study.

The Student Sample

For the main purpose of this research project, the writer requested seven teachers in the high school to complete another survey. A significant class characteristic of those teachers asked was they must teach classes with at least one-third to one-half Native student enrollment. As noted previously, the enrollment of Native students in the classes had to be substantial enough to make the reliability factor significant. Five of the seven teachers agreed to do the survey. There were 105 students (total) in the five classes--56 Native students and 49 non-Native students

The Student Instrument

One instrument was designed for the collection of data from the student sample--Student Survey Chart. This individual rating scale consisted of five lower-level (non-gifted) skills and seven higher-level (gifted) skills, randomly assembled. The items were selected from contemporary literature on gifted education (Barnes, 1971;

Bloom, 1982; Brookover, 1980; Davis, 1985; Freehill, 1961; and Gallagher, 1985; et al.). A research professor of gifted education was consulted in the development of the chart.

Items classified as NORMAL traits were Nos. 1, 4, 5, 9, and 11 (Total=5); those classified as GIFTED traits were Nos. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12 (Total=7) (see Appendix B).

Research Procedure Regarding Students

No introductory explanation preceded this survey. An individual student rating scale was distributed to each consenting teacher. Each teacher was asked to rate each individual student in his/her entire class on some 12 items on the survey as to the student's behavior toward certain skills or tasks. They were asked to rate the students (with a checkmark) for each item on a scale consisting of: 1. Does Poorly, 2. Does Average, 3. Does Well, or 4. Does Extremely Well. No explanatory information was given to the teacher regarding the relationship of Native vs. non-Native students in his/her class, nor the significance of the lower and higher level tasks. The teachers assumed they were chosen at random and had no opportunity to confer with each other regarding their ratings.

A separate survey sheet was completed by the teacher and returned for each student in each of five classes

(Total: 105 students: 59 Native students; 46 non-Native Students). Individual student names were not used--a check mark categorizing each student as either Native or non-Native gave the needed classifications. The results of each Student Survey Chart sheet were then tallied as to the totals each student scored in the GIFTED area, and the totals each student scored in the non-gifted NORMAL area. These results were then transferred to a Master Class list and the results tallied as a class total. Comparison charts were then assembled to compare how Native children rated in gifted behaviors in comparison with non-Native students for each class.

Data Analysis Procedures

Question One: What are the main reasons teachers cite for the "general" low achievement of Native students?

1. To profile the distribution of queries of teacher's reasons for low achievement (see Appendix A) amongst their Native students, a tally was made of each survey and the scores were displayed on a chart showing the distribution of each teacher's replies to the survey (see Table 1).

Question Two: Are there any Native students in this school that could be identified as gifted?

1. To determine whether or not there were any Native students who could be classified as gifted, the following procedure was followed:

- a. Lower-level Tasks or NORMAL rating (on survey chart) for each student included
Nos. 1, 4, 5, 9, and 11 = 5.
- b. Upper-level Tasks or GIFTED rating (on survey chart) for each student included
Nos. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12 = 7.

2. Each individual Student Survey Chart was tallied. If a checkmark appeared in columns 1 (Does Poorly) or 2 (Does Average) in either the lower-level or upper-level tasks, the student was categorized as NORMAL.

3. In order to receive a GIFTED rating, the checkmark must appear in an upper-level task item and be in columns 3 (Does Well) or 4(Does Extremely Well).

4. In order to receive an overall GIFTED rating, the student must be rated as GIFTED in at least three or more of the upper-level task items.

5. The above rating ratios (Normal and Gifted) were designed with the help of replicated studies in a review of

contemporary literature (Barnes, (1971); Bloom, (1982); Brookover, (1980); Davis, (1985); Freehill, (1961); Gallagher, (1985); et al.), and with the help of an author-clinician who works with the gifted, and is an expert in his field.

6. The rating scheme is not infallible and the reliability may be limited to this high school, but the results were exploratory in nature in order to search for possible trends in discovering potentiality for giftedness in Native students.

7. A line graph was made comparing the number of Native students and the number of non-Native students with three or more gifted characteristics, in each of the five surveyed classes (see Figure 1).

Question Three: Are there any Native students in this school with some gifted traits?

1. To further probe the possibility of the potentiality of gifted characteristics existing among the Native students in this school, further compilation of the survey resulted in ratings of numerous students with one or

two gifted characteristics gathered from data on the Student Survey Chart.

2. A line graph was made to compare the number of Native students and the number of non-Native students with one or two gifted characteristics, in each of the five surveyed classes (see Figure 2).

RESULTS

Research Question One

What are the main reasons teachers cite for the "general" low achievement of Native students?

The primary purpose for conducting this survey was to find out "why?" the teachers think the Native students are low achievers. When this information was collected, the purpose was to research the validity of these hypotheses of her fellow teachers. Another question that might have been asked is, "What is the relationship between what a teacher perceives a student be capable of doing and what his/her behaviors actually indicate?"

All of the 24 teachers completed the questionnaire survey and returned it. The results tallying the highest number of checkmarks were:

1. Poor attendance - 22 checkmarks.
7. Low academic motivation - 18 checkmarks.
10. Poor attitude towards education - 12 checkmarks.

(See Table 1)

TEACHER SURVEY CHART

INSTRUCTIONS: Listed below are a group of 23 general reasons why Native students are sometimes categorized as low achievers. Please select the top THREE reasons which you personally feel applies most to the Native students you teach. Place a checkmark beside the THREE you choose OR place an appropriate reason/s in the space at the bottom. Thank you for participating in this survey.

1. Poor attendance	<u>22</u>
2. Segregation of Native vs. non-Native students	<u>0</u>
3. Truancy	<u>0</u>
4. Dropping out	<u>0</u>
5. Language difficulty	<u>0</u>
6. Age-grade difference	<u>1</u>
7. Low academic motivation	<u>18</u>
8. Poor home-school communication	<u>5</u>
9. Lack of Indian involvement in school policy	<u>0</u>
10. Poor attitude towards education	<u>12</u>
11. Middle-class curriculum bias	<u>1</u>
12. Lack of stimulation in the home	<u>7</u>
13. Lack of teacher skills in multicultural classrooms	<u>0</u>
14. Inefficiency on verbal tests	<u>0</u>
15. Low self-concept	<u>5</u>
16. Cultural conflict	<u>1</u>
17. Lacks sufficient intelligence to achieve	<u>0</u>
18. Anti-Native discrimination	<u>0</u>
19. Family instability	<u>1</u>
20. Low socio-economic status	<u>1</u>
21. Loss of Native values and attitudes	<u>0</u>
22. Narrow life experiences	<u>2</u>
23. Acculturation problems	<u>0</u>
24. Other Reasons _____	<u>0</u>

Research Question Two

Are there any Native students in this school that could be identified as gifted?

The results of the data to this question are reported in Figure 1.

(See Figure 1)

RESULTS: No. of Students Surveyed: 105.

Natives: 59.

Non-Natives: 46.

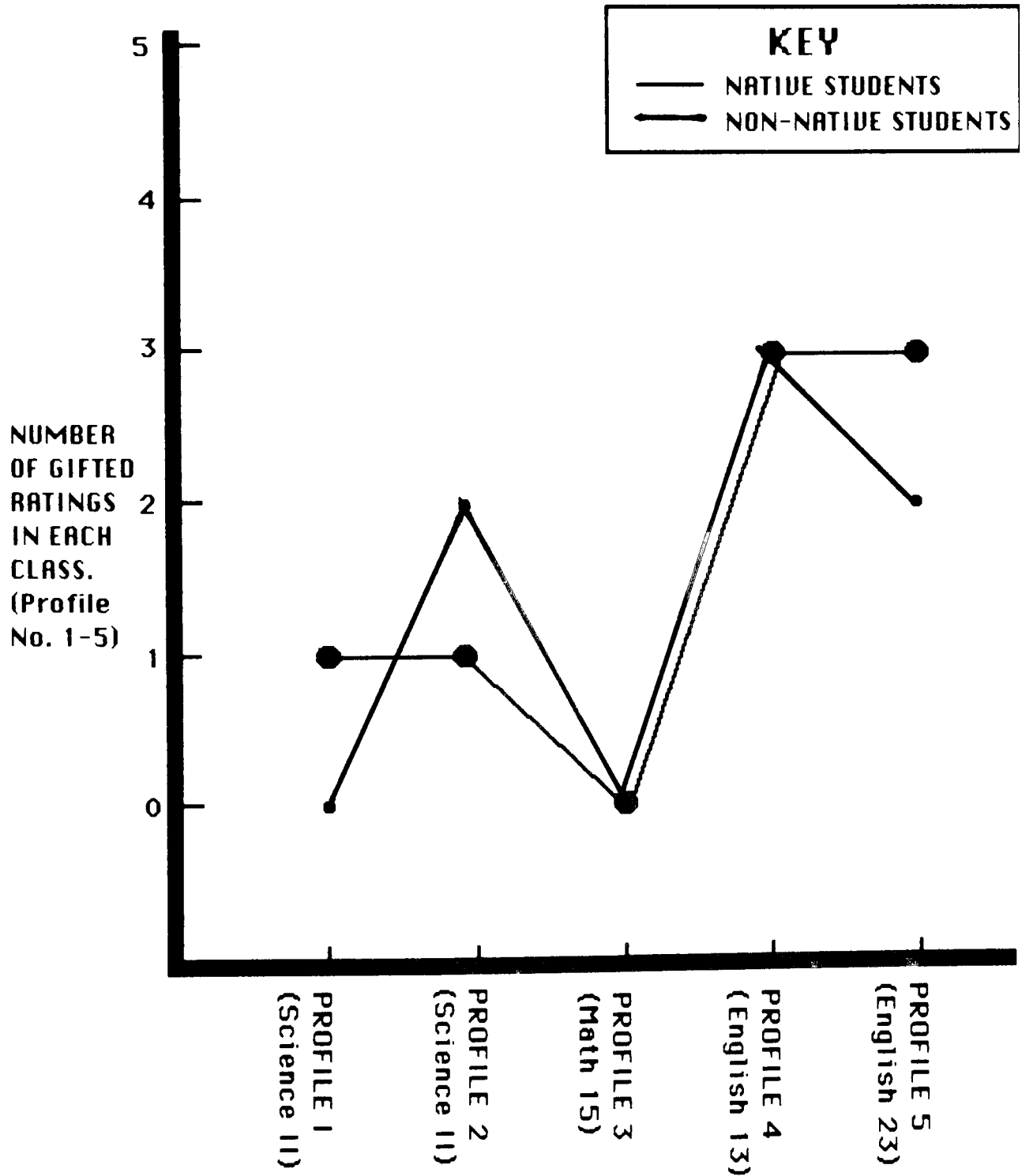
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH AN OVERALL <u>GIFTED</u> RATING	- 15/105 = <u>14.3%</u>
(with three or more gifted characteristics)	

Number of NATIVE Students with an overall <u>GIFTED</u> rating	- 8/59 = <u>13.6%</u>
--	-----------------------

Number of NON-NATIVE Students with an overall <u>GIFTED</u> rating	- 7/46 = <u>15.2%</u>
--	-----------------------

The results of this data show very little difference in the ratings of the Native and non-Native students. The conclusions point to the fact that, if judged on an equal basis, there are few distinguishing factors.

COMPARISON CHART OF STUDENTS WITH THREE OR MORE GIFTED TENDENCIES IN FIVE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES.



Research Question Three

Are there any Native students in this school with "potential" for giftedness?

The results to this question paralleled very closely to the statistics for question No. 3:

(see Figure 2)

RESULTS: No. of Students Surveyed: 105.

Natives: 59.*

Non-Natives: 46.*

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS
WITH ANY GIFTED TENDENCIES
(with one or two gifted
characteristics)

- 56/105 = 53.3%

Number of NATIVE
students with any
GIFTED tendencies

- 29/59 = 49.2%

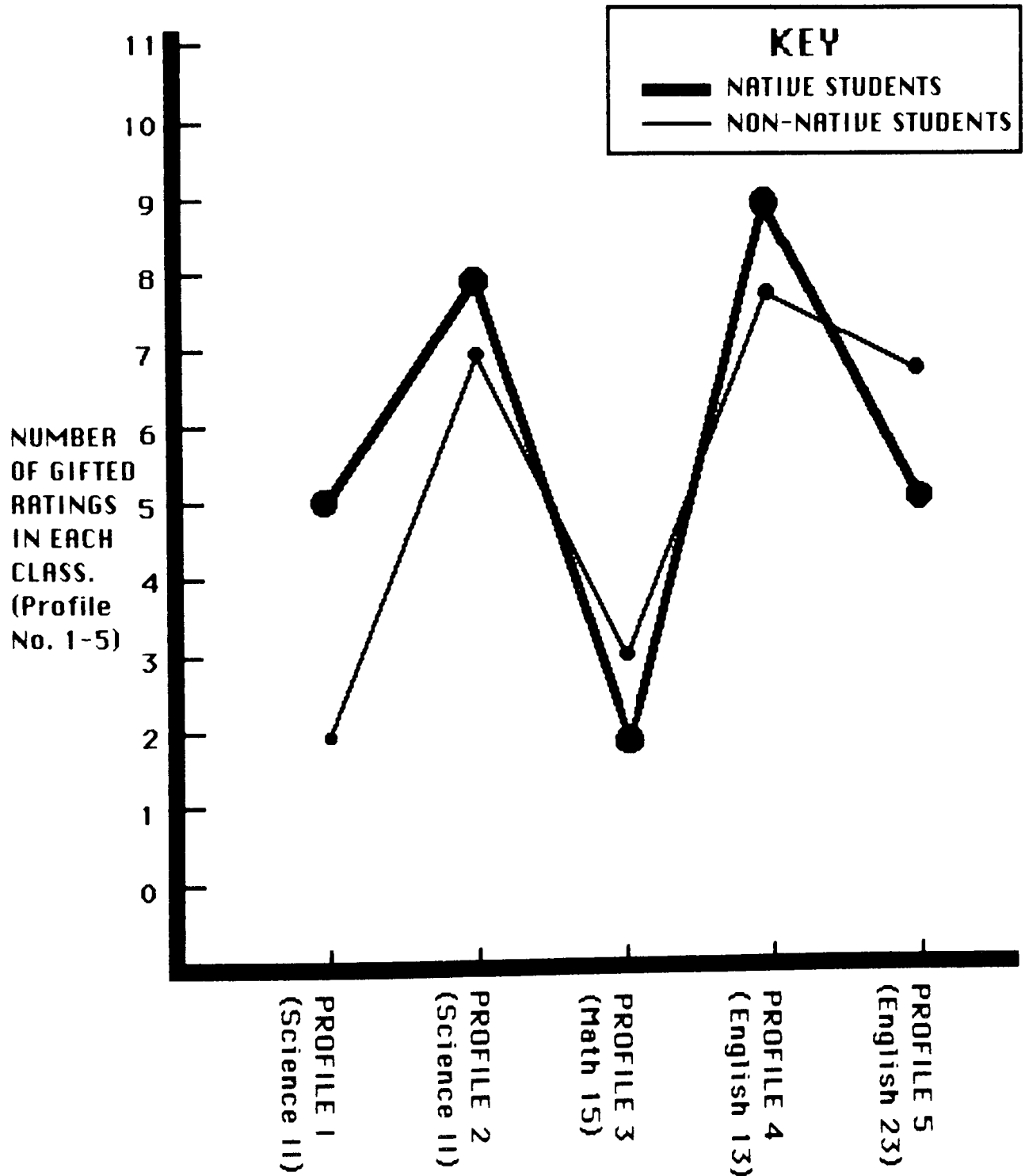
Number of NON-NATIVE
Students with any
GIFTED tendencies

- 27/46 = 58.7%

*NOTE: Consideration must be made that the Native students outnumbered the non-Native students in the classes surveyed 13.

Again the results of the data show very close parallels between the Native and non-Native students, which proves the hypotheses of the surveyed teachers does not hold true in that the Native students are low achievers when comparing the natural traits of each individual. Native students will demonstrate equal proportion of competence with non-Native students if judged on an equal basis.

COMPARISON CHART OF STUDENTS WITH ONE OR TWO GIFTED TENDENCIES IN FIVE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES.



A comparison chart pictorially emphasizes the equality of competence between Natives and non-Natives.

The chart in Figure 3 presents the combined results of the data from questions 1 and 2. These data are represented both in chart form and in a bar graph for the group with "gifted" characteristics and the group with "near gifted" characteristics.

None of the data provided any evidence of significant differences between the Native and non-Native groups when consideration is given that there were 13 more Native students surveyed than non-Native. (See Figure 3)



Results of the Study

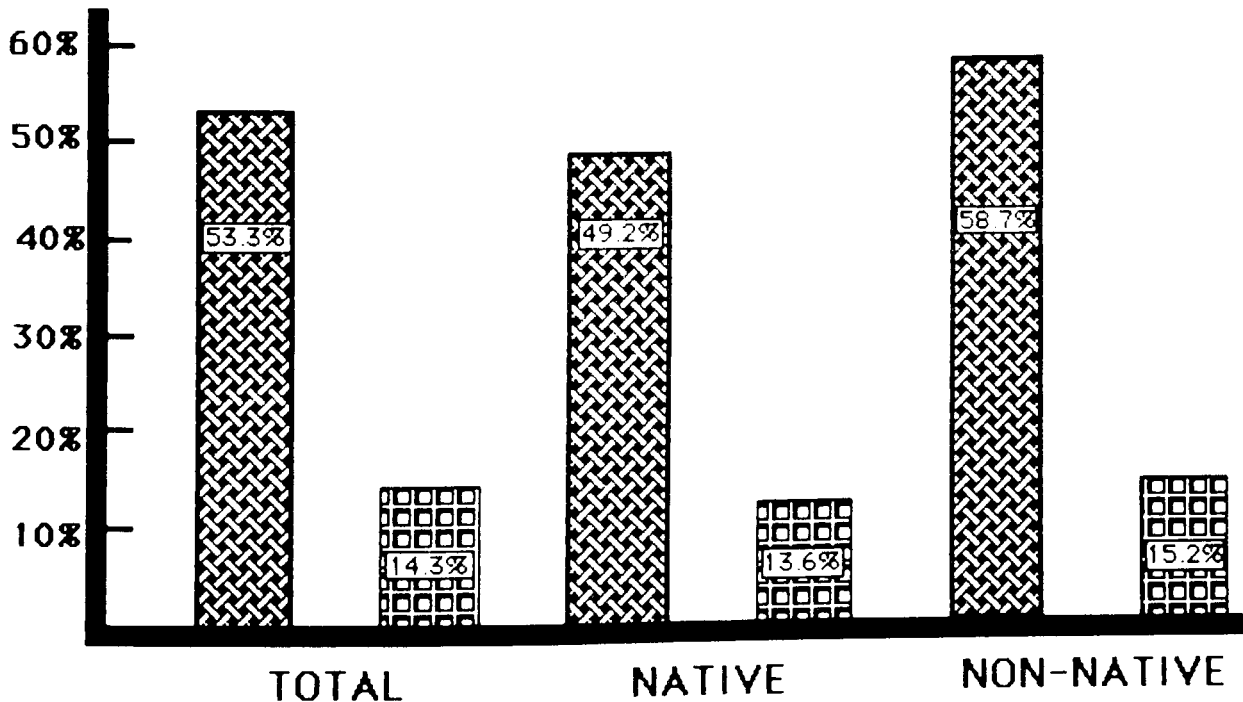
1. There are, indeed, potentially-gifted Native students among the culturally different students in the school surveyed.
2. Evaluated on characteristics or attributes of giftedness (given equal numbers in school), the ratio of Natives to non-Natives in a gifted class would be .895/1, or a relatively even split.
3. Actual enrollment in gifted classes doesn't reflect balance cited above. It may be judged on achievement measures or an unfortunate stereotype.

COMPARISON CHART OF ETHNIC AND GIFTED CLASSIFICATIONS.

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS

SURVEYED: 105 $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{NATIVE} - 59 \\ \text{NON-NATIVE} - 46 \end{array} \right.$

	TOTAL		NATIVE		NON-NATIVE		
	NO.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
GIFTED	15 / 105	14.3%	8 / 59	13.6%	7 / 46	15.2%	 GIFTED
NEAR GIFTED	56 / 105	53.3%	29 / 59	49.2%	27 / 46	58.7%	 NEAR GIFTED



* Note: Consideration must be made that the native students outnumbered non-native students by a total of 13.

DISCUSSION

This study did reveal the fact that there are some Native students in this school who could be identified as gifted students, and many who demonstrated behaviors that could be identified as potential for giftedness. However, this study did not lead to any clear conclusions about a distinct definition of the term "gifted" or "culturally different". This contributed to much difficulty in reviewing the literature, designing the questionnaire, and interpreting the results.

The interpretation of the results, however, in comparison to other research, reveals similar results even though the problem was not a replicated study.

Assessing Definitions

A major problem was a workable definition for each of the terms, "gifted", and "culturally different". Assessing gifted was extremely difficult because giftedness can be viewed from different perspectives. Terms such as "culturally different," and "culturally disadvantaged" were used interchangeably throughout the literature making it difficult to distinguish differences between the two.

The Sample

The teacher sample that was used was primarily to verify the writer's belief that her hypotheses of the teacher's expectations were correct. The fact that the survey was handed out shortly before a staff meeting might perhaps have rushed the participants in completing the survey, whereas if there would have been more time, the results could have been affected by this characteristic.

The student sample was limited because of the restriction of enrollment to include at least 1/3 Native students. Because all of the student sample were from non-academic classes, the results may not have been as good as those from the academic classes.

Instruments

There were two instruments used in this study: a Teacher Survey Chart, and a Student Survey Chart. Both instruments were original designs of the author--with help from a Professor who works with the gifted. However, because there were no means of replicating results with a commercial instrument, there is still some question as to the reliability and validity of the instruments.

Recommendations

With reference to the data collected in this study, the following recommendations are offered with respect to Native

Education in this school division. The local school board should immediately prepare, adopt, and implement a Native Education Policy for this high school--some of the objectives of the policy being:

1. To develop a program for the identification of gifted Native students comparable to that for non-Natives.
2. To encourage Native children to reach their full potential and achieve parity within the public education system.
3. To make curriculum changes that reflect Native culture and which challenge the gifted.
4. Special circumstances must be recognized when administering tests to Native children when English is a "second language" or verbal skills are poorly developed.
5. To encourage teachers to take a teacher training program relative to Native culture, or acquaint themselves with available materials.
6. To encourage the parents of the Native students to participate in developing education programs for their children.

Concluding Statement

It was the intent of this study to examine and identify the gifted Native students within the student body of this high school. The results of the instrument used verified

that there were 13.6 percent of the Native students surveyed that had definite gifted characteristics. These results are encouraging for this school.

Native peoples have been significant in Canadian history and we must look to the future as the greatest period for their participation. Their contributions have not always been obvious, but must be assessed as to what they as a people and a culture can contribute, and also what they can accomplish as individuals to add to our country's total potential--especially in the gifted area.

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TEACHER SURVEY CHART

INSTRUCTIONS: Listed below are a group of 23 general reasons why Native students are sometimes categorized as low achievers. Please select the top THREE reasons which you personally feel applies most to the Native students you teach. Place a checkmark beside the THREE you choose OR place an appropriate reason/s in the space at the bottom. Thank you for participating in this survey.

1. Poor attendance _____
2. Segregation of Native vs. non-Native students _____
3. Truancy _____
4. Dropping out _____
5. Language difficulty _____
6. Age-grade difference _____
7. Low academic motivation _____
8. Poor home-school communication _____
9. Lack of Indian involvement in school policy _____
10. Poor attitude towards education _____
11. Middle-class curriculum bias _____
12. Lack of stimulation in the home _____
13. Lack of teacher skills in multicultural classrooms _____
14. Inefficiency on verbal tests _____
15. Low self-concept _____
16. Cultural conflict _____
17. Lacks sufficient intelligence to achieve _____
18. Anti-Native discrimination _____
19. Family instability _____
20. Low socio-economic status _____
21. Loss of Native values and attitudes _____
22. Narrow life experiences _____
23. Acculturation problems _____
24. Other Reasons _____

CLASS: _____

STUDENT: Native _____

Non-Native _____

STUDENT SURVEY CHART

Instructions: For each of the 12 skills or characteristics listed below, please place a checkmark in one of the appropriate columns which best describes the students capabilities in YOUR class.

<u>Skill or Task</u>	<u>Does Poorly</u>	<u>Does Average</u>	<u>Does Well</u>	<u>Does Extremely Well</u>
1. Good at remembering facts				
2. Generates original ideas and solutions to problems				
3. Has a keen sense of humor				
4. Performance on work-book assignment-type work				
5. Does well on routine tasks				
6. Is sensitive to the needs of others				
7. Has an inquisitive mind (Asks reasons why, etc.)				
8. Has a strong awareness of self (likes, dislikes, personal strengths, etc.)				
9. Performance on objective tests				
10. Demonstrates good leadership ability				
11. Follows directions easily				
12. Has good comprehension skills on tests				