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A Study of Native American GED Graduates at Four Tribal Community Colleges in North Dakota

Karen Starr Gillis

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A STUDY OF NATIVE AMERICAN GED GRADUATES AT FOUR TRIBAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN NORTH DAKOTA

by

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Bachelor of Science, University of North Dakota, 1976
Master of Education, University of North Dakota, 1984

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
University of North Dakota
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Education

Grand Forks, North Dakota
December
2001
This dissertation, submitted by Karen Starr Gillis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

[Signatures]

This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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Date

December 14, 2001
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Title A Study of Native American GED Graduates at Four Tribal Colleges in North Dakota

Department Educational Leadership

Degree Doctor of Education

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Date 12-10-2001
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I dedicate this dissertation to my firstborn, my son Dave, who was always so proud and supportive of me in my educational endeavors. I deeply regret that he is not here to share this momentous achievement with me. He is always in my thoughts and prayers.

I have realized a goal and a dream. I thank the Lord. Now, it is on to fulfill another.
ABSTRACT

This study focused on the General Educational Development (GED) graduates of four tribal colleges in North Dakota. The purpose was to provide answers to five research questions and to determine baseline data on Indian education in an area not fully studied. The study will assist in closing the gap between research already conducted with Hispanics and African American populations.

The study accumulated data on participants in GED programs at the four adult education and/or testing centers at the tribal colleges in North Dakota for the years 1990-1999. The participants were analyzed using a set of variables that was specific to Native American GED participants. Data were obtained from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and adult education centers at four tribal colleges. Data were gathered on completers and non-completers of the GED program at the local and state level.

The study found that the completion rate of GED graduates from tribal college GED programs was moderate (20%). Similarities at the local, state, and national levels were found in GED test scores, age, gender, and marital status. Differences were found in race, marital status, and employment. In tribal college programs, the variables of age, gender, marital status, location of services, financial support, employment status, support system, and an educational goal desire appeared to be important in obtaining a GED diploma.
Recommendations include implementing a uniform record keeping system at all four tribal colleges, increasing prominence of GED programs in the tribal college, emphasizing heritage and culture in the GED programs, and establishing a communications network with all entities serving the GED participants. Research on the population served, adult learners, by staff (full-time certified counselors, instructors, and administrative assistants) of the GED programs to assist in program operation and aggressive fund seeking to expand and enhance GED programs was also recommended.

Further research is recommended to explore reasons for dropping out of school or the GED program, returning to complete the process, and discovering how many GED graduates pursue higher education at two year and four year colleges and universities or technical training.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of the General Educational Development or GED certificate has been a process that some adults have used to successfully meet and complete educational standards that are recognized by state, federal, and local entities. These are adults, over the age of 18, who have never completed the mandated four year high school course of study to fulfill the requirements for a high school diploma. As a result they had not received the standard diploma, signifying completion of these requirements. Not obtaining such a certificate has, in many cases, limited their ability to attain a quality of life enjoyed by those who have met the requirements. It has clearly limited the ability of those adults to obtain jobs that now require a high school diploma or to pursue education at technical schools or in higher education. It may result in feelings of inferiority, being a second rate citizen with some doors of opportunity closed to them, and embracing a general sense of lowered self-esteem and fulfillment. To bolster this perception, Boesel, Alsalam, and Smith (1998), in a research report on GED recipients, stated that the GED certificate may serve as a confidence builder. They reported that survey research findings on high school dropouts who have passed the GED indicated these students felt better about themselves. This increased self-esteem may have assisted them in seeking additional education, obtaining well paying or prestigious jobs, or improving their life circumstances.
In a study conducted with Native American adults in South Dakota, some findings related to the self-concept of Indians. Swan (1977) found that a slightly lower self-concept existed among those Indians not enrolled in an Adult Basic Education program than among those American Indians enrolled in the program. While the findings were tentative they indicate possible contributions of adult programs.

The GED tests originally were developed for the Army during World War II. They were developed to enable veterans who had not finished high school to have the opportunity to complete the high school requirement through an alternative means and then the opportunity to attend college under the planned GI Bill (Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, 1999).

An early version of the Iowa Test of Educational Development was the basis for the GED tests. The test reflected progressive educational emphasis on practical learning rather than academics. The GED measured the student’s knowledge in five areas (writing skills, reading, math, science, and social studies) using multiple choice questions. In 1988, a requirement for a short written essay was added (Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, 1999).

The GED, commonly referred to as a high school equivalency diploma, appears to have gone full circle for the military. The GED was developed to enable veterans an opportunity for employment and post-secondary education. The GED is now being administered to allow access to the military for citizens (Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, 1999). Furthermore, GED recipients are now usually classified as high school graduates in federal, state, and local government statistics.
Boesel et al. (1998) found that the average age of recipients of the GED diploma was about 25 and they had completed about 10 years of school. Approximately one third were members of minority groups. It was further noted that holders of GED diplomas were less likely to complete their college programs than were high school graduates. Those with GED diplomas who planned to complete an associate degree were only half as likely as high school graduates to achieve this degree. Further, those who sought bachelor's degrees were very unlikely to attain them, although there were around 2% who did.

Personal characteristics and circumstances also have a bearing on college completion rates. Recipients of GED diplomas were most likely to be "non-traditional" students who had delayed entry to college and were more likely to have family responsibilities, to be on their own financially, and to attend college part-time. Such attributes tended to work against persistence in college for these students (Boesel et al., 1998).

Statistics from the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials (CALEC) (1999) cite that in 1998 more than 718,000 adults worldwide completed the GED battery of tests. This number is much the same as the 1995 figure of 723,899 and the 1997 figure of 722,421. CALEC data further stated that the average age for adults taking the GED test was 24.4 in the United States. Two of every three (67.7%) adult GED test takers reported that they took the GED test for reasons related to furthering their education.

The *North Dakota GED Statistical Report* (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1999) indicated that 861 individuals scored high enough to qualify for a GED credential in that reporting period. The total number of examinees (1,629) were comprised of three categories. There were those who
had completed the battery for the first time, those who had completed the battery in prior years and were retested, and those who had not yet taken all the tests in the battery.

Of the 1,629 examinees, those who were self identified as American Indian on the racial/ethnic background numbered 250. There were 891 examinees in the category of “missing/unknown.” There is the strong probability that Native Americans also could have been part of this group of unidentified respondents (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1999).

The greatest number of GED credential recipients in North Dakota were in the 17-19 year old range. The age of North Dakota GED examinees and diploma recipients has been decreasing from the 18-24 year old average range of the prior years to the current 17-19 year old average range (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1999). The national average, as reported in the 1999 CALEC report, was still at the 24.5 age and has been fluctuating over the years between 24.5 and 26.4.

One of the reasons given for the lower national average age from previous years has been attributed to home schooling. The typical process was that a student was home schooled and at the end of what would have been his/her senior year, s/he takes the GED test to validate his/her achievement for employment and access to financial aid for post-secondary education (Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, 1999). Another assumption was that there was not a good fit between student and school, causing students to drop out. There may be a number of other factors associated with this change (Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, 1999).

The number of males in the state GED statistics who were diploma recipients was greater than females. Interestingly, there was a gender category
of missing/unknown with 476 recipients, which could have contributed further to either or both of the categories of gender (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1999).

The highest grade completed by most North Dakota GED test takers was the 10th grade, followed by a high number who had completed the 11th grade (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1999). This was within the national average of grade completion by dropouts identified as the 10th and 11th grade range (Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, 1999). The greatest number of North Dakota examinees entered the GED program with the intent to qualify for further education, followed by qualifying for employment (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1999).

This study about Native Americans and the GED focused on four tribally controlled community colleges in North Dakota that had Adult Basic Education programs offering the GED as a program and/or served as a testing site. The locations were the Turtle Mountain Community College on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, the Fort Berthold Community College on the Fort Berthold Reservation, the Cankdeska Cikana Community College on the Spirit Lake Reservation, and the Sitting Bull College on the Standing Rock Reservation. In addition to the tribal colleges, the other state Adult Basic Education programs offering the GED or serving as a testing site were administered by the state.

There was a total of 21 adult learning/education centers in the state of North Dakota. They provided GED classes and/or served as GED testing sites for adult education. Three of the four tribal community colleges were listed as adult education centers. The exception was Sitting Bull College, which only served as a GED testing site. Eight of the adult education centers were affiliated with public schools. Two others were at state two year colleges; another was at
a state university. There also was one at the state penal institution and another one at the state youth correctional center. There were four at vocational technical centers and there was a program designated for the homeless (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1999).

Adult Basic Education programs offering the GED should not be confused with student development programs or Student Support Services (SSS) in community colleges. GED programs take students where they are educationally and lead them through a learning process that is intended to culminate in testing for and meeting the requirements to obtain a GED certificate.

Student development programs and SSS take high school graduates who are entering college as first year students and provide services to address concerns before students exhibit academic deficiencies and to meet the need for more structured support. These student development programs and SSS provide mentoring, tutoring, counseling, advising, study skills classes, professional and personal development growth activities, transfers to colleges/universities, and other support services to help make the higher education experience successful for the student (Cankdeska Cikana Community College Catalog, 2000; Fort Berthold Community College Catalog, 2000; Sitting Bull College Bulletin, 2000; Turtle Mountain Community College Catalog, 2000).

Need for the Study

Native Americans have not been identified in the census as having large numbers who have attained higher education degrees that result in corresponding numbers in mainstream professions, let alone being shown as completing high school. The gathering of the data for this study, along with its
assessment and results, will enable the North Dakota tribal colleges with GED programs and the tribal governments to develop strategies and processes that will better assist people to become self-sufficient through education. Helping tribes move toward the goal of self-determination, and providing more Native Americans access to jobs in the professions and ultimately an improved quality of life, is an aim.

Tribal colleges have undertaken the initiative of providing GED programs for adults in the tribal community as part of their mission to prepare Indian people for a better quality of life. Many of the tribal college mission statements and goals attested to this, as shown in several of the following paragraphs. Tribal colleges are seen as pursuing, developing, and implementing academic strategies and programs in many areas through education that is beneficial to their tribal audiences.

The *Fort Berthold Community College Catalog* (2000) stated as its mission:

The mission of the Fort Berthold Community College is to address tribal needs and concerns and to perpetuate tribal heritage, history, and culture through education. Fort Berthold Community College plays a leadership role in directing reservation development in terms of local potential. The Community College realizes the positive correlation between achievement and self-concept. The college will make every effort to enable individuals to acquire a positive self-image and a clear sense of identity. This educational process will prepare tribal and community members to operate effectively in a multi-cultural society. (p. 7)

The *Fort Berthold Community College Catalog* (2000), in stating the institution's goals, had four out of seven goals that directly related to adult education for the institution and were as follows:

To provide students with the skills to become self-supporting by providing educational programs aimed at self sufficiency and transferability.
To provide education to adults at convenient times and locations, FBCC will provide flexible local schedules and will utilize distance-learning technology.

To ensure that all students have the opportunity to attend and succeed, FBCC will continue to upgrade services to meet educational needs.

To continue life long learning, FBCC will provide technical assistance and community education. (p. 7)

The *Turtle Mountain Community College Catalog* (2000), in the philosophy statement, asserted that the college had the “obligation of direct community service to the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe” (p. 6). The related Turtle Mountain Community College goals were:

- Academic preparation for learning as a life-long process for discovery of knowledge embedded in the intellectual disciplines and the traditions of the tribe;
- In and out of class opportunities to discover the nature of Indian society, its history, variation, current and future patterns, needs and to serve as a contributing member toward its maintenance and betterment. (p. 7)

The *Sitting Bull College Bulletin* (2000) stated in its institution’s mission:

Sitting Bull College will improve the educational level of the people it serves by expanding existing academic and technical areas; developing four-year programs; providing continuing education; enhancing the Dakota/Lakota culture and language; and assisting with the social and economic development of the Standing Rock Nation, creating vision and responsible behavior. (p. 9)

The goals which were seen as contributing to adult education development were:

- Students will be able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, synthesizing critical thinking skills.
- Students will develop their own leadership and community building skills.
- Students will value and develop a balanced physical (body), intellectual (mind), social (heart), and spiritual (soul) lifestyle.
- Students will be able to function in a technological world. (p. 9)
The Cankdeska Cikana Community College Catalog (2000) stated in its mission statement:

The mission of Cankdeska Cikana Community College is to provide comprehensive post secondary education, which addresses both traditional and contemporary aspects of learning. The College focuses on educating our students to live successfully by assisting each in reaching a goal that is desirable and attainable for their needs in this multi culture world. (p. 7)

The goals which could be attributed to adult education in the mission were:

To facilitate development of the human resources of the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe.
To preserve, enhance, and transmit the Dakota culture through the academic curriculum.
To provide the first two years of college education for those students wishing to continue their academic study at a four-year institution.
To develop articulation agreements with institutions of higher education in order to facilitate students' transition to those institutions.
To provide vocational education in keeping with the local employment needs, yet of such quality that the student is not limited to local employment alone. (p. 7)

The literature provided data about the impact of GED programs on the dominant culture and on Hispanic and Afro-American minorities, but there appeared to be little, if any, data about the impact of GED programs on American Indian recipients. This information is needed to help policy makers know whether those who are implementing the self-determination policy are securing the impact they desire on Indian education and all that goes with more advanced levels of education.

Chavers (2000), as a result of a national conference on Indian education, reported in the preliminary report, Deconstructing the Myths, that the major concern of the Native American participants was the lack of research on Native American education. The mission statement of that summit meeting indicated
that research should look at success and refocus on factors which lead to it, rather than focusing only on negative factors. Also that such research should encourage schools to do the things they should be doing and discourage them from doing the things they should not be doing. There was the assumption by the investigator this meant not only schools, but programs, organizations, colleges, universities, and communities that served Native Americans.

The 1990 report of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the 1992 report of the White House Conference on Indian Education identified future research needs. They called for applied research to assess the extent of adult illiteracy and the adequacy of current adult literacy funding and programs (Swisher, 1997).

In addition to the need for additional research in Indian education, another reason for this study was the need for Native Americans to conduct research about Indian education as “authentic researchers” (Boyer, 1982). Authentic researchers were defined as those who were members of the group about whom they write. These types of researchers have also been described as “insiders” and “outsiders” (Merton, 1972). Native American researchers may be seen as insiders and presumed to be those who may be more sensitive to the real needs of the people studied and who may have greater knowledge or awareness of the community. The investigator approached this study as an insider. There is the need for self-assessment by the authentic researchers to ensure they reflect upon their own objectivity and to avoid being biased and predisposed in their research. The importance of minority researchers in conducting research about the groups of which they are members has been stressed and encouraged by the educational research community (Swisher, 1986). Swisher (1997) also stated in another article in the Journal of American
Indian Education that “the role of researcher, both Indian and non-Indian, has never been more important than it is now” (p. 6). Other authors of articles and of Native American descent who also foster this position of concern include Brown (1980), LaFromboise and Plake (1983), and Robbins and Tippeconnic (1985).

Robbins and Tippeconnic wrote:

The majority of technical educational research in Indian education has been, and is still, done by non-Indian researchers. The point is not to disallow the non-Indian from performing research in Indian education. Rather, it is to encourage Indian professionals to begin to function as researchers in education. Criticism of non-Indian researchers in Indian education will continue until such time that Indian researchers are sufficient in numbers to significantly alter the direction of this research. (p. 11)

There is the responsibility for Indians now to take an active role in a fair and objective manner in defining what is best for their people in Indian education.

The investigator approached this study as an insider with the intent to develop a base of data for Native American use in program planning and decision making. The research was entered into with the unique perspective of an insider.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the success rate of Native Americans attending tribally controlled community college General Educational Development Adult Basic Education programs. It was also to determine, from the practices of mainstream programs and the current literature, what recommendations or practices may be suggested and pursued at the tribal college Adult Basic Education programs that would result in a greater degree completion rate among students in their GED programs. These practices and literature will also be examined to identify possible linkages or connections in
the educational process that have been viewed as important and that might be considered as a way of developing success on an educational ladder.

**Delimitations**

This study was delimited by the following factors:

1. Only GED programs located at four of the five tribally controlled community colleges in North Dakota were studied.
2. Only graduates of GED programs of the four tribal colleges in North Dakota in the years 1990-1999 were included.

**Assumptions**

The following basic assumptions were made for this study:

1. The population studied was served by General Educational Development programs at four of the five tribal colleges in North Dakota.
2. The groups participating in the study, GED graduates over a 10 year period from the four tribal colleges in North Dakota, was accurate and reflective of the programs of the institution the participants represent.

**Definitions**

Definitions which were used throughout the study were state program specific and were as follows:

**Adult education:** The term "adult education" means services or instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals--

A. who have attained 16 years of age;
B. who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
C. who--

i. lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individuals to function effectively in society;
ii. do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
iii. are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

\textit{(Eligible Agency Certifications, 2001, p. 1)}

**Adult Basic Education:** “an instructional program for the undereducated adult planned around those basic and specific skills most needed to help him function more adequately as a member of society” (Good, 1973, p. 16).

**Education:**

(1) the aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of positive value in the society in which he lives; (2) the social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and controlled environment (especially the school) so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development; (3) the art of making available to each generation the organized knowledge of the past. (Good, 1973, p. 202)

**American Indian:** a member of any of the aboriginal peoples of North and South America except the Eskimos. The terms Native American, Indian, American Indian, and Native will be used interchangeably.

**General Educational Development (GED) program:** academic instruction to prepare students to take the high school equivalency examination.

**GED recipient:** a person who has obtained certification of high school equivalency by meeting state requirements and passing an approved exam, which is intended to provide an appraisal of the person’s achievement or performance in the broad subject matter areas usually required for high school graduation.

**Institution of higher education:** The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term in section 1201 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1141):

The term “institution of higher education” means an educational institution in any state which (1) admits as regular students only persons
having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate, (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education, (3) provides an educational program for which it awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a two-year program which is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree, (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution, and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time. Such term also includes any school which provides not less than a one-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and which meets the provisions of clauses (1), (2), (4), and (5). Such term also includes a public or nonprofit private educational institution in any state which, in lieu of the requirements in clause (1), admits as regular persons who are beyond the compulsory school attendance in the state which the institution is located. For purposes of this subsection, the Secretary shall publish a list of nationally recognized agencies or associations which he determines, pursuant to subpart 2 of part G of subpart IV of this chapter, to be reliable authority as to the quality of the education or training offered. (Eligible Agency Certifications, 2001, p. 2)

Literacy: an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society. (Eligible Agency Certifications, 2001, p. 2)

Academic persistence: “a measure, usually in school years, of the extent to which students continue their residence in college: usually employed in conjunction with measures of general scholastic aptitude” (Good, 1973, p. 416).

Persistence in school: “the continuance or the role of pupils who have once been enrolled” (Good, 1973, p. 416).

Postsecondary educational institution: The term “postsecondary educational institution” means--

A. an institution of higher education that provides not less than a 2-year program of instruction that is acceptable for credit toward a bachelor's degree;
B. a tribally controlled community college; or
C. a nonprofit educational institution offering certificate or apprenticeship programs at the postsecondary level. *(Eligible Agency Certifications, 2001, p. 2)*

**State:** “each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico” *(Eligible Agency Certifications, 2001, p. 2).*

**Native American:** the aboriginal people of the United States, also categorized in tribes. The terms American Indian and Indian mean essentially the same. The preference is determined by the people themselves or groups. For the purpose of this study, the term Native American will be used interchangeably with American Indian, Indian, and Native.

**Self-determination:** having independent authority—freedom.

**Tribal college:** a two or four year college that is located on or near a reservation and is chartered by a tribe or tribes to provide higher education, training, and basic educational opportunities to Native Americans, specifically, and others.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were identified for investigation:

1. What is the completion rate of the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in which Native Americans enroll in North Dakota?

2. What scores do the GED graduates of programs at the tribal colleges receive on the GED test?

3. What are the similarities and the differences among or between GED recipients of North Dakota tribal colleges and mainstream GED programs?

4. Which variables, such as single parent, gender, age, race, marital status, employment status, last grade completed, disability (physical, social,
mental, intellectual, behavioral), are perceived to be factors in program completion of the GED at North Dakota tribal colleges?

5. What are the stated purposes for pursuing the certificate among Native American GED recipients at tribal college Adult Basic Education programs?
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Indian Education

The American Indian has a unique place in America, based upon a special relationship between Indian nations or tribes and the federal government. This special relationship was established during the founding of the United States of America, between the federal government and American Indians who were indigenous to North America. The Indians were recognized as sovereign nations by the United States government. Since the end of the treaty period, presidential executive orders, Supreme Court decisions, and Acts of Congress have continued to recognize and strengthen this special relationship. This relationship exists today and provides the legal basis for federal responsibility and involvement in the education of Indian people (Tippeconnic, 1991).

In order to give a frame of reference and understanding to this study, a short history of Indian education will be useful. An effort was made to divide the history of Indian Education into several periods.

The first period is the Pre-European or the Indian period. This was the time prior to the arrival of Columbus in 1492. In the Pre-European period, Indian people had both a formal and informal educational structure for teaching their youth the tribal culture. A passage in the final report of the American Indian Policy Review Commission succinctly describes this process.
Education has always been a need of human society, and every society evolved a process of educating its youth for active adult participation in that society. The Indian society devised means for socializing the youth and transmitting the culture. The educational process was active and not passive. The boys and girls learned by doing. The process was not highly structured and was dependent upon parents, relatives, and tribal elders for implementation. The Curriculum could be described as informal but relevant. The life style of Indians was tuned to the natural forces surrounding them and the overall goal of education was to preserve and maintain their way of life. Indian children were expected to grow up as their parents were, to perpetuate tribal customs, values, traditions, and ethics. Because American Indians did not have a written language, much of what was learned was by word-of-mouth transmission. The basic thrust of Indian education was traditional in the sense that the past was revered. (Task Force Five, 1976, p. 5)

The differing tribes, of which there were many, used generally the same pattern of education for their tribal members. While it may not have been seen in the same light as the formalized European educational structure, it met the tribes' needs at that period of time (Fowler, 1992).

**Evangelical/Mission/Missionary/Paternalistic Period**

After the arrival of the Europeans, the process of education centered on the Evangelical period or Mission/Missionary/Paternalistic period which roughly occurred from 1500 to 1870. A more structured educational system was imposed upon the Indian during this period. Religious orders or sects whose goals were to civilize and Christianize the Indian were very influential during this period. This also was the time in which the federal government began to take control of Indian education, which extended into the 20th century (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Thompson, 1978). The first formal Indian school was established in 1568 in Havana, Cuba, by Spanish priests (Thompson, 1978). During this religious-dominated period, different types of religious-oriented schools were established for the Indian.
The French Catholic priests operated in the northcentral area of the continent. They promoted and stressed religious training. The Spanish Catholic priests operated in the southern and southwestern areas of the continent. They taught religion and agricultural skills. The English on the eastern coast recruited Indian youth to attend the same schools as their youth. Their purpose was to encourage and train Indians to become Anglican ministers for both societies, Indian and Anglo (Task Force Five, 1976). The English system had the most influence on Indian education because the 13 English colonies eventually shaped the federal government policies (Task Force Five, 1976).

After the establishment of the United States and the settlers' movement west, the Indians were relegated to reservations. Treaties which were negotiated with the Indians in return for their lands included provisions for Indian education. In 1778, the first treaty was signed with the United States government (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Thompson, 1978). In 1794, the first treaty alluding to the provision of educational services was signed with the Delaware, Tuscarora, and Stockbridge tribes (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Task Force Five, 1976). The educational stipulations in the first treaties involved white farmers, who were to teach Indians agricultural methods.

Between 1794 and 1868, 120 treaties containing educational provisions for Indian tribes were signed (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Thompson, 1978). In exchange for the large amounts of land, the treaties granted the Indian nations specific services, such as education and health (Tippeconnic, 1991). In 1801, the United States assumed some responsibility for Indian education and other services by passing the first in a series of Trade and Intercourse Acts, which
provided $15,000 for Indian education (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Task Force Five, 1976).

In 1819, the Civilization Fund Act provided an annual fund for Indian education. These funds were appropriated to support the mission schools, which were established by various religious denominations (Task Force Five, 1976). These funds were supplemented by tribal annuities from ceded land and with donations to the various religious organizations (Task Force Five, 1976).

The Federal Period (1870 to the 1960s)

Toward the end of the 1800s, the federal government became a dominant force in Indian education. In 1870, the federal government appropriated $100,000 to establish industrial training schools for Indian students. The first, Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, opened in 1878. Schools in Forest Grove (Oregon), Chilocco (Oklahoma), and Lawrence (Kansas) soon followed. Military influence was evident in the utilization of former military barracks as schools and these schools’ discipline and regimen were modeled after the military (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Szasz, 1977). Teaching agriculture and vocational skills to prepare Native Americans for assimilation were curricular goals of the schools. The curriculum consisted of basic academic courses as well as training in vocational skills such as agriculture, textiles, blacksmithing, and carpentry (Fowler, 1992; Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Task Force Five, 1976).

In 1928, Lewis Meriam published *The Problem of Indian Administration* or more commonly known as The Meriam Report. In this report, he condemned the policy of removing Indian children from their homes for educational purposes. His recommendations were that day schools replace boarding
schools, that Indian schools become models of excellence, that the quality of
teachers be improved, and that efforts be made to provide a relevant curriculum
for the students (Szasz, 1977; Task Force Five, 1976). John Collier, who was
Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the early 1930s, began to implement some of
Meriam's recommendations. Some of the boarding schools were closed, some
added high school curricula, and teacher standards were established (Fuchs &
Havighurst, 1972; Szasz, 1977).

Collier arranged for necessary use of Native dialects, developing and
consigning arts and crafts, conserving authentic Indian music, teaching adult
basic education, training Indian teachers, teaching Indian history and culture,
and developing inservice training programs for school staff (Jeanotte, 1981).
Many of these efforts are still being attempted and implemented in schools and
communities through different federal, state, and local programs.

Two significant legislative acts were passed in 1934. The Johnson
O'Malley Act allowed states to contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to
deliver Indian health, education, and welfare services. This act led to the
enrollment of thousands of Indians in state public schools (Fuchs & Havighurst,

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, sometimes referred to as the
Indian Bill of Rights, stopped the sale of Indian lands, established a modified
form of tribal self-government, and provided for reservation day schools
(Fuchs & Havighurst, 1972; Szasz, 1977; Task Force Five, 1976). According to
Brightman (1971), when the act was passed 75% of Indian children attending
school were in boarding schools. Within 10 years, 67% of Indian children were
attending day schools on the reservations. Sixteen boarding schools, including
Carlisle, had been closed and 84 day schools had been opened.
Indian Self-Determination Period (1960-Present)

The mid 1960s to the present has been seen as the Indian Self-Determination period (Szasz, 1977). One of the significant forces to promote this was the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. This act provided for the beginning of Headstart, Upward Bound, Job Corps, Vista, and Community Action Programs (Task Force Five, 1976). This act allowed Indians the advantage to direct and control education for Indians through the various programs.

Three major education studies were published which helped pave the way for major reforms in Indian education. These reports were *Equality for Educational Opportunity* (Coleman et al., 1966); *Indian Education: A National Tragedy--A National Challenge* (United States Senate, 1969), also known as the Kennedy Report; and *Final Report of the National Study of American Indian Education: The Education of Indian Children and Youth* (Havighurst, 1970). The passage of the Indian Education Act of 1972 created more tribal involvement in programs and addressed cultural inclusion and relevancy of materials and programs (Task Force Five, 1976).

The most significant act which allowed Indians to begin realizing and practicing self-determination was the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. Tribes were authorized to contract with the BIA for services, including education (Fowler, 1992).

Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Continental Congress in 1775 foresaw the need to negotiate with the original inhabitants of the North American continent, the Indians. One of the first actions the Continental Congress took was to name a Committee on Indian Affairs. Henry Knox, the Secretary of War, assumed responsibility for Indian
affairs with the ordinance of August 7, 1786. The primary purpose of the office, under the direction of the Secretary of War, was to place armed militia at the disposal of Indian commissioners for negotiating treaties with the Indians (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2001). The Bureau of Indian Affairs is an agency of the United States Department of the Interior that is responsible for providing services to federally recognized American Indian tribes. The Bureau of Indian Affairs or the BIA, as it is commonly referred to in Indian country, was conceptualized and then created by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun on March 11, 1824. While it was administratively established by the Secretary of War, it did not receive congressional authorization until 1834. Its assignment to the War Department of the United States only lasted 15 years. It was then transferred to the Department of the Interior on March 3, 1849, where it was passed from military to civilian control. It was first named the Indian Service. This was later changed to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The primary function of the Indian Service was to negotiate treaties with Indians. These treaties were needed because of the land issue of Indians. The movement of the BIA to the Department of the Interior was a lasting one. The Department of the Interior still has the responsibility for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The function or mission of the BIA as currently stated is as follows:

- to enhance the quality of life, to promote economic opportunity, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes and Alaska Natives. We will accomplish this through the delivery of quality services, maintaining government-to-government relationships within the spirit of Indian self-determination. (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2001, p. 1)

The BIA, as an arm of the United States government, has been responsible for the education of Indian people. Education of Indian youth became a focus in 1879, with the establishment of boarding or industrial
schools for Indians. Schools which opened within a five year period were Carlisle in Pennsylvania, Chemawa Indian School in Oregon, Haskell Institute in Kansas, and Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma. Many other schools followed in their wake.

The BIA has employed many ways to inculcate Indian people into the mainstream way of life (Jeanotte, 1981). The ways have been termed assimilation, isolation, acculturation, and termination. Assimilation was the attempt to integrate the Indian into the mainstream culture by means of placing Indians in schools and educating them in the white man's ways, providing training in mainstream occupations and in major mainstream cities with the aim to have them adopt the culture of white society. Isolation was the removal of children from their parents, communities, and tribes by placing them in schools outside of their communities with the intent to de-Indianize them (Task Force Five, 1976). Acculturation was the required adoption of a different culture, often requiring the loss of one's own. For example, being required to move onto a farm and learn agricultural practices used by Europeans was used as a method, as well as being educated by the dominant culture's style and content. Termination was the most destructive, being the obliteration of a people and their culture. It later came to mean termination of the recognition of tribes, thereby de-obligating responsibility for tribes by the federal government. Forced assimilation could also be seen as termination.

Self-determination is the new federal policy: Indian people having control and authority over their way of life, including education. Self-determination is a policy that the Indian people have learned to use to their benefit (Jeanotte, 1981). As shown by the increasing numbers of educated Indians, it has proven
to be an effective tool by which Indian people can determine or shape their education and their destiny.

**Tribal Colleges**

One of the initial attempts to take control of Indian education by Indians was the formation of tribal colleges. These were started in 1968, with the Navajo Nation taking the lead by creating the Navajo Community College or the Diné Community College. Many tribes soon followed suit and formed their own colleges, as well as later forming an alliance among these colleges, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). There are presently 32 tribal community colleges in the United States and 1 in Canada (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 1999). Although finances to administer the colleges have been in short supply, the colleges have used many innovative ways to continue to operate and to expand their academic offerings, as well as their facilities and services for the students they serve. Four of the five tribal colleges in North Dakota provide Adult Basic Education programs. This appears to be a way to ensure a feeder system to the college and to create a bridge between educational levels and systems. It also assures the tribe that the people will become minimally educated and may be the starting point for advanced education or training for jobs, thus ensuring opportunity for a better quality of life.

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium, a representative for the tribal colleges and universities and The Institute for Higher Education Policy, conducted a study, *Building Strong Communities: Tribal Colleges as Engaged Institutions*, which speaks of the expanding importance of the role of tribal colleges in serving tribal communities where they are located. A relationship characterized as “engaged involvement,” in which tribal culture and traditions
are at the heart of the tribal colleges' missions. Tribal culture and traditions are interwoven throughout instructional activities, and community services are created between the tribal colleges and local communities. General Educational Development (GED)/adult education was addressed as an area of comprehensive community engagement. The findings of the study pointed out the important role that tribal colleges play in serving students and the larger communities where they are located and that they serve ("Study Shows," 2001).

GED Program/Adult Basic Education Programs

The GED tests are intended to measure the academic skills and the knowledge required of high school graduates in the United States or Canada. Due to the lack of adequate prior schooling, many of the World War II veterans were not able to take advantage of employment, technical training, and advanced educational opportunities upon their return to civilian life. Taking and passing the GED tests permitted the veterans to take advantage of educational and employment opportunities. During the 1950s, the focus of the GED was enlarged from the military and the option was offered to anyone who had not graduated from high school (Tyler, Murnane, & Willett, 2000).

At the end of the 20th century, there was the recognition that the nation was moving from an industrial to an information-based society. There were initiatives and trends in the last decade that made a high school diploma essential in order to qualify for additional education and training or to enter the work force. Whereas before the high school diploma was an asset in the work force, it is now in demand as part of a skilled labor force and represents the minimal entry requirement. In addition to being a requirement, it also is an essential beginning for those who want to progress in their personal, academic,
and work lives into the next century (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999).

The past decade has experienced unprecedented changes in welfare-to-work laws by President Clinton and Congress. In replacing the New Deal era welfare system with state run programs featuring work rules and time limits, welfare rolls have dropped 45%. Those who remain on welfare, 6.6 million, are often without high school credentials (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999).

Literacy also became a focus in the past decade. A National Literacy Summit 2000 conference was held in Washington, DC. The group was charged with developing a 10 year plan to ensure that the United States becomes a literate nation by 2010 (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999).

Rep. Bill Goodling (R-PA), who was considered a major legislative force in the literacy movement, made this statement:

"Six years ago, when I spoke of functional literacy, I stated that a person should be able to read, write, think, and compute at the sixth grade level. Things have changed; today I would define functional literacy as the ability to read, write, think, and compute at the 12th grade level." (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999, p. i)

In 1999, there were 860,000 adults who recognized a need to earn a high school credential. The number taking the test in 1999 increased 4.5% program wide. Previously, the GED program had seen booms during economic slowdowns. The increase in the late 1990s was significant in that the economy was booming and unemployment had attained an all-time low. There were several initiatives which contributed to these increases (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999).
Societal factors have emerged that may account for the increased numbers of 16, 17, and 18 year old adults taking the GED tests to earn a high school equivalency diploma. Home schooling was rapidly growing. In 1990, an estimated 250,000 to 350,000 children in the United States were educated at home. By 1995, the numbers rose from 700,000 to 750,000. The growth was at a rate between 7% and 15% per year. It is estimated that the number of children educated at home could well be above the 1 million mark. These students often took the GED tests as a way to document their learning and to qualify for post-secondary scholarships and financial aid (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999).

In a report released by the National Center for Education Statistics (1999a), 350,000 to 550,000 10th through 12th grade students left school each year without successfully completing a high school program. The high school completion rate had only slightly increased over the last quarter of the century, despite the increased importance of the high school diploma. In 1993, Congress authorized a program, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, as a pilot program in 10 states, which was later expanded to 26 states. The program's aim was to provide 16 to 18 year old high school dropout youths with values, life skills, education, and self-discipline. The ultimate goal of the program was to place youths who graduated into jobs, military service, and/or post-secondary education programs. Seventy-two percent of the 4,159 youths enrolled in 1998 earned their GED high school equivalency diploma (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999).

The GED tests were originally established in response to the military, that of assisting and validating the high school level skills of service men and women returning from World War II. Now civilian men and women are required
to take the GED to validate their skills to qualify for military service (General Educational Development Testing Service, 1999).

The General Educational Development Testing Service is a program of the American Council on Education's Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials. Its primary purpose is to provide a reliable vehicle, the GED tests, through which adults can certify that they possess the major and lasting outcomes of a traditional high school education (Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, 2001b).

The GED has also been shown to serve the following functions: stimulus to human capital investment, tool for measuring and assessing cognitive skills, sorting procedures, certification tool, and self-confidence builder. Studies have shown that 50-63% of GED recipients pursue and obtain additional civilian education and training, most notably in community colleges and vocational-technical skills. Although GED recipients have shown that grade point averages in vocational programs, and in two and four year colleges, have been similar to high school graduates, GED recipients are less likely than high school diploma holders to complete their post-secondary education. Also in comparison to high school graduates, GED recipients tend to earn less, experience more job turnover, and have similar cognitive abilities (Boesel et al., 1998).

Dropouts: National Average

Over the decade 1990-2000, between 347,000 and 544,000 10th through 12th grade students left school each year without successfully completing high school and receiving a diploma. In October 1999, 5 out of every 100 young adults who had been enrolled in high school in October 1998
were no longer in school and had not successfully completed a high school program (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999a).

The definition of a dropout varies throughout the United States by state, district, and even schools (Gaustad, 1991). Some districts included students in their reporting that others did not include. Some districts kept more complete records, such as follow-up on students who did not return after the summer to determine if they were enrolled in other schools. Other information used by some districts included the follow-up on non-traditional students (i.e., those who left regular high school before graduation to enter correctional institutions, enroll in GED programs, or enter college) and were counted as dropouts until an equivalency program was completed (McMillan, Kaufman, & Whitener, 1994).

Dropout rates in the United States are defined by three categories: event dropout rates, status dropout rates, and cohort dropout rates.

Event dropout rates . . . describe the proportion of youth ages 15 through 24 who dropped out of grades 10-12 in the 12 months preceding October 1999.

Five out of every 100 young adults enrolled in high school in October 1998 left school before October 1999 without successfully completing a high school program.

Hispanic students were more likely than white students to leave school before completing a high school program.

In 1999, young adults living in families with incomes in the lowest 20 percent of all family incomes were five times as likely as their peers from families in the top 20 percent of the income distribution to drop out of high school.

Although dropout rates were highest among students age 19 or older, about two-thirds . . . of the current-year dropouts were ages
15 to 18; moreover, about two-fifths . . . of the 1999 dropouts were ages 15 through 17. (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999b, p. 1)

Status dropout rates represent the proportion of young adults ages 16 through 24 who are out of school and who have not earned a high school credential. Status rates are higher than event rates because they include all dropouts in this age range, regardless of when they last attended school.

In October 1999, some 3.8 million young adults were not enrolled in a high school program and had not completed high school.

The status dropout rate of whites remains lower than that of blacks, but over the past quarter of a century, the difference between the rates of whites and blacks has narrowed. In addition, Hispanic young adults in the United States continue to have a higher status dropout rate than whites or blacks. (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999b, p. 1)

Cohort rates measure what happens to a group of students over a period of time. These rates are based on repeated measures of a cohort of students with shared experiences and reveal how many students starting in a specific grade drop out over time. [Typically, these data are provided by longitudinal studies.] (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999d, p. 1)

In a research paper, High School Dropouts: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions (Hetherington, 1999), the percentage of dropouts in American youth age 16 to 24 was 11% in 1997, an improvement over 11.1% in 1996. It was stated that there were higher dropout rates for minorities, which did not include Native Americans specifically. At the national level, males had a higher dropout rate of 11.9% than females at 10.1%. The 1997 numbers indicated a positive upturn in dropout rates. In 1972, the national overall dropout rate was 14.6% and indicated a steady decline. The numbers for the next 25 years were 14.1% (1980), 12.1% (1990), and 11% (1997). The dropout rate had also declined for minorities. White non-Hispanic rates dropped by 4.7 percentage
points over the same 25 years, with Black and Hispanic rates declining 7.9 and 9 points respectively. According to data in a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, the percentage of 9th and 12th graders who dropped out were categorized by state and ethnicity for the years 1994-95 and 1995-96.

The state of North Dakota reported the lowest dropout rate of 2.5 for both years measured. The 9th to 12th grade NCES report highlighted an additional minority group not previously reported in the age 16 to 25 report: American Indian. Several states reported higher dropout rates among American Indians, including Minnesota at 19.5%, Nebraska at 17.1%, Wyoming at 15.6%, and Louisiana at 15.1% (Hetherington, 1999). The increasing numbers of young Native American people in elementary and secondary schools and the reporting of high dropout rates of Native Americans by state in comparison with other races compelled Native Americans to look for solutions to these educational problems and how that concern transferred into the need for GED programs.

Consequences of Dropping Out

Several consequences were found to be related to dropping out. Economic consequences consisted of the following outcomes. Dropouts were more likely to be unemployed than high school graduates and when they secured work they were apt to make less money. High school dropouts were more likely to receive public assistance than high school graduates who did not go to college. One of the reasons for the reliance on public assistance seemed to be due to the fact that many of the dropouts were young females who may have had children at younger ages, and these were more likely to be single parents than the high school graduates. Social implications seemed to result from the individual stresses and frustrations associated with dropping out. A
disproportionate percentage of the nation’s prison and death row inmates were dropouts (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999c).

**Reasons That Students Leave School/Drop Out**

Tyler (1998) reported that one of the reasons dropouts did poorly in school was often related to attitudes, values, and behaviors. In addition, life events, such as pregnancy, family problems, and poverty, led students to drop out, thereby posing continuing barriers to their ability to perform successfully. Most dropouts were non-traditional students who were likely to be on their own financially and often were single parents.

Students living in households in the lowest 20% of all family incomes were seven times more likely to drop out as students in families with incomes in the upper 20%, according to a 1997 survey (Hetherington, 1999).

Employment was a factor cited by students who lived in locations with a good economic climate, who may have left school for the short-term reward of a paycheck. Most of these dropouts had a short-term view of the world and did not reflect on the long-term implications of their decision to leave school (Hetherington, 1999).

Student retention was also cited as a reason for dropping out. Approximately two thirds of dropouts left before the 10th grade, most of whom had been held back at least one year. Whiteside and Merriam found in a 1973 study that 84% of all pre 9th grade dropouts in their study had been retained two grades, and all had been retained at least one grade (Hetherington, 1999). It was also reported that “a one grade retention increases the risk of dropping out by forty to fifty percent, and more than one by ninety percent” (Hetherington, 1999, p. 3). Age, then, appeared to be a negative factor for students who may
have been older than their peers as a result of the grade retention, as well as the stigma of being retained.

Completion Rates

The high school completion rate represented the proportion of 18 through 24 year olds who have completed a high school diploma or an equivalent credential, including a GED credential. In addition to event, status, and cohort rates, the completion rate also looked at the variables of race/ethnicity, age and sex, and geographical region and state. Graduation rates were the measurement of students who had completed the traditional high school years and had shown success by graduating with a high school diploma.

The high school completion rate improved only slightly over the last quarter century. Between 1972 and 1985, the rates climbed by 2.6 percentage points (from 82.8% in 1972 to 85.4% in 1985). Since 1985, the rate fluctuated around 85% and 86%. There was a net increase of 3 percentage points over 28 years (1972-1999). The national goal was a 90% high school completion rate and the 3 percentage points indicated slow progress toward achieving that goal (National Education Goals Panel, 1999).

The importance of a high school education changed over the last half century in the United States. While it was once an asset, with technological advances in the workplace, increased demands for a skilled work force meant that a high school education served as a minimum requirement for entry into the work force. In order to access further education and training in the work force, completion of a high school education seemed essential.

Dropouts: American Indians

According to an American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) comprehensive study conducted by Swisher and Hoisch (1991), the dropout rates for American
Indians/Alaska Natives were higher than other racial/ethnic groups, but the overall or national AI/AN dropout rate was not known. Although data were collected from state departments of education, the BIA, and tribally controlled schools, as well as extensive library searches of the literature and data, it became apparent that the lack of a standardized definition of dropouts and methods of counting and calculating rates made a meta-analysis impossible.

Longitudinal studies suggested a dropout rate for Native Americans of between 24% and 48% for 1962-89 and 29%-36% in the 1980s, but these studies were limited to specific populations and regions. It also appeared from the study that academic reasons for leaving school appeared less important than family and school environmental factors (Swisher & Hoisch, 1991). Not only did AI/AN tend to have the highest dropout rates of other major racial/ethnic groups, they also had the lowest rate of eventually returning to school and completing high school or an equivalent program.

There are many references in the literature which indicated the dropout rate of AI/AN. The 1969 Kennedy Report found that dropout rates for AI/AN were twice the national average for both public and BIA schools. Dropout rates ranged between 25% and 75% in a 1975 report on Indian education (Task Force Five, 1976). Yet another study, National Impact Evaluation of Title IV, Part A, found that dropout rates in a number of studies ranged from 14% to 100% (Developmental Associates, 1983). More recent dropout rates included from 35.5% to over 50% (Wells, 1991).

According to a data on the 2000 cohort graduation rate for AI/AN students presented by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the dropout rate for AI/AN students was 41.8% (Bucholz, 2001). This had ramifications for
tribal college GED programs, since presumably many of these students resided on or near reservations that were served by these programs.

Native American student membership in elementary and secondary education in the 1996-97 North Dakota state report was 8.1% of the general population, as compared to 5% in 1987. Of all the minorities reported in the state of North Dakota, Native Americans made the most significant growth during this period. Black non-Hispanics increased from .6% in 1987 to .9% in 1996, the Asian or Pacific Islanders decreased from .8% in 1987 to .7% in 1996, and the Hispanic remained stable at 1.1%. These statistics were figured in the thousands (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1997).

In 1995, in the state of North Dakota, 860 obtained a high school equivalency. Again it was assumed that some of these may have been Native American, since the report did not indicate the race of the GED graduates (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1997).

Barriers

What were some of the barriers that prevented greater numbers of people from taking advantage of the Adult Basic Education (ABE)/GED programs? In a dissertation study conducted in Navajo County, Arizona, by Kenna (1994), a questionnaire was implemented that attempted to identify perceived barriers by adults that prevented them from obtaining a GED or high school diploma. The perceived barriers were evaluated into three types: situational, dispositional, and institutional. The participants in the study were Caucasian, Native American, Black, and Hispanic. They were also divided by gender. Of all the perceived barriers, situational barriers like being unmarried with children or being unemployed accounted for 36%, institutional barriers like
entry requirements to programs accounted for 36%, and dispositional barriers like a person's persistence or resiliency accounted for 31%.

A study conducted by Sherman (1990) attempted to identify what survey respondents perceived to be barriers to not attending or participating in ABE programs. The responses were then used to inform decision makers as to what were the best practices in marketing and delivering the ABE programs. In response to open-ended questions done by a telephone survey, "Why are you not attending school now?" and "What reasons keep you from attending a class you like?", the responses seemed remarkably alike. The responses were "I don't have anyone to care for my child," "I'm too old to return to school," "Classes are provided at the wrong times," and "I don't have transportation." In a related survey done with 139 officials from educational and social agencies, the responses were somewhat different. When asked of their perceptions of reasons why adults did not participate in the ABE programs, the program representatives ranked and cited the reasons as such: fear of failure, unaware of program, child care problems, transportation, cost of attending, wrong times, and location. Sherman reported that child care should always be made available, local community organizations should assist with costs of GED, class schedules should be flexible for working students, and that transportation problems could be assisted by vouchers. Sherman made the suggestion that efforts needed to be made to improve potential participants' self-images and to address more dispositional barriers.

In a demographic report in *Education Week* (Jacobson, 1997), the United States Bureau of the Census reported that Americans are better educated than ever before. It was also reported that more children were living with only one parent and that more people were receiving assistance from the government in
the form of food stamps and Medicaid. The proportion of children under age 18 living with one parent more than doubled between 1970 and 1995. The number grew from 12% in 1970 to 27% in 1995. The growth was attributed to rising divorce rates and increasing numbers of children living with a parent who had never been married. The use of child care centers from 1988 to 1993 fell and then rose to 30%. The use of family child care providers fell from 23% in 1988 to 18% in 1993. So, child care clearly needs to be part of the consideration of strategies to meet the needs of dropouts with children. Child care centers sponsored by colleges should be beneficial to students and to the college through the care provided and by modeling appropriate child care to young mothers.

In an evaluation of the Teacher Quality Enhancement Project at the University of North Dakota (Simanton, 2001), many of the students who were interviewed stated that child care was a concern. There was no consistent place for their children, the hours of present child care centers were not conducive for evening classes, and they did not want to burden family members with child care assistance. These college students, many of whom were young and/or single parents, also were reflective of the young parent who had dropped out of high school with the same needs.

Identifying barriers which prevent Native Americans from attending GED programs or graduating from the program is necessary. Some of the barriers include the need for child care; transportation; cost involved with attending; research and utilization of the concepts of learning styles, self-esteem, and motivation; the accommodations of time and location; and the self-perception of the limitations of age. The planning of programs that meet the needs of the whole student, such as with the elementary and high school levels, is necessary
to address the mental, physical, social, and intellectual components of a person. To provide counseling to give direction and support to individuals in the myriad of choices that would be available to them upon completion of a GED, as well as the support so necessary during the process of participation in the program, would prove beneficial. Student support could be assistance with personal and academic problems, information on sources of funding, assistance and contacts, preparation for required testing for the field or the college of choice, or assistance with field experience and practicum expectations. The counselor would serve in a guidance counselor/social worker capacity. Research conducted on the different types and needs of people entering the program, rather than just surface assessment and a community-wide recruitment plan, seems necessary. Strategies such as these could most notably increase the participation and graduation rate of participants in the ABE/GED programs.

Individual and Social Consequences

Consequences of dropping out of school can have individual and social consequences for AI/AN students. The individual consequences may be low academic skills, lack of employment opportunities, limited advanced educational and training opportunities, and an adverse effect on a dropout's psychological well-being and health.

The social consequences include incomes lower than the national income, increased demand for social services, increased crime, reduced political participation, reduced intergenerational ability, and fragile levels of community stability and security (Task Force on New York State Dropout Problems, 1986). The unemployment rate for dropouts is more than double that of high school graduates (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). High school dropouts earn 30% less than high school graduates (Economic Impact,
Female dropouts experience an additional burden. A female dropout earns 50 cents for every dollar earned by a man with the same level of education (Posner, 1990). A high school graduate may earn an average of $212,000 more in his/her lifetime than a high school dropout and a college graduate will earn $812,00 more in their lifetime than a high school dropout in 1993 dollars (Schwartz, 1995). Dropouts account for nearly 50% of the heads of households on welfare and approximately 50% of the United States prison population (Schwatz, 1995).

A study was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention between 1993 and 1996 with 430,000 people on the subject of their health. A question was asked about how healthy they felt, physically and emotionally, during a 30 day period. According to the national survey, college graduates reported feeling healthy 26 days per month. High school dropouts reported feeling healthy only 22.8 days per month. The premise behind this study was that college graduates did feel better emotionally and physically than high school dropouts because they had better jobs, took better care of themselves, and had greater access to health care ("Health Drops Off," 1998; Hetherington, 1999).

Swisher and Hoisch (1991) stated that it was sensible to address school and society relationships through the dropout issue because dropout prevention is more likely to return social and economic dividends to society. Collectively, being able to confront the dropout situation is an indication of a successful social and economic community environment.

Clear Definition Is Needed

A precise definition of dropout must be developed and used by all states. Only then can statistics be combined and compared. Morrow (1987) suggests
that any definition include three criterias: (1) Is the student actively enrolled?, (2) If not, has the enrollment been formally transferred to another legitimate institution?, and (3) Has the student earned a high school diploma or its equivalent?

There are actually several categories of students for the term dropout. There are "push-outs" or students who are deemed undesirable, the "disaffiliated" or those who have failed in attempts to complete a program, the "capable dropouts" or those who are just not suited for school, and the "stop-outs" who drop out and return to school again (Swisher & Hoisch, 1991).

United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

The report entitled *We, The . . . First Americans* by the United States Department of Commerce (1993) points out a number of reasons AI/AN drop out, including obstacles that stand in the way of high school completion. The report also gives reasons these students have difficulty in reentry into the system, even for a GED. The selected citations that follow give the reader a flavor of the reported issues:

Nearly 2 million American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts are living in the U.S. in 1990, which represents an increase of 38% over the 1980 total. (p. 1)

Thirty-nine percent of the American Indian/Alaska Native population was under 20 years of age in 1990, compared with 29 percent of the Nation's total population. (p. 3)

Approximately 8 percent of all American Indians were 60 years of age and older in 1990, compared with 17 percent for the total population. (p. 3)

The median age of the American Indian population was 26 years, considerably younger than the U.S. median age of 33 years. (p. 3)

Although the vast majority of American Indian families had both a wife and husband present, the proportion of families maintained by a female
householder at 27.3 percent was higher than the national average of 16.5 percent. This has shown an increase in American Indian families maintained by a female householder without a husband present during the last decade to the present. (p. 4)

In 1990, 66 percent of the 1,080,000 American Indians 25 years and over were high school graduates or higher, compared with only 56 percent in 1980. Despite the advances, the 1990 proportion was still below the total population of 75 percent. (p. 4)

Sixty-nine percent of American Indian males 16 years old and over were in the labor force, compared with more than 74 percent for all males. (p. 5)

American Indian women shared in the national trend of increased labor force participation by women. The proportion of American Indian women in the labor force increased from 48 percent in 1980 to 55 percent in 1995. The rate for all women was only slightly higher at 58 percent. (p. 5)

A larger proportion of American Indians than of the total population were employed in service occupations; farming, forestry, and fishing jobs; precision production, craft, and repair occupations; or were employed as operators, fabricators, and laborers. (p. 5)

The median family income of American Indians/Alaska Natives was $21,750, compared with $35,225 for the total population. Stated another way, for every $100 U.S. families received, American Indian families received $62. (p. 6)

Twenty-seven percent of all American Indian families were maintained by a female householder with no husband present in 1990. The median income for these families was $10,742, about 62 percent of the $17,414 median for all families maintained by women without husbands. (p. 6)

The proportion of American Indian families living below the Official Government poverty level in 1989 was considerably higher than that of the total population. (p. 6)

In 1989, about 630,000, or 31 percent of American Indians, were living below the poverty level. The national average poverty rate was about 13 percent. (p. 6)
Twenty-seven percent, or 125,000, American Indian families were in poverty in 1989, compared with 10 percent of all families. (p. 6)

Fifty percent of American Indian families maintained by females with no husband present were in poverty, compared with 31 percent of all families maintained by women without husbands. (p. 6)

Statistics on American Indians residing on reservations and trust lands differed when viewed microscopically (United States Department of Commerce, 1993):

Twenty-two percent, or 437,431, of all American Indians (including Eskimos and Aleuts) lived on reservations and trust lands in 1990. Reservation and trust lands are areas with boundaries established by treaty, statute, and/or executive order or court order. (p. 7)

The median age of the American Indian population on all reservation and trust lands was 22 years, considerably younger than the median age of 26 years for the total American Indian population and the U.S. median age of 33 years. (p. 8)

Fifty-four percent of American Indian adults living on all reservations and trust lands were high school graduates or higher. (p. 9)

The per capita income in 1989 was about $4,478 for American Indians residing on all reservations and trust lands. (p. 10)

A very high proportion, 51 percent, of the 437,431 American Indians residing on reservations and trust lands were living below the poverty level in 1989. (p. 10)

**Persistence: Continuing in Education**

What is it that causes a person who has experienced lack of success or failure to try again at the same game? What motivates people to go on, in spite of past obstacles? Is it maturity? Is it life experiences or learned experience? A likely contributor is termed persistence. Persistence was defined by Good (1973) as a measure by which students continue their education. Persistence seemed a likely factor, with students who had not successfully completed their
high school years and not received their diplomas, in their decision to return to pursue an alternative method of completing their high school education.

Much has been studied on student leaving, retention, and persistence of college students by such noted researchers as Astin (1972, 1975), Smart and Pascarella (1987), and Tinto (1975). Persistence by these researchers was used in the context of reasons for leaving college and increasing retention of college students by the colleges/universities. Research on the elementary and secondary levels speaks to the same. Many theoretical perspectives have been advanced, such as economic, organizational, psychological, and societal factors, to account for the phenomena of college student departure (Tinto, 1986, 1987). Can these same theories be used to explain what causes a high school dropout to return to school and complete the GED? Can they be used as a boiler plate to explain reasons for returning to finish what may have caused individuals to view themselves as failures and as the source of feelings of frustration, anguish, and inadequacy? In the case of the high school dropout, these theories and studies showed what could have been done in the schools/colleges before they dropped out and also showed what should be done to retain them. But, what explained those things that motivated some students to pursue the GED after they had dropped out, in some cases, many years before?

Tinto (1987) noted:

There is still much we do not know about the longitudinal process of students leaving and the complex interplay of forces which give rise to it. Much of the literature on student dropouts is filled with stereotypes about the character and causes of student departure. Student dropouts have been frequently portrayed as having a distinct personality profile or as lacking in a particularly important attribute needed for college completion. We then tend to view them as different or deviant from the rest of the student population. Such stereotypes are reinforced by
negative language, which labels individuals as failures for not having completed their course of study. In this regard, dropout is one of the most frequently misused terms in our lexicon of educational descriptors. It is used to describe the action of all leavers, regardless of the reasons or conditions which mark their leaving. But leavers often do not think of themselves as failures. Many see their actions as quite positive steps toward goal fulfillment. Indeed, it is often the case that such departures are an important part of the process of discovery which marks individual social and intellectual maturation. (p. 3)

Other researchers, such as Shields (1995), conducted studies on the link between student identity, attributions, and self-esteem among returning adult college students. She used the “Attribution Theory” by Heider (1958) and the “Self-Presentation Theory” by Crittenden (1989) in reference to the subjects. Weiner (1992) also researched various achievement contexts. The context in the research was external and internal attributes in regard to student identity and self-esteem (Shields, 1995).

Could the reasons identified by Crittenden (1989), Heider (1958), Shields (1995), and Weiner (1992) be the same for an individual who has dropped out of high school and then returns to pursue the GED? Many of the individuals who have dropped out of high school are older and are more likely the age of current college students or a little older, with much of the same physical, intellectual, and social maturity and like experiences. It was with this premise that the comparison was made with the research on college students and GED student graduates by the investigator.

Tinto (1975) indicated in his study that intention and commitment on an individual level have been two major factors considered in student persistence and that stand out as primary roots of departure. In the study, they are referred to in terms of entering first year college students, but this may also be the case
of students who have “stopped out” from high school and then pursued the GED.

Intention and commitment each refer to important personal dispositions with which individuals enter institutions of higher education. Individual intentions may be viewed in terms of educational or occupational goals. Individual intentions, in regard to participation in higher education or attendance at a specific institution, are important indicators of the likelihood of degree completion (Astin, 1975; Panos & Astin, 1968; Rossman & Kirk, 1968). While intention may be construed as true for GED participation and completion, commitment is questionable, unless one considers the buying into of the purpose/mission of tribal colleges by the individual tribal members for an improved quality of life through education. Individual commitment may be expressed in terms of motivation, drive, or effort. The lack of individual commitments also is proven to be centrally related to departure from institutions of higher education. A person’s willingness to work toward attainment of his/her goal is an important part of the process of persistence in higher education (Astin, 1975; Panos & Astin, 1968; Rossman & Kirk, 1968).

Individual commitment takes two forms: goal and institutional. Goal commitment refers to a person’s commitment to the educational and occupational goals one holds for oneself. Institutional commitment refers to the person’s commitment to the institution in which s/he is enrolled. Cope and Hannah (1975) indicated that their review of the literature led them to the conclusion that with all personal attributes that were studied, they determined that personal commitment through either academic or occupational goals was the most important indicator of persistence.
On the institutional level, the four forms of individual experience which impact departure are adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation (Tinto, 1975). These may have very well been what impacted the GED student’s early withdrawal from school. They are certainly items to be studied at the elementary and secondary levels for decision makers to have an impact on dropout statistics.

Smart and Pascarella (1987) wrote about “stop-out” behavior and how understanding the personal, educational, and occupational motivations underlying the intent to reenter colleges takes on importance. It was expressed that periods of employment, family rearing, military service, and other activities may be important steps in the development of adulthood for many who “stop out” of college prior to earning their degree.

Smart and Pascarella (1987) performed a study to propose and test a causal model of factors associated with the intention of adults to assume the responsibility for their college education. The criterion measure was the intention of adults to reenter higher education. It was noted that prior research had demonstrated that the best estimates of students’ subsequent educational and occupational attainments are their initial educational and occupational intentions/aspirations. It was found that in looking at the characteristics of employing organizations, adults employed in larger and in public organizations are more likely to resume their college education. Extrinsic job satisfaction had a strong, direct effect for women only. Income, job prestige/status, and intrinsic job satisfaction all had significant direct effects for men only. Women who were dissatisfied with their income, fringe benefits, and job security were more inclined to resume their college education. Men who were likely to return to college tended to have jobs with higher status, lower income, and to derive less
intrinsic satisfaction (e.g., challenge of the job, variety of activities) from their jobs. In much the same way that adults were entering colleges for the above reasons, adults' educational and occupational intentions could be viewed to be related.

In studies by Astin (1972), Cope (1971), Fenstemacher (1973), and Spady (1970), it was found that the sex of an individual appeared to be related to college persistence, with a higher proportion of men finishing college programs than women. In doing a comparison between such data with GED completers, it was found that women were more inclined to complete the GED program. Lembesis (1965), Robinson (1967), and Spady (1971) found that among those who dropped out, a greater proportion of women who withdrew tended to do so voluntarily rather than by academic dismissal.

Research on preparation for the GED examination and subsequent completion indicates substantial differences between characteristics showing global and external functions related to a perception called field dependency/independency. Witkin's (1973) research indicated that the field independent people tended to be more analytical, logical, and better able to restructure and abstract subtle aspects of a problem than were field dependent people. In contrast, field dependent people tended to be more "global" and to incorporate more of the external dimensions of the perceptual field.

Donnarumma, Cox, and Beder (1980), in their studies, have shown that a significantly greater percentage of people (83%) who completed the GED were relatively field independent. It was also found that those who dropped out of GED instruction were more field dependent than those who persisted. Many studies have found that a greater percentage of women than men are more field
dependent. These findings would be helpful in diagnosing and prescribing instructional treatment (Donnarumma et al., 1980).

In a study by Newsom and Foxworth (1980), the relationship between locus of control and participation/completion of clients in ABE/GED classes was considered. Although the findings only suggested a relationship between locus of control and completion, much of what was found could be considered relevant to the study of the makeup of students in GED programs. Variations were found among the ethnic groups, educational levels, and the age groups in completion and locus of control.

Anderson and Niemi (1970) cited alienation and powerlessness as a part of an explanation for limited involvement by the disadvantaged in a study that had been done on dropouts of ABE programs in 1971-72. To further explain the alienation and powerlessness that students felt, other studies were referenced which furthered this school of thought. Tiffany, Cowan, and Tiffany (1970), in a study of manpower programs, stated that the programs were ineffective for the majority of the disadvantaged because these programs had been treating the effects of a lack of education and had been ignoring the psychological orientation of the disadvantaged toward having the power to influence their situation because of their perceived lack of power to improve their condition. Rotter (1954) explained this concept in terms of locus of control, which consists of either an internal or external orientation. If a person believes s/he can change his/her current situation by his/her behavioral acts, s/he is described as being internally oriented. If s/he believes that his/her behavioral acts cannot change or affect his/her current situation, s/he is described as externally oriented. Rotter also developed the Rotter I-E Scale to determine an individual's locus of control.
When the locus of control theory was applied to ABE/GED clientele, it was suggested there was a greater chance that a person who enrolled in the programs and went on to achieve his/her personal and program goals were “internals.” Internals would see the programs as a means by which to control, effect, and shape their future. Internals would enroll and complete in greater percentages than “externals.” This would have been because the external perceived that they have little control over their lives and circumstances. The study found that internality tended to increase with age. Externality was greatest among those who had completed six or less grades of school. It was also found that as educational level increased so did internality increase. The study indicated evidence that a relationship existed but was not significant between locus of control and age, as well as grade completed before enrolling in basic education and race. Findings among Afro-Americans indicated that a large portion rated themselves as externals. Mexican-Americans were divided more by chance between internals and externals. It was suggested that there was a need to examine locus of control among ethnic participants in more detail.

Outcomes of GED Participation

Dean (1998) itemized four outcomes of GED certification based upon his study of GED graduates in Pennsylvania:

GED recipients tend to feel better about themselves than do dropouts who never return to school. They have an enhanced sense of self-esteem by knowing that they have accomplished the requirements of educational certification.

GED recipients tend to realize greater satisfaction with their lives than do dropouts. They are more apt to read, continue learning, and be financially secure.
GED recipients are more likely to encourage their children to finish school as they realize the handicaps they have had to face by not completing high school themselves.

GED recipients are more likely to get a better job than high school dropouts who do not return to school. They tend to have more full-time work and experience regular, uninterrupted employment. (p. 4)

There are few dissertations done specifically on Native Americans and the GED program. Some that have dealt with the subject have been in regard to GED test scores and self-esteem. Two of the dissertations noted and utilized in this study were those by two noted Native American educators who are fully involved in Indian education.

Farlee's (1982) doctoral dissertation noted comparisons of the test scores of Native American GED students on the South Dakota Indian reservations of the Yankton Sioux and the Rosebud Sioux with non-Native adult learners in adjacent towns. Her conclusions were as follows:

1. There was a difference in performance on parts of the GED examination based on ethnic group membership, specifically when Native American and non-Natives were compared. The Native American scores were lower than the non-Natives.
2. When composite scores were compared between American Indians and non-Indians a difference was found in the performance on the GED examination.
3. There was a significant difference between scores of men and women on parts of the GED examination and the composite scores when compared with ethnicity. The scores of Native Americans were not as high as the non-Natives. (p. 64)

Swan’s (1977) dissertation was also on Native American GED students in the state of South Dakota and examined Native Americans’ self-esteem within their tribal group and their communities. His conclusion was that among Native American dropouts, those who completed their GED had the most positive sense of self-esteem when compared with those who were in the
process of preparing for the GED and those who made no attempt to enroll in ABE/GED classes. He also found that the self-concept of those Native American adults enrolled in the GED programs and those who were GED graduates was somewhat lower than that of the general population.

There are other dissertations that deal with Native Americans who started college and dropped out for varying reasons. These studies have given the reasons for dropping out and given recommendations or strategies to address them. Many of the reasons put forth by Native American college dropouts can also be viewed as the same reasons that impact GED students prior to making their commitment to pursue a GED certificate. It is not a difficult leap to think some of the same recommendations/suggestions for addressing these problems could also be used by GED programs in giving services to the Native American students. It would appear that providing the program means more than just looking at it an academic sense and must address the whole student, academically, socially, and psychologically.

Learning styles also have been a subject of discussion in educational circles, mainly at the elementary and secondary learner levels. This should be given consideration and discussion with adult learners as well. Learning styles were recommended for use in Indian education in articles by Swisher and Hoisch (1991) and Swisher (1997). In a study conducted by Pigg, Busch, and Lacy (1980) on learning styles in adult education, they cited reasons or theories for the use of identifying and utilizing learning styles of participants in Adult Basic Education programs. Knowles (1973) is cited as having written that how a person learns and helping people understand how to learn were major requisites for a successful educational program. Smith and Haverkamp (1977) stated that educators should seek to match learning situations that were
commensurate with their learning styles. Such concepts may result in useful and important tools to use in learning activities with educators who may be designing learning experiences. It was further stated that through identifying differences in learning styles, “then counseling, program planning, learning environments, and administrative strategies could be more finely tuned for their benefit” (Cawley, Miller, & Milligan, 1976, p. 102). The tool Cawley et al. focused on was the Learning Style Inventory (LSI). The inventory was developed by researchers in the field of organizational psychology. The learning style concept examines the question of “how people learn.” The Learning Set, introduced by Ausubel (1968), and Cognitive Style, introduced by Cohen (1969) and Kagan, Moss, and Sigel (1963), were several labels attached to learning styles. There were several consistent aspects that were derived from models. These aspects were learning takes place as a relatively stable cognitive pattern and it is related to the interaction of the learner and his/her environment and experiences. Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory was used in the study conducted by Pigg et al. (1980). Kolb (1976), in testing the LSI, identified four statistically different types of learning styles. They were designated as converger, diverger, assimilator, and accommodator. The study bore out Pigg et al.’s hypothesis that the subjects tested were of the dominant learning style type of accommodator. Although the authors cautioned against utilizing inventories such as Kolb’s for developing educational programs, they felt that learning style instruments generally were useful. The study reached the conclusion that the LSI may be used effectively in the conduct of educational programs or as a participatory approach to the development of ABE programs based on its high degree of face validity.
Murnane and Tyler (2000) asserted that the sheer numbers of GED test takers (1 million in 2002 up from 800,000 in 1997) should make the GED a prominent part of the American educational system. But despite these numbers, the GED program was rarely a part of discussions in state governments on strategies to improve public education. GED program administrators had little interaction with those state officials who were responsible for K-12 educational reforms. They believed this was not realistic since more states were requiring that high school students pass exit examinations to obtain a high school diploma.

Murnane and Tyler (2000), in their discussion of the GED in American education, felt that four goals should be focused on for attainment. The first was to provide a second chance for Americans who leave schools with weak skills and perhaps develop poor records of employment. The second was to assist Americans through the GED to access post-secondary education, which has become increasingly important to obtain a decent living in the United States. The third was to minimize incentives for students who drop out of school with the intent to take the GED, thinking an easier route to graduation and not fully understanding the consequences. The fourth was to minimize the incentives for guidance counselors and other school staff who might advise or encourage students who were performing poorly to drop out of school with the intent to pursue a GED. Tools available to states to achieve these goals are not many and may not be sufficient. For instance, states may set age limits for who may take the GED or set minimum passing scores, but this alone will not achieve the goals. Murnane and Tyler stated that "it is foolhardy to debate strategies to improve American education without considering the growing role of the GED" (p. 3).
A report by the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials (2001a) of the American Council on Education titled *For the Record: Facts and Figures in Adult Learning* presents a profile of the adult learner who has not completed high school graduation. The adult learner desires to go on to higher education, is a 36 year old mother, likely separated or divorced, and is returning to school for career advancement or to secure a promotion. It was further stated that approximately 50% of adult students were part-time and may take up to six or seven years to earn their degree. When one considers the age, gender, marital status, and reason to return to school to seek a degree, these could very well be the same students who could take advantage of completing the GED program. Also in the report, survey findings in 1999 indicated that 11% of the work force never finished high school, 32% have a high school diploma, 21% have some college, and 9% have earned associate degrees. These data were part of the 73% of the work force that does not have a four year college degree.
CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES/RATIONALE

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the success rate of Native Americans attending tribally controlled community college General Educational Development Adult Basic Education programs. It was also to determine, from the practices of mainstream programs and the current literature, what recommendations or practices may be suggested and pursued at the tribal college Adult Basic Education programs that would result in a greater degree completion rate among students in their GED programs. These practices and literature were examined to identify possible linkages or connections in the educational process that have been viewed as important and that might be considered as a way of developing success on an educational ladder.

Research Questions

The following research questions were identified for investigation:

1. What is the completion rate of the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in which Native Americans enroll in North Dakota?

2. What scores do the GED graduates of programs at the tribal colleges receive on the GED test?

3. What are the similarities and differences among or between GED recipients of North Dakota tribal colleges and mainstream GED programs?

4. Which variables, such as single parent, gender, age, race, marital status, employment status, last grade completed, disability (physical, social,
mental, intellectual, behavioral), are perceived to be factors in program completion of the GED at North Dakota tribal colleges?

5. What are the stated purposes for pursuing the certificate among Native American GED recipients at tribal college Adult Basic Education programs?

**Subjects**

The research population was tribal members from the four reservations in North Dakota who enrolled in the General Educational Development (GED) programs with tribal colleges serving them through adult education departments. The tribal colleges and reservations were the Turtle Mountain Community College on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, the Fort Berthold Community College on the Fort Berthold Reservation, the Cankdeska Cikana Community College on the Spirit Lake Reservation, and the Sitting Bull College on the Standing Rock Reservation. While there are five tribal colleges in the state of North Dakota, United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, North Dakota, does not offer an Adult Basic Education program with a GED component or serve as a GED test site.

**Data Base**

The study resulted in the development of a data base collected from records for a 10 year period from 1990-1999. Not all of the colleges were able to provide 10 years of data on their GED completers. Moving to different buildings, storage problems, failing to have a uniform reporting system in place, and changes of staff and directors were reasons for incomplete archiving of the data. Two colleges provided 10 years of data, another provided 8 years of data, and another provided 4 years of data. The investigator reviewed 490 records of
those who were graduated with a GED over the 10 year period (1990-1999) from the four GED sites.

Procedures

The investigator developed a dissertation proposal and presented it to her doctoral committee for approval on March 12, 2001. The committee reviewed the proposal, made suggestions for narrowing the study, and gave its approval. The investigator then submitted a Human Subjects Review Form to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota to go forward with the study. Approval was granted by the IRB and the work began on disseminating the necessary requests and forms to the tribal colleges, tribal educational entities, and state entities for the study.

The following departments and agencies were used for information gathering on Adult Basic Education/GED programs:

Tribal College Adult Basic Education Site Directors/Coordinators

The information on the program, philosophy, mission of the college, community makeup, types of students applying for admission to GED program, types of students completing the GED, evaluation of the program, use of the results, and sources of support was gathered by an interview (see Appendix B and Appendix C) with the directors.

The Adult Basic Education Program/GED

Information was collected that included self-studies of the colleges, enrollment reports, catalogs and brochures, GED program descriptions, and GED reports to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (see Appendix D).
Student Records from Tribal College Adult Basic Education/GED Programs

This information was accessed from the sites after guaranteeing confidentiality. Record information was tabulated using the list of variables noted for this study. Records from the 10 year period of 1990-1999 were sought. Some of the colleges had records which covered the time period specified and some did not due to loss or misplacement of records. Some directors at tribal colleges had served the department for many years; several others were new to the position. What was gathered and was the most helpful was the Student Information Management System (SIMS) data which were required by the state in 1993. Identification by race was not part of the state recording system until recent years, so state GED records for some years did not indicate race, specifically Native American in this case. Recording and reports became more consistent and accessible with the new forms. Prior to 1993, there were a variety of forms used at the GED centers on the reservations.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction: Adult Basic Education

Records of total state program results for the past years 1990-1999 were used for data analysis on Native American participants. Data collection from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction on GED information consisted of the number of recipients, percentage completed, and comparison of the state and national statistics focusing on Native Americans and non-Native participants. The SIMS data were required by the state in 1993 and made reporting to the state by Adult Basic Education programs more uniform. State reports to the national office were also impacted by the move. The move to technology is also being implemented with the reporting from Adult Basic Education Programs directly to the North Dakota Department of Public
Instruction via new technology. This may allow for more rapid reporting to the government and, as a result, to the public.

Tribal Education Departments or Tribal Departments

Those entities which may have educational statistics were solicited for this information. The information gathered from the tribes of the specific reservations were the number of tribal members of the reservation, the population to be served, the number of tribal members with less than a high school degree, and the percentage of GED completers as compared to the number without high school diplomas (see Appendix E).

The United States Department of Education

This department provided educational information and statistics on the national level by specific categories including Black, Hispanic, Native American, Caucasian, and other. This was helpful in gaining a picture of Native Americans in comparison to the whole.

What was also considered was the percentage of Native Americans attempting the GED as compared to the state total and the national total of others attempting the GED. In addition, the percentage of Native Americans completing and acquiring a GED certificate in comparison to the state total and the national total of GED completers and acquisition of a GED certificate was addressed. Much of the information was accessed through the Internet under the web pages of several government entities. The information sought was in many places and departments due to the wide use of such information and its bearing on decision making. A few of the sources were United States Bureau of the Census, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), The Digest of Education Statistics, the United States Department of Education (DOE), Bureau of Labor Statistics,
Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials (CALEC), and American Council on Education (ACE). The information on statistics, studies, research, articles, and other pertinent information on adult learners was accessible through a number of sites.

Data Collection

The data collection on Native American GED recipients included the following variables taken from the SIMS and previous reporting forms.

1. Program year
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Type of area in which student lives, reservation or off-reservation
5. Race
6. Marital status
7. Last grade completed
8. Is the student a parent in a one-parent family with dependents under the age of 18? If yes, the number of dependents? Single status.
9. Does the student have a disability? If yes, specify.
10. Reason for taking GED classes: Educational Goals
11. Reason for taking GED classes: Occupational Goals (see Appendix F and Appendix G).

The investigator asked permission from the community college presidents to gather GED data (see Appendix H). After permission was granted, the investigator made contact by telephone with the Adult Basic Education program director at each college (see Appendix A). Appointments were set with the directors as to when the investigator could come on site and retrieve information. Directors were also interviewed at this time to gather their
perceptions on the program, or the interview questions were left for their completion and submission when the director had the opportunity to do so.

Data collection included specific information on the GED participants and graduates from the site directors or coordinators at the tribal colleges' Adult Basic Education departments and the tribal education departments. This information from the tribal college Adult Basic Education departments consisted of the GED student records that were submitted to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, which contained data about the variables listed to be studied as well as the scores of failed attempt or successful achievement in taking the test. In addition, self-studies of the tribal colleges, enrollment reports, catalogs and brochures of the tribal colleges and Adult Basic Education programs, and GED program descriptions were requested.

The information gathered from the Tribal education departments was the number of tribal members on the reservation and the number of tribal members with less than a high school diploma. Data collection accessed from the Division of Adult Education and Literacy, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, on GED information consisted of the number of recipients, percentage completed, and comparison of the state and national statistics focusing on Native Americans. Information for this study was specifically sought that was in reference to Native Americans in North Dakota. GED statistical reports from the past 10 years (1990-1999) for the state of North Dakota were obtained.

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the umbrella of the tribal colleges in the nation, was contacted for specific information on the Adult Basic Education/GED programs at the 31 tribal colleges. It was determined that such information rested at the tribal colleges
that took on this charge with their tribal members and state departments and governmental agencies. With AIHEC being relatively new, this was an area that the organization may eventually pursue through the course of determining and serving Native American education.

The United States Department of Education proved to be a valuable resource in obtaining information and statistics on minorities, specifically Native American, as well as the mainstream public, with statistics on education. The DOE posted current statistics on the Internet for easy access.

**Instrument and Variables**

The instruments to gather and analyze the data were determined in consultation with the investigator's advisor, the director of the Bureau of Educational Services and Applied Research, and the chair of the Department of Educational Foundations and Research at the University of North Dakota. An unsuccessful search was conducted for instruments used by earlier investigators through searching the ERIC data base and Dissertation Abstracts International.

**Statistical Analysis**

All information gathered was reviewed and categorized. With the assistance of the director of the Bureau of Educational Services and Applied Research, the chair of the Department of Educational Foundations and Research, and the investigator's advisor, a statistical method was determined and the information was analyzed to determine answers to the research questions posed. Statistical analysis was used to describe the sample and the data collected. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) was utilized to provide data analysis.
1. What is the completion rate of the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in which Native Americans enroll in North Dakota? Descriptive statistics and the use of percentages were employed.

2. What scores do the GED graduates of programs at the tribal colleges receive on the GED test? These data were analyzed using SPSS-X frequencies and descriptives.

3. What are the similarities and differences among or between GED recipients of North Dakota tribal colleges and mainstream GED programs? The data retrieved were analyzed using SPSS-X descriptives and frequencies. Comparisons were done with state and national data.

4. Which variables, such as single parent, gender, age, race, marital status, employment status, last grade completed, disability (physical, social, mental, intellectual, behavioral) are perceived to be factors in program completion of the GED at North Dakota tribal colleges? These data were analyzed using SPSS-X descriptives and frequencies.

5. What are the stated purposes for pursuing the certificate among Native American GED recipients at tribal college Adult Basic Education programs? SPSS-X descriptive analysis and frequencies were used.

The subjects for this study were Native American students at four tribal college Adult Basic Education programs in North Dakota who had completed the GED and received the certificate. Records of the students were used to retrieve data information for this study. In addition, program directors were interviewed, as well as using what information was available on the reservations and the tribal colleges that was relevant to the study. A description of the student record information is described in depth in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The data reported in this chapter are the findings of the study. The information is presented in both tabular and narrative formats. It is organized around the research questions identified for study. Demographic and biographic data are presented first.

The study was conducted with the four tribal community colleges in North Dakota and the Adult Basic Education programs located at the colleges. Variables used were taken from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) form which is used by the state for reporting purposes. The SIMS form was introduced and required in 1993, so for the years prior to that information on the variables of interest was retrieved from the various forms utilized by the colleges.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the success rate of Native Americans attending tribally controlled community college General Educational Development Adult Basic Education programs. It was also to determine, from the practices of mainstream programs and the current literature, what recommendations or practices may be suggested and pursued at the tribal college Adult Basic Education programs that would result in a greater degree completion rate among students in their GED programs. These practices and literature were examined to identify possible linkages or connections in the
educational process that have been viewed as important and that might be considered as a way of developing success on an educational ladder.

Data were gathered from the four selected tribal colleges in North Dakota based on what each Adult Basic Education program had in terms of records. The main source of data was the SIMS form that was reported to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Adult Basic Education programs office. The form provided categories which were used as variables on which to base data gathering, input, and results. Data were gathered on 660 recipients over the 10 year period (1990-1999) at the four tribal college General Educational Development (GED) programs. Of the 660 recipients, 490 were Native American and only the data about the Native American participants were analyzed.

A total of 490 student records was reviewed from the four colleges covering a 10 year period from 1990 to 1999. Five research questions were addressed.

1. What is the completion rate of the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in which Native Americans enroll in North Dakota?
2. What scores do the GED graduates of programs at the tribal colleges receive on the GED test?
3. What are the similarities and differences among or between GED recipients of North Dakota tribal colleges and mainstream GED programs?
4. Which variables, such as single parent, gender, age, race, marital status, employment status, last grade completed, disability (physical, social, mental, intellectual, behavioral), are perceived to be factors in program completion of the GED at North Dakota tribal colleges?
5. What are the stated purposes for pursuing the certificate among Native American GED recipients at tribal college Adult Basic Education programs?

The Tabulated Data

The introductory tables address the demographic and biographic features of the survey population and GED graduates from the four tribal college Adult Basic Education programs in North Dakota.

Demographic Data

The data presented in Table 1 represent the age of the Native American participants at the time of their enrollment in a GED program, the gender of the participants enrolled in a GED program, the area of residency of participants of a GED program at the time of their enrollment, the race of the participants of a GED program, and the status of citizenship of the participants of a GED programs at the time of their enrollment. They are the Native American students who attended and graduated from the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in North Dakota over a 10 year period (1990-1999).

The mean for the age of students of the four colleges over the 4 to 10 year study was 23.3 years of age. The standard deviation of the age distribution was 7.45. The ages ranged from 16 years to 62 years. The largest group of students was 302 (62.3%) in the 17 to 22 year old range. A total of 485 (99%) students completed the age item through listing birthdates and chronological age. Females were predominate with 268 (58.5%), and there were 190 (41.5%) males.

While there were two items to choose from on the SIMS form for area, rural or urban, considering the criteria for the definition of each, all of North Dakota and the reservations were considered rural. In an effort to make the
Table 1
Age, Gender, Area, Race, and Citizenship of GED Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-22</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-27</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-32</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-37</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43+</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservation</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-reservation</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. citizen</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-U.S. citizen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

location variable meaningful, the investigator determined whether the student who graduated with a GED had an address on the reservation or off the
reservation. A total of 317 (74.6%) students was listed as being on the reservation and 107 (25.4%) were off-reservation.

The data show that the predominate group served by the GED programs was American Indians (490 or 91.8%). However, 39 (7.3%) white students, 3 (.6%) Hispanic students, and 2 (.4%) Asian/Pacific Islanders students were served. In addition, 126 (19.1%) of the students served did not report their race. The reader should note that only Native American respondents will be used in the analysis. However, the investigator thought it important to point out that the tribal college GED program provides service to all races within and outside of the boundaries of the reservation. The data indicated that 490 (91.8%) of the attendees at the four tribal colleges over the 10 years were self identified Native American. There was no tribal enrollment or blood quantum information requested on the state form or any tribal Adult Basic Education forms.

Of those who responded to citizenship, 405 (100%) were United States citizens.

Table 2 represents the data on the marital status, single parents in single-parent homes with dependents under 18, and number of dependents of the participants in GED programs at the time of their enrollment.

Of the respondents, 261 (78.6%) indicated that they were single/never married, with 48 (14.5%) being married, 14 (4.2%) divorced, 8 (2.4%) separated, and 1 (.3%) widowed. The data described 144 (42.7%) of the students who were single with dependents.

The number of dependents under the age of 18 for single students was 48 (26.1%) with 1 dependent, 38 (20.7%) with 2 dependents, 9 (4.9%) with 3 dependents, 13 (7.1%) with 4 dependents, and 7 (3.8%) with 5 dependents or more.
Table 2

Marital Status, Parental Status, and Dependents of GED Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single/Never married</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Is a Single Parent in a One-Parent Family with Dependents under 18</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Dependents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 represents the last grade completed by students upon entry into a GED program and graduated from the program.

The 11th grade was completed by 180 (43.7%), followed by 108 (26.2%) at the 10th grade level, 75 (18.2%) at the 9th grade level, 43 (10.4%) at the 8th grade level, 5 (1.2%) at the 7th grade level, and 1 (.2%) at the 2nd grade level. The mean of the last grade completed was 9.9 for the tribal college GED graduates.
Table 3

Last Grade Completed by GED Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Grade Completed</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 represents the types of services and assistance that the GED participants received at the time of entry into the GED programs.

Assistance or services received by students completing the GED included 161 (71.9%) who received AFDC/GA; 151 (67.4%) who received food stamps; 7 (3.1%) who received workers compensation or unemployment benefits; 10 (4.5%) who received SSI; 9 (3.9%) who received SSDI, refugee benefits, assistance from the BIA, and foster child payments; 16 (7.1%) who received fuel assistance; 5 (2.2%) who received housing assistance; 36 (16.1%) who received medical assistance; and 18 (8.1%) who received other.

Table 5 represents the data on participant employment at the time of entry into a GED program and the data on those who qualified for the lower living standard and displaced homemakers.
Table 4

Types of Assistance Received by GED Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services/Assistance</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFDC/GA</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food stamps</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers compensation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSDI/Refugee benefits/BIA/Foster child</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel assistance</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing assistance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical assistance</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Employment, Lower Living Standard, and Displaced Homemakers'
Status of GED Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in job market</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower living standard</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaced homemaker</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment status indicated that 271 (78.8%) of the students responding were unemployed. Of the respondents, 53 (15.4%) were employed and 19 (5.5%) were not in the job market. Of the respondents, 163 (80.7%) students qualified for the lower living standard. The lower living standard is a criterion that determines if a person is below the national poverty line and thus is eligible for certain services. There were 18 (7.2%) who identified themselves as displaced homemakers.

Table 6 represents the data gathered on participants with disabilities and the type of disability.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students with Disabilities and Type of Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD/LD/Dyslexia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students who indicated a disability was 17 (4.3%) of the 391 responding. Those who identified a specific disability were 4 (21.1%) indicating ADHD; 2 (10.5%) indicating SLD/LD/Dyslexia; and 9 (47.4%) indicating other, which were mainly physical disabilities consisting of a bad back, inability to perform a job due to a physical handicap, etc.
Table 7 presents the data on types of referrals of participants to the GED program.

Table 7

| Types of Referral to Adult Basic Education/GED Program for GED Participants |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                 | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
| Program Referral                |           |         |               |
| Job training                    | 35        | 7.1     | 13.9           |
| Vocational education/           |           |         |               |
| Welfare requirement/            |           |         |               |
| Radio-TV/Literacy program/High school/ |   |         |               |
| College/Former student         | 15        | 2.0     | 5.2            |
| Friend                         | 135       | 27.6    | 53.4           |
| Other agency                   | 12        | 2.4     | 4.7            |
| Newspaper                      | 9         | 1.8     | 3.6            |
| Employer                       | 11        | 2.2     | 4.3            |
| Other                          | 32        | 6.5     | 12.7           |
| Missing                        | 237       | 48.4    |                |

Referrals to the Adult Basic Education/GED programs took many forms. The most common ones were referral by a friend (135 or 53.4%), referral by job training (35 or 13.9%), and referral by other (32 or 12.7%). Other agencies that referred the completing students as their clients were 12 (4.7%). Employers seeking further job enhancement through skills and new learning referred 11 (4.3%). The use of the newspaper impacted the decision of 9 (3.6%) of the recipients. Radio-TV, referral by a former student or returning to the program as a former student, requirement of a literacy program, welfare clients, and vocational education training agencies referred 15 (5.2%).
Table 8 represents the data on program classification of participants upon their entry into the GED program.

Table 8  
**Categories of Program Classification for GED Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Classification</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parents</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTPA 8%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program classification indicated that 108 (49.8%) were self identified as independent. Single parents were 73 (33.6%). Other was comprised of younger students or students living with parents and were 17 (7.8%). Multiple was checked by 10 (4.6%) students who apparently fit in several categories. The JTPA 8% category stood at 5 (2.3%). Students who were self identified as homeless were 4 (1.8%).

Table 9 represents the data on the educational and occupational goals of participants upon their entry into the GED program.

The educational goal of obtaining a GED was the largest response received. Of the respondents, 280 (97.6%) gave this as a reason to participate in and complete the program. Five (1.7%) students listed going to post-secondary education/training as their educational goal. Basic skills/family literacy was 2 (.7%) students.
The occupational goal of obtaining a job was selected by 119 (57.8%) followed by other with 68 (33%). Improving/retaining employment was selected by 14 (6.8%) students. Improvement of computer skills was identified by 5 (2.4%) as the reason for pursuit of adult education.

### Analysis of the Data Pertaining to Research Question One

Research question one: What is the completion rate of the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in which Native Americans enroll in North Dakota?

In Table 10, the letters A, B, C, and D are the tribal colleges. The colleges are not named to protect their anonymity.

In attempting to determine the answer to research question one, only records of Native American graduates of GED programs were reviewed by the
### Table 10

**Completion Rate of GED Programs by College and Overall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Number of Graduates</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2,989  132  525  350**  385  143  133  71  12.8  34.8  23.5  20.3

*Numbers not available for these years.

**Grand total for 10 years, not separated by year.

***Percentages not available due to missing numbers by year for college.

****Special estimated numbers by year.

**Note.** Only the total number of students for 1992-00 (8 years) is used to calculate the percentage for column A. Only 1998-99 and 1999-00 are used to calculate the percentage for column B. Only the total number of graduates for 1992-00 (8 years) is used to calculate the percentage for column C. Numbers for total number of students in column D are 350 averaged out per year to get percentage of the data reported.
investigator and numbers of entire program entrance by year were supplied by the directors. In the Adult Basic Education program at tribal college A, it was found that over an 8 year span the average graduation number was 48 and this represented 12.8% of those who had enrolled in the program. At tribal college B, the information was available for two years. During those two years, 46 of the students completed the program, representing 34.8% of those enrolled. At tribal college C, over a 10 year period, 133 were graduated and this represented 23.5% of those enrolled. In tribal college D, 71 students were graduated and this represented 20.3% of those who had enrolled over a 10 year period. Cumulatively, the tribal colleges graduated 732 GED students. Because one reservation had enrollment data for only two years and another for only 8 years, the calculations of the average number of graduates may be flawed.

It was also determined, by requesting information from the registrar’s office of the colleges, the number of students who entered the tribal college with a GED certificate by year. Not all colleges were able to retrieve this information readily. One of the colleges did supply numbers. At that college, the numbers of students entering the college with GED certificates ranged from 1 year of 36 to a another year’s high of 112. The average number over the 10 year period (1990-1999) was 88 students per year entering with the GED. It was apparent that these numbers far exceeded the number of GED graduates of the Adult Basic Education program at that community college. This raises the question, where did all these other GED graduates get their certificates and services? The registrar hypothesized that they may have been transfers and received their GEDs from other in-state educational entities or from another state.
Analysis of the Data Pertaining to Research Question Two

Research question two: What scores do the GED graduates of programs at the tribal colleges receive on the GED test?

A review of the data in Table 11 shows that the GED mean of the writing skills scores was 45.8 for 142 students, the social studies mean was 50.7 for 157 students, the science mean was 50.3 for 157 students, the math mean was 46.6 for 146 students, and the language mean was 50.5 for 153 students. The minimum mean received was 32 and the maximum was 92. Not all students had GED means available for reporting. The scores indicated that those students who had scores available collectively met the passing mean or surpassed it. The passing score on each of the five tests of the GED is 45.

Table 11
Mean Test Scores of GED Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section of Test</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing skills</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>45.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>50.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>50.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>46.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>50.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the Data Pertaining to Research Question Three

Research question three: What are the similarities and differences among or between GED recipients of North Dakota tribal colleges and mainstream GED programs?
Table 12 provides information on the age, gender, race, marital status, last grade completed, and employment status on the similarities and differences found at the local, state, and national level.

**Age.** The age mean for tribal college graduates was 23.3 years old, while the state mean was 22.8 and the national mean was 24.4 years old for individuals issued a credential. The average ages of the different groups taking the test varied between the state at 22.8 and the national at 24.4.

**Gender.** Females were the major participants and graduates of tribal college programs with 268 (58.5%). In the state data, males were dominant with 658 attending and graduating compared with 495 females. The national data indicated that females at 56% were the major attendees and graduates. Males in the national data also were in this category of households with one child at 49%.

**Area.** According to the national definition on area, all of the North Dakota tribal college service areas would be considered rural. It seemed more appropriate to determine how many of the GED graduates lived on the reservation or lived off the reservation. The information was accessed by the SIMS form as well as the addresses of the GED graduates. The GED graduates who resided on the reservation were 317 (74.6%) and 107 (25.2%) graduates resided off the reservation.

**Race.** The tribal colleges served 490 (74.2%) Native Americans, with other races as White, not of hispanic origin (39 or 5.9%), Hispanic (3 or .5%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (2 or .3%). The state served 250 Native Americans, but there were no data on the Native Americans who graduated with a GED. The national data revealed data of minorities in a cumulative number, but Native Americans were not listed specifically.
Table 12

Similarities and Differences among the Tribal College, State, and National GED Participants/Graduates on Age, Gender, Area, Race, Marital Status, Single Parent/One Parent/Dependents under 18, Highest Grade Completed, and Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Study Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age</strong></td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservation</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off reservation</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American (Total)</td>
<td>84.8*</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single/never married</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinale Parent/One Parent/Dependents</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 18</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dependents</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Grade Completed</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labor force</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*National statistics of high school completion rates.
Marital status. Tribal college data reported 261 (78.6%) students were never married. In addition, 48 (14.5%) were married, 14 (4.2%) were divorced, 8 (2.4%) were separated, and 1 (.3%) was widowed. There were no data at the state or national level on the marital status of GED graduates.

Single parent/one parent/dependents under 18. Data for the tribal college GED graduates indicated that 144 (42.7%) of the students fit the category of single parent/one parent/dependents under 18. The average number of dependents per those students was 1.5. There were no data at the state or national level.

Highest grade completed. The grade mean of 9.9 was indicated in the data as the last grade completed for tribal colleges. The state and national data showed 9.9 as the highest grade for all students who were tested for the GED; this was a combination of those who passed and those who needed to retest. Data were not available on GED graduates specifically at the state and national level.

Employment. The majority of students (271 or 78.8%) who were graduates of tribal college GED programs were unemployed. No data were available at the state and national level for GED graduates specifically.

Table 13 provides information on the educational and GED variables on the similarities and differences found at the local, state, and national level.

Does student have disability. The national information listed 3,080 GED students who were self identified with a disability. The state information listed 20 students. Tribal colleges indicated that 17 (4.3%) of the GED graduates were self identified as having a disability.
Table 13

Similarities and Differences among the Tribal College, State, and National GED Participants/Graduates on Educational and GED Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>State N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Study Population N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does Student Have Disability</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Disability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD/Dyslexia</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,997</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Goal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain GED</td>
<td>542,072</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain job</td>
<td>215,513</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section of GED Test</strong></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing skills</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Type of disability.** There was no national and state information available on ADHD as the type of disability that GED students exhibited. The tribal colleges reported that 4 (21.1%) of the GED graduates self identified this specific type of disability.

The national and state data indicated 3,080 and 20 students, respectively, as self identifying SLD/Dyslexia. The tribal colleges reported 2 (10.5%) of the GED graduates as indicating this type of disability.

Other types of disabilities were listed by 1,997 students in the national data, 54 students in the state data, and 9 (47.4%) of the tribal college graduates. Other disabilities consisted of physical disabilities such as a bad back, asthma, etc.

**Educational goal.** The national number for an educational goal for obtaining a GED was 542,072 (65.1%) students with the state reporting 743 (45.8%) students. Tribal colleges reported 280 (97.6%) students with an educational goal of obtaining a GED.

**Occupational goal.** The occupational goal of obtaining a job was indicated by 215,513 (28.8%) students at the national level with 547 (33.6%) at the state level. The tribal colleges reported 119 (57.8%) students with this goal.

**Section of GED test.** The scores on the sections of the GED test for tribal college graduates were writing skills with a mean of 45.8, social studies with a mean of 50.7, science with a mean of 50.3, math with a mean of 46.6, and language with a mean of 50.5. The passing mean for the tests was 45. The tribal college graduates were at that mean or slightly above.

**Analysis of the Data Pertaining to Research Question Four**

Research question four: Which variables, such as single parent, gender, age, race, marital status, employment status, last grade completed, disability
(physical, social, mental, intellectual, behavioral), are perceived to be factors in program completion of the GED at North Dakota tribal colleges?

The data on the variables that were factors indicative of program completion of the GED by tribal college Adult Basic Education/GED program participants were age, gender, and area (see Table 1). The variables of marital status and single parent with dependents were also factors (see Table 2). The variable, support services and assistance, assisted participants and was an important factor (see Table 4). Also determined was the employment or unemployment status of GED graduates, which may have been reflective of the reservations’ employment or unemployment status (see Table 5). The support by a friend as seen in the referral to the Adult Basic Education/GED program proved to be vital to the graduates in the pursuit of a GED diploma (see Table 7). The desire to obtain an educational goal was an important factor in obtaining a GED diploma. The combination of all of the listed variables was descriptive of a GED graduate.

Analysis of the Data Pertaining to Research Question Five

Research question five: What are the stated purposes for pursuing the certificate among Native American GED recipients at tribal college Adult Basic Education programs?

The educational goal of obtaining a GED had the largest number of responses received. Of the respondents, 280 (97.6%) gave this as a reason for participating in and completing the program (see Table 9). Five (1.7%) students listed post-secondary education/training as their educational goal. Basic skills/family literacy was listed by 2 (1.7%).

The occupational goal of obtaining a job was considered most important by 119 (57.8%) respondents, followed by other at 68 (33%).
Improving/retaining employment for 14 (6.8%) students followed. Improvement of computer skills was considered by 5 students (2.4%) as the reason for pursuit of adult education (see Table 9).

Responses to Open-Ended Questions with Tribal College Adult Basic Education/GED Program Directors

The intent was to have interviews with each of the ABE/GED program directors. However, the interviews could not be conducted. The interview questions were left with the directors for written open-ended responses.

Following are the specific questions that were asked of the directors and their responses to the questions. Responses are reported verbatim.

Question 1: How long has the adult education/GED program been at the college?

Participant 1: "23 years."
Participant 2: "Since 1974."
Participant 3: "Since fiscal year 1975."
Participant 4: "Approximately 15 years."

Question 2: Prior to that, was there a GED program on site to serve the reservation audience?

Participant 1: "Yes."
Participant 2: "No."
Participant 3: "No."
Participant 4: "Yes, via the tribe."

Question 2a: If not, where was the nearest GED program?

Participant 1: "The nearest program is [local town]."
Participant 2: "[number] miles [direction]-[local town]."
Participant 3: "[three major North Dakota towns]."
Participant 4: "No response."
Question 2b: Was the former program run by the state?

Participant 1: "Yes."
Participant 2: No response.
Participant 3: "First program run by BIA--Native American 1987, Non-Indian DPI."
Participant 4: "No."

Question 3: How long have you been the director of the program?

Participant 1: "21 years."
Participant 2: "Five years."
Participant 3: "15 mos."
Participant 4: "5 years."

Question 3a: Other staff?

[Probe: Could you give me an average length of time most staff members have been with the program?]

Participant 1: "11 years."
Participant 2: "None."
Participant 3: "5 GED instructors, [two sites listed], 7 years."
Participant 4: N/A.

Question 3b: How many staff serve the GED program?

Participant 1: "Nine instructors (1 full-time, 8 part-time)."
Participant 2: "I have college students who volunteer their time to tutor the GED students--usually two per semester average four hours per week."
Participant 3: "1 person."
Participant 4: "1 (myself)."

Question 4: Are facilities adequate in your view?

Participant 1: "Some of our satellite[s] sites have very limited space with the numbers of students being served."
Participant 2: "No! We are cramped for room. Need space for more computers and quiet room for study and testing."
Participant 3: "No. We need more room. It would be great if we had 2 classrooms and a large office."
Participant 4: "Yes."
Question 5: Are there other outreach sites? Where?

Participant 1: “Yes.”
[eight sites listed]
Participant 2: “No.”
Participant 3: “Yes.”
[five sites listed]
Participant 4: “Varies with availability of funds from other sources.”

Question 6: Do you feel the program meets the needs of the people it serves?

Participant 1: “Yes, in regard to their educational needs. However, [there] are many barriers for the people that we serve (i.e., transportation, day care, personal, etc.).”
Participant 2: “No, we need more staff for one on one with the LD students.”
Participant 3: “Yes! But it could be better if we had 2 full-time instructors working daily.”
Participant 4: “Yes.”

Question 7: What are some changes you personally have seen or know about taking place that are a result of the GED program?

Participant 1: “Throughout my years of service to this program, I have seen and witnessed many of our tribal members further [their] education and become self supporting.”
Participant 2: “Every year I see former GED students graduate from our two year college and from other universities--what a life change for the graduates!”
Participant 3: “Local residents being able to be employed, be educated and returning to school--studying for a degree.”
Participant 4: “GED or high school diploma need for most jobs.”

Question 8: What are some recommendations you might have for improving the services of the program?

Participant 1: “Hiring of more full-time instructors would be a plus for our program. However, with our current funding level [it] does not allow for this.”
Participant 2: “More staff (more money). Need space. Need transportation for students.”
Participant 3: “More staff people. A secretary, an assistant for the director and 2 full time instructors.”

Participant 4: “More funding as we have no money for tutor, teacher, counselor and very little for equipment re: (computer).”

Question 9: Is networking/coordination occurring with other agencies and organizations such as Job Service, Social Services, schools, or others?

Participant 1: “Yes, we have a very good networking process in place with all agencies throughout this service area. We have a very good working relationship and all strive to work as a team in meeting the needs of the client.”

Participant 2: “I am in constant contact with service agencies in the area--I serve on three [boards] at present.”

Participant 3: “Very much so!”

Participant 4: “Yes.”

Question 9a: Please identify the agencies/organizations with which you network.

Participant 1: “Job Service, JOBS/NEW (Tribal & State), WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workers Compensation, BIA Social Services, TANF, Probation and Parole, Court System, and employers.”


Participant 4: “[TANF], ND Job Service, TWEP, BIA, tribe, and Social Services.”

Question 10: Do you have a mission statement? Or does a portion of your ABE mission pertain to the GED program?

Participant 1: “Our mission statement pertains to the [tribal college listed] mission statement as well as the mission statement for state ABSE [Adult Basic State Education].”

Participant 2: No response.
Participant 3: "We have the same as the college."
Participant 4: "Yes." (Note: Or does a portion of your ABE mission statement pertain to the GED program? was underlined by the respondent.)

Question 11: Is there college planning being done that has a special attention on the GED program? (e.g., Does the GED program form a substantial base for any plans for increasing enrollments? Follow-up or other plans?)

[Probe: How often is the planning done? Annually? Biannually? 7-10 years (NCA)?]

Participant 1: "The Adult Ed/GED program has always been an important part of this institution. Our program serves as a feeder to this institution. Approximately 34% of [tribal college’s] student body are GED graduates."
Participant 2: No response.
Participant 3: "Yes, monthly."
Participant 4: "Yes, annually."

Question 11a: Are you, as the administrator of the adult education program (GED), involved in (strategic) planning with the college?

Participant 1: "Yes, I serve on the Administrative Council for this institution. I am very much involved with strategic planning serving in this capacity."
Participant 2: "Not at [the] present time."
Participant 3: "No."
Participant 4: "Yes."

Question 12: Why did the college decide to offer the adult education (GED) and "Ability to Benefit" program?

Participant 1: "The need to provide such services at our own institution is vital to this community. Our school systems have a high dropout rate. These individuals need that opportunity to complete their high school education. The term 'Ability to Benefit' applies to those individuals who may want to enroll in one/two college courses that may benefit him/her in the job or personal life. ‘Ability to Benefit’ may also apply to GED students who have completed three parts of
the state GED test. They are allowed to enroll in the
developmental courses (Language Skills or Basic Math).

Participant 2: No response.
Participant 3: "Not sure."
Participant 4: "The program started with the tribe and they turned it over
to [tribal college] because of access to classroom[s] and
availability of study materials."

Question 13: Now that the GED program is in place for your institution,
how is it working?

Participant 1: No response.
Participant 2: "Great!"
Participant 3: "Yes, it's working."
Participant 4: "Need money, but [it] is very beneficial to the college."

Question 14: What is your opinion of the quality, importance, and impact
of the GED program at your institution?

Participant 1: "The quality of program can always be improved. We are
always striving for improvements for our students and the
services that we provide them. One area that could be of
great benefit is to gain a more stable funding base and
more funding. This would allow us to hire more full-time
instructors. We also need to hire more instructors who are
trained and certificate[d] in the area of special education.
Approximately one third of our students have special
needs. The importance and impact of our program is vital
to this service area due to the numbers of people who are
in need of completing their GED, up-grading their
academic skills, learning to read, etc. Each year our
program serves approximately 250 individuals."

Participant 2: "I feel that our GED program has alot of influence as I see
about 75% of my students enter college."

Participant 3: "The quality is excellent."
Participant 4: "[Tribal college] benefits a great deal. Approximately 50% of
our student[s] are via the GED route."
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter five presents a summary and discussion of the findings of the study. The chapter also presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the success rate of Native Americans attending tribally controlled community college General Education Development Adult Basic Education programs. It was also to determine, from the practices of mainstream programs and the current literature, what recommendations or practices may be suggested and pursued at the tribal college Adult Basic Education programs that would result in a greater degree completion rate among students in their GED programs. These practices and literature were examined to identify possible linkages or connections in the educational process that have been viewed as important and that might be considered as a way of developing success on an educational ladder.

Data were gathered from the four selected tribal colleges in North Dakota based on what each Adult Basic Education program had in terms of records. The main source of data was the Student Information Management System (SIMS) form that was reported to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Adult Basic Education programs office. The form provided
categories which were used as variables on which to base data gathering, input, and results.

Data were gathered on 660 recipients over the 10 year period (1990-1999) at the four tribal college General Educational Development (GED) programs. Of the 660 recipients, 490 were Native American and only the data about the Native American participants were analyzed.

**Research Questions**

It was the intent to answer five specific questions about Native American GED graduates of four tribal college Adult Basic Education (ABE)/GED programs. The following research questions were identified for investigation:

1. What is the completion rate of the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in which Native Americans enroll in North Dakota?
2. What scores do the GED graduates of programs at the tribal colleges receive on the GED test?
3. What are the similarities and differences among or between GED recipients of North Dakota tribal colleges and mainstream GED programs?
4. Which variables, such as single parent, gender, age, race, marital status, employment status, last grade completed, disability (physical, social, mental, intellectual, behavioral), are perceived to be factors in program completion of the GED at North Dakota tribal colleges?
5. What are the stated purposes for pursuing the certificate among Native American GED recipients at tribal college Adult Basic Education programs?

Analysis of the data was accomplished with assistance from the Bureau of Educational Services and Applied Research at the University of North
Dakota. The SPSS-X computer program was utilized as a means of analyzing the data through the use of frequencies and descriptive analysis.

Summary of the Study

Adult learners who have taken the initiative to return to complete an alternative to a high school diploma were the subjects of this study. The study focused on their pursuit of the GED. There was an attempt to determine whether there were dramatic differences among the students when compared with similar mainstream educational participants of the state and nation.

Some of the variables viewed were age, race, area, services and assistance received, last grade completed, marital status, single parent with dependents under 18, number of dependents, and GED test scores. In addition, promising practices were sought which could be recommended to ABE/GED programs that served Native Americans. Research was reported about the psychological behavior of students in an effort to explain what caused them to do what they did. Information was included from many researchers who had conducted studies and developed theories about student dropouts of high school and college. Dissertations by Native Americans with a focus on Indian learners were helpful and essential in the reporting.

Five questions were posed for research. It was found that there were more similarities than differences among the GED participants and GED graduates at the tribal colleges, the state level, and the national level; however, none seemed dramatic. The similarities and differences were determined from data taken from administrative paperwork about students, but no interviews with actual students occurred. Some of the similarities were age, gender of those who complete the GED, GED test scores, marital status to a degree, last grade completed, and the goal of pursuing education. The differences were found to
be race, since tribal college ABE/GED programs that served GED students were predominately Native American; marital status, in that there were a slightly larger percentage of single parents with dependents; and the unemployment figure was high. Although there were no data from the state and national records on students who received assistance and support for basic living expenses, the tribal college GED students reported receipt of such services by over one third of the students. The completion rate for GED students at tribal colleges was moderate (20%). A profile of a typical Native American GED student was determined.

In doing the study, more questions were raised about Indian education. It certainly became apparent that more research needs to be done with Native Americans. Some of the articles and authors promoted the thought that more Native American people needed to do research on their own peoples, given the insight and experiences they have in common. The importance of the ABE/GED programs became apparent for the necessary growth of the reservations.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of the data which answered the research questions is presented in this section. Each research question is presented followed by a discussion of the pertinent findings from the study.

1. What is the completion rate of the GED programs at the four tribal colleges in which Native Americans enroll in North Dakota?

The completion rate, as determined by the number of graduates of GED programs, was moderate at approximately 20%. The modest completion rate may be explained to some degree by the Kenna (1994) study at Navajo County, Arizona, identifying barriers to completion of ABE/GED programs. Kenna found that there were three types of barriers: situational, dispositional, and
institutional. Kenna found that situational and institutional barriers accounted for 36% and dispositional barriers accounted for 31% of the dropouts. In a different study, Sherman (1990) identified barriers such as child care problems, being too old, classes scheduled at wrong times, and not having transportation. Perceived barriers identified by officials from educational and social services in the Sherman study included fear of failure, unaware of program, child care problems, not having transportation, cost of attending, wrong times, and location.

To further support the need to identifying and addressing barriers, most of the directors of the ABE/GED programs on the four reservation sites noted that they felt the program was meeting the needs of the people they served, but barriers were identified. One of them noted, “Yes, in regard to their educational needs. However, [there] are many barriers for the people that we serve (i.e., transportation, day care, personal, etc.).” Others noted the need for more instructors, full-time and certificated in speciality areas. The directors noted that funding was a problem in addressing the barriers, those of the students as well as those of the ABE/GED programs, such as limited number of part-time instructors and the need for more space. Availability of outreach sites to serve the populations, in addition to the main site, varied from seemingly very adequate to the number of outreach sites depending on funding.

Consideration of the barriers that effect the students and seeking ways to ameliorate such barriers to the greatest degree possible are of prime importance. Greater use of the research on dropouts at all levels with the use of recommended strategies is also needed. Seeking additional funding through internal and external sources also would benefit the program by providing both growth and stabilization. This is in addition to the perceived need for greater
recognition, respect, and understanding by college and program administrators and decision makers about the importance of the GED program in terms of their positive impact upon the colleges and the reservations being served. Finally, recruitment of greater numbers of people who have not achieved a high school diploma and provision of needed services in addition to the academic needs would enhance the program.

2. What scores do the GED graduates of programs at the tribal colleges receive on the GED test?

A review of the data found that the GED writing skills mean was 45.8, the social studies mean was 50.7, the science mean was 50.3, the math mean was 46.6, and the language mean was 50.5. The minimum and maximum range varied greatly with scores from 32 to 92. The mean as shown for each of the five tests was over 45. The minimum score required for passing at the time the tests were taken was 40 to 45, based upon state determination. The minimum new score that will be required will be 45. Based on the mean scores the students in the research population who took the tests did average to slightly above the national mean.

3. What are the similarities and differences among or between GED recipients of North Dakota tribal colleges and mainstream GED programs?

The similarities of the GED recipients in comparison to the mainstream GED programs were many. The students of the national, state, and tribal college programs were approximately in the same age range, 22-24. The gender of the students in the national and the tribal colleges appeared to be somewhat similar, with a majority of females attending and graduating; but the state data indicated the number of females was lower than the male number. Although there is no information for the national and state on marital status of
GED graduates, the number (53.3%) of the tribal college GED graduates who were single and never married could be found similar, most likely because the audiences of the national and state colleges and universities generally consist of younger, unmarried students. The mean grade level (9.9) completed by the GED recipients of the national, state, and tribal colleges was very much the same.

Differences could be found in race, since the very mission and purpose of the tribal colleges are to support Native American audiences with education opportunities. Those colleges and universities that could be comparable to this aim would be the Black colleges and universities. Marital status could also be seen as a difference in the makeup of the single, never married students with dependents. Many of the single, never married students (78.6%) may be part of those who have dependents and are using this educational avenue to obtain a better quality of life. The national unemployment rate was 17.2%. Tribal college students were different in that 78.8% were unemployed. This is likely a reflection of the high unemployment rates of reservations. The opportunity to be gainfully employed, while a student, is small. This is almost certainly from the lack of jobs, which again is typical on Indian reservations. Many of the tribal college GED graduates (57.8%) saw the GED diploma as a means to obtain a job. The directors of the ABE/GED programs on the reservations saw the GED as a way of furthering the students' education, and also as a way of students becoming employable, since the GED or high school diploma was a requirement of most jobs.

4. Which variables, such as single parent, gender, age, race, marital status, employment status, last grade completed, disability (physical, social,
mental, intellectual, behavioral), are perceived to be factors in program completion of the GED at North Dakota tribal colleges?

Even though tables presented in Chapter IV showed the data quantitatively, the data can be viewed in a qualitative way. To accomplish this, the investigator developed the profile of a typical student who attended and graduated from the GED programs at the four tribal colleges.

Profile of Typical Student

A profile of the typical GED student who completed a GED within the 10 year period between 1990 to 1999 at a tribal college Adult Basic Education program in North Dakota was approximately 24 years old, single, independent, Native American, female, and lived on a reservation. She had never been married and had one dependent under the age of 18. She completed the 11th grade and then dropped out of high school. She was unemployed and receiving AFDC/GA and/or food stamps. Referral by a friend or a job training agency was the way she became aware of the services of the Adult Basic Education program. She qualified for the lower living standard. The goal she had for entering and completing the program was obtaining the GED diploma in order to be able to pursue further education in an institution of higher education.

This may be compared to a national profile described in Chapter II and prepared by the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials of the American Council on Education on adult learners and higher education. This profile indicated that today's adult learner is a female, a mother, and approximately 36 years old. She is likely to be separated or divorced. She is returning to school for career advancement or as a means to obtain a promotion. The profile further indicated that adult learners are part-time students. Most of them take six to seven years to obtain their degree. This
profile described the adult learner and higher education, but this description fits the profile of the typical GED graduate of a tribal college in many ways. The profiled student in both cases was a female. There was a difference of 12 years in age, with the Native American being the younger. A larger percentage of the tribal college GED graduates were not married and in various categories, as compared to the separated or divorced in the national survey. The similarity here is that these are single women. The reason for completing the GED was different. The Native American women did so with an intent to go on to higher education specifically as an educational pursuit while the national profiled women indicated job advancement or promotion was their goal. Native American and the national profiled women were both part-time students and they had no set time frame or limit for the completion of the diploma.

At the tribal college level the variables of age, gender, marital status, location of services to residence, family responsibility, support by services and assistance, employment status, support by a friend, and the desire to obtain an educational goal appeared to be important factors in the obtaining of a GED diploma.

5. What are the stated purposes for pursuing the certificate among Native American GED recipients at tribal college Adult Basic Education programs?

Data gathered from the SIMS form reported that 57.1% of the students attended and completed the GED program with the explicit educational reason of obtaining a GED certificate so they could go on to higher education to improve their lives. Twenty four percent stated that their reason was an occupational goal related to a job. The other three reasons reported were having a GED or high school diploma as an entry level job requirement,
improving their chances for upward mobility in an organization resulting in higher wages and responsibility, or improving their skills and improving their job performance at their current job.

Murnane and Tyler (2000) asserted that the sheer numbers of GED test takers (1 million in 2001 up from 800,000 in 1997) should make the GED a prominent part of the American educational system. But, despite these numbers, the GED program is rarely a part of discussions in state governments about strategies to improve public education. GED program administrators apparently have little interaction with those state officials who are responsible for K-12 educational reforms.

Murnane and Tyler (2000) also stressed, in the discussion on the GED in American education, that four goals should be focused on for attainment. The first is to provide a second chance for Americans who leave schools with weak skills and perhaps develop poor records of employment. The second is to assist Americans, through the GED, to access post-secondary education, which has become increasingly important to obtain a decent living in the United States. The third is to minimize incentives for students who drop out of school with the intent to take the GED, thinking it is an easier route and not fully understanding the consequences. The fourth is to minimize the incentives for guidance counselors and other school staff who might advise or encourage students who are performing poorly to drop out of school with the intent to pursue a GED. Tools available to states to achieve these goals are not many or may not be sufficient. For instance, states may set age limits of who may take the GED or standardized minimum scores; but this alone will not achieve the
goals. Murnane and Tyler stated that "it is foolhardy to debate strategies to improve American education without considering the growing role of the GED" (p. 3).

Directors of the ABE/GED programs on the reservations reinforced student goals in their perceptions of positive change resulting from the GED program and the participants and graduates. They noted that many of the tribal members are furthering their education. They noted former GED graduates graduating from two year colleges and universities becoming employed as a result of the GED diploma, which may be a requirement for employment at some jobs.

The tribal colleges stated the educational needs of the tribal members in their mission statements and attempted to address them as well as the goals of the participants of the GED programs. One of the directors observed,

The need to provide such services [ABE/GED] at our institution is vital to this community. Our school systems have a high dropout rate. These individuals need the opportunity to complete their high school education. The term "Ability to Benefit" applies to those individuals who may want to enroll in one/two college courses that may benefit him/her in the job or personal life. "Ability to Benefit" may also apply to GED students who have completed three parts of the state GED test. They are allowed to enroll in the developmental courses [language skills or basic math].

Promising Practices

One of the promising models in adult education is the Division of Adult Education and Career Education (DACE) of the Los Angeles Unified School District (1997), reporting the largest adult education program in the United States. It serves more than 350,000 students of widely diverse ethnic backgrounds each year.

Learning opportunities are offered via distance learning on district-owned television station KLCS. Classes are competency based,
conforming to the state's department of education program standards and offer individual, small group, and whole group instruction. Computer assisted instruction is an integral part of the program. Instructors use varied methodologies and strategies, such as cooperative learning, to meet the diverse learning styles of their students. Each of the community adult school and employment preparation centers have full-time counselors who address assessment, program planning, referrals, and other student support services. Child care is provided at some of the schools and centers (Los Angeles Unified School District, 1997).

The program adapts traditional family literacy models which include pre-school classes, adult basic skills training, parent education, and parent-child interactions to meet the demands of inner city neighborhoods. The model is felt to meet the needs of minority and economically disadvantaged individuals. Even though it is suggested that this model may be adapted to high poverty urban areas nationwide, much of the same services are present on the reservations as stand alone projects. Practices that were seen as promising and innovative and that could be transferable to other sites were the integration of adult and parent education, linkages to post-secondary and employment training, innovative support services, and scheduling around core activities of family literacy (Los Angeles Unified School District, 1997).

Some of the special features of the DACE program (Los Angeles Unified School District, 1997) were centers forming articulation agreements with various two and four year colleges, fund-raising efforts to obtain private sector support that provided large portions of the various centers' operating budgets, some students enrolled in the program were AmeriCorps volunteers, centers typically offered employment readiness opportunities, and employment
preparation centers' models offer job skills as a key component of the program. All centers are located near accessible public transportation.

During the period of 1994-95, the DACE model (Los Angeles Unified School District, 1997) served more than 300 families. During that period, 95% of the participants who enrolled in GED classes received their GED diplomas. Many of the initiatives of the promising practices exercised by the DACE project could be considered and adapted to tribal college ABE/GED centers.

Another model which may be used is the PATHWAYS curriculum. It is used with the instruction of basic reading and writing skills for adult learners. A PATHWAYS implementation handbook is available to use with the curriculum. One of the sections focuses on working with Native American adult learners by recognizing learning styles of individuals, assisting them with educational goals, giving a wide view of the educational process and what problems may be encountered, and getting to know students. It also contains sections on methods for diagnosis, placement, and evaluation. It suggests classroom management techniques in outlined form. It also provides a record keeping system. Forms are also included in the manual that may be used for recording student placement and progress. It is written for Indian adult education teachers and directors. It may be used in coordination with state required materials to assist Native American adult learners (PATHWAYS: implementation Handbook, 1984).

Other Findings

One of the tribal colleges was able to immediately determine the number of GED graduates who enrolled at that tribal college. An accurate account of the same information was not available from the other tribal colleges. The directors of the programs, through conversation and discussion about GED
recipients, were able to provide estimates of the number of GED students who went on to enter the tribal college academic program. The estimates were high. Some of the directors stated that the GED program was a “feeder system” for college enrollment. One of the directors, in response to a question on involvement in college planning, noted, “The Adult Ed/GED program has always been an important part of this institution. Our program serves as a feeder to this institution. Approximately 34% of [tribal college's] student body are GED graduates.” Estimates were made of students who were GED recipients, completed the two year tribal college academic requirements, and then went on to four year colleges. These estimates were also high. Institutions, however, did not have follow-up data on students who went on to four year colleges.

**Limitations**

The following represent limitations in conducting the study:

1. There was limited data at the colleges to do a comprehensive study of GED participants/graduates.

2. Records varied as to form and content at the colleges.

3. Movement of the programs to different sites over the course of the 10 years created the problem of loss or misplacement of records.

4. There was no systematic follow-up on GED graduates from the programs at the four tribal colleges, whether it was going on to the tribal college, to mainstream colleges, to technical colleges, or obtaining a job that was comprehensive.

5. There were no reliable data available that would indicate which GED graduates went on to higher education and succeeded in graduating with a degree.
6. Although there was the distinction that tribal college GED participants needed their Native culture integrated into their programs in some manner, there was no indication of the use of research in the characteristics of adult learners and strategies and methods to use.

7. Only the academic appeared to be stressed in the programs; and some physical needs of the GED participants, such as the accommodation of special hours of instruction, the impact of child care, and transportation, appeared to be downplayed.

8. Although variables could be identified, research and implementation of means to assist were not presented for each variable by the Adult Basic Education/GED program as ascertained by the investigator.

9. Educational and occupational reasons for completion were stated; but, as always, it is an individual's choice and commitment that will lead him/her to completing the goal. Further professional educational/vocation counseling would assist in clarifying goals for individuals.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations/suggestions were made to assist the Adult Basic Education programs that administer the GED program at tribal colleges and to assist the administrators of the colleges in North Dakota that serve Native Americans to make informed decisions in regard to such programs.

1. It is recommended that a uniform record keeping system be implemented at all four tribal colleges so that student records are consistent and current. Archiving data also needs to be addressed. Perhaps by working in coordination with other colleges through the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), a system for maintaining an accurate data base of GED
information for tribal colleges can be developed. Quite possibly, the data base system could be used for other functions such as planning programs, decision making in curriculum, and programs which benefit the reservation needs. It may also serve as a valuable resource for fund seeking and reports to entities such as tribal nations and grant making organizations. If used as a data base for all college reporting, it perhaps would be helpful to provide tribal colleges data in seeking a formula base that is consistent with national colleges and universities and funding which is consistent with the Tribal College Act.

2. It is recommended that tribal Adult Basic Education programs be accorded a respected position among the institutions’ other tribal college programs. The ABE/GED program should become immersed in the educational direction of the tribal colleges through decision making. One step toward this would be the assignment of a desirable and a permanent physical place that is not the first to be considered for relocation when adjustments in space are needed. Resources should be sought to give the Adult Basic Education program a permanent, prominent place at the tribal colleges. It should be seen as a “feeder system” to the college and as another means for achieving self-determination through education of the tribal members.

3. Meeting the needs of Indian people, socially and economically, and bringing to bear the culture and social heritage throughout the curriculum are addressed in all four tribal college mission statements as being of prime importance. Tribal culture also should be addressed and stressed in the Adult Basic Education program. One of the Adult Basic Education directors spoke of how she infused cultural content and activities into the GED program. During the year, enrollments increased dramatically. Unfortunately, she was unable to continue the practice because less monies were available in the ensuing years.
To provide a second chance to students through completion of a high school degree is great improvement to their lives, and to provide students with a keener knowledge of their origins and culture leading to a recognition and respect of themselves as an integral part of this second chance would be even greater improvement. Fowler (1992), in her dissertation, recommended, to infuse the tribal culture into the college curriculum, American Indian colleges should emulate church-related institutions of higher education. Tribal culture should permeate every aspect of the tribal college curriculum and student life in the same manner that religious doctrine permeates the curriculum and student life of church-related colleges.
(p. 185)

4. It is recommended that directors and instructors of the GED program examine the research on adult learners, learning styles, identification of learning disabilities, referral to appropriate agencies for counseling and identify issues of Indian people. In short, to look at the total person in much the same manner, it is recommended for students in elementary and high school.

5. It is recommended that a communication network be developed between the ABE/GED and all service agencies on and off the reservation that provides services to Native Americans. Although the Adult Basic Education program directors networked with many human services resources on and off the reservation that served their clients, there did not appear to be a systematic, preventative method of addressing all clients' needs at all times. An organization that has those goals and that meets on a regularly scheduled basis to plan ways to meet these goals greatly reduces the potential for having clients fall through the cracks. It seemed to occur as the need arose individually. A comprehensive, coordinated effort would alleviate many
individual meetings, calls, etc., thereby giving more time for directors to work with the program.

6. Tribal colleges should provide a full-time certified counselor to assist in counseling students on academic matters, personal concerns, as well as career making decisions. Further professional/educational/vocational/personal counseling would assist in clarifying the goals for individuals. The counselor may also serve in the capacity of an instructor or as the part-time director of a program in addition to other positions/duties for which staff is needed at tribal colleges.

7. Tribal colleges should provide more instructors for their GED programs. They should be employed on a full-time basis to serve the students, as well as doing recruiting, paperwork, research on students, and participating in staff and program development. In many of the tribal colleges, there was only the director of the program and a few seasonal instructors. Administrative assistants were needed to assist the directors in carrying out the responsibilities of the program. None of the directors had an administrative assistant or other personnel to whom they could delegate work tasks. This put undue burden on the director for record keeping.

8. Tribal colleges should provide additional funding through local funding efforts and from other sources for the tribal Adult Basic Education programs. This would allow programs to become more stable. Although many of the Adult Basic Education programs received funding from the states and in-kind resources from the colleges, it still was not sufficient to run a comprehensive and effective program. Taking advantage of state funding and other opportunities through the designated state education department is a source that could prove to be beneficial to the GED programs at tribal colleges.
9. In light of the moderate rate of GED graduation by Native Americans in tribal college ABE/GED programs, consideration should be given to retaining students who are currently in the program by different and possibly novel ways of assisting them in achieving the goal of a GED diploma.

In working through the research for the study to make meaning of the information that was available, some things emerged that were of real importance. Foremost was the need to have more Native Americans feel confident in their abilities. Confidence can have an incredible impact on the ability to succeed and the ability to meet the goals of self-determination. Other reasons were the need to change the thinking or culture of Indian life so Native Americans have a higher value of education and can provide the support and encouragement for children to complete high school, and also to gain Native American professionals who can change the quality of life for Indian families.

Tribal colleges have played a vital role in working toward realizing self-determination for Indian people and have addressed all of the above mentioned. Their continued efforts will definitely have an even greater impact upon Indian education and the quality of life for Native Americans.
PROTOCOL

List of requests for on-site data gathering by graduate student.

Call ABE/GED director with explanation of study and make arrangements for site visit.


2. Request student records of completers by year. SIMS form (9 pages).

3. Request GED center staff make copies of the student records and black out confidential information, such as name, social security number, address, birthplace on each student of each year.

4. Request all copies of non-completers (1990-1999) that are available.

5. Allow Karen Gillis 2 or 3 days to transfer data onto own forms.

6. Provide Karen Gillis the use of a space to work at the GED center.

7. Discuss any pertinent information on program and students in addition to forms. (Interview with director or designated person.)
APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of study
3. Request permission to interview
4. Assurance of confidentiality
   a. No names mentioned
   b. No institutions named
   c. All data reported as grouped data
5. Estimate of the length of time for the interview
6. Request to tape record
7. Conduct the interview
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GED PROGRAM DIRECTORS
Interview Questions for GED Program Directors

1. How long has the adult education/GED program been at the college?

2. Prior to that, was there a GED program on site to serve the reservation audience?
   
   2a. If not, where was the nearest GED program?
   
   2b. Was the former program run by the state?

3. How long have you been the director of the program?
   
   3a. Other staff?  
   (Probe: Could you give me an average length of time most staff members have been with the program?)
   
   3b. How many staff serve the GED program?

4. Are facilities adequate in your view?
5. Are there other outreach sites? Where?

6. Do you feel the program meets the needs of the people it serves?

7. What are some changes you personally have seen or know about taking place that are a result of the GED program?

8. What are some recommendations you might have for improving the services of the program?

9. Is networking/coordination occurring with other agencies and organizations such as Job Service, Social Services, schools, or others?

9a. Please identify the agencies/organizations with which you network.

10. Do you have a mission statement? Or does a portion of your ABE mission statement pertain to the GED program?
11. Is there college planning being done that has a special attention on the GED program? (e.g., Does the GED program form a substantial base for any plans for increasing enrollments? Follow-up or other plans?) [Probe: How often is the planning done? Annually? Biannually? 7-10 years (NCA)?)

11a. Are you, as the administrator of the adult education program (GED), involved in (strategic) planning with the college?

12. Why did the college decide to offer the adult education (GED) and “Ability to Benefit” program?

13. Now that the GED program is in place for your institution, how is it working?

14. What is your opinion of the quality, importance, and impact of the GED program at your institution?
APPENDIX D

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
President,

I am requesting your assistance in providing additional tribal college information needed to complete my dissertation. My name is Karen Gillis and I am currently working on completing a study about the GED and its impact on Native Americans. I hope to receive my Ed.D. degree from the University of North Dakota in either May or August of this year.

I had previously written you with a request to secure information from your adult education department for use in my study. Thank you for your willingness to do so.

As part of my data gathering, I would also like to request copies of the latest self-study of your college, enrollment reports or student counts, and brochures of the college and adult education program with a program description of the GED program and any other pertinent information on that program.

Again, thank you for your valuable assistance. I look forward to working with your staff.

Respectfully,

Karen Gillis
Graduate Student
University of North Dakota
APPENDIX E

LETTER TO TRIBAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS/ENTITIES
I am writing to request information from your department on tribal membership. My name is Karen Gillis and I am working on a dissertation for an Ed.D. degree from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota. The information I am requesting is needed for me to complete my study.

The information I seek is:

1. Total enrollment of tribal members--on reservation and off reservation.

2. Total number of tribal members currently on the reservation--resident members.

3. Numbers of resident members at the educational levels (i.e., less than 8th grade, less than high school, high school graduates, dropouts, college levels, etc.). Should you have numbers on total enrolled members this would also be helpful.

4. Numbers in Headstart program.

5. Average age of tribal members and the percentage below 18 years of age. If you have percentages by age strata, that would be useful to me.

6. Other pertinent information you may have on your tribal membership. This information will be most helpful to me.

Thank you for your able assistance.

Respectfully,

Karen Gillis
Graduate Student
University of North Dakota
DATA GATHERING FORM

Variables for Student Records Study

Identifier: __________

Program Year: __________

Walk-in Date: __________

Enrollment Date: (date of first attendance) __________

Exit Date: __________

Age: __________

Gender: _____ M _____ F

Type of Area: _____ Reservation
_____ Off reservation

Race: _____ American Indian or Alaska Native
_____ Asian or Pacific Islander
_____ Black, not of Hispanic origin
_____ Hispanic
_____ White, not of Hispanic origin

Is the student a U.S. citizen? _____ Yes _____ No

Last Grade Completed: __________

Student a single parent in a one-parent family with dependents under 18?

_____ Yes _____ No

Marital Status: _____ Never married
_____ Divorced
_____ Separated
_____ Widowed

Is the student currently _____ Employed?
_____ Unemployed?
_____ Not in the labor force (not employed and not seeking employment)?
Indicate whether the student is receiving any of the following:

_____ AFDC or General Assistance
_____ Workers Compensation
_____ Unemployment Benefits
_____ SSI or Other Disability
_____ SSDI
_____ Refugee Assistance

_____ Bureau of Indian Affairs
_____ Foster Child Payment
_____ Fuel Assistance
_____ Housing Assistance
_____ Medical Assistance
_____ Other

Does this student have a disability?  _____ Yes  _____ No  If yes, specify ________________________________

How did the student hear about the adult learning center?

_____ Referred by job training/JTPA
_____ Referred by vocational education program
_____ Referred by vocational rehabilitation program
_____ Friend or family member told me about program
_____ Referred/required to attend by welfare-work/jobs program/workers compensation
_____ Referred by other agency (specify) __________________________
_____ Radio or TV advertisement
_____ Newspaper or magazine advertisement
_____ Literacy hot line
_____ Pamphlet or brochure
_____ High school or college staff
_____ Employer
_____ Former student
_____ Other (specify) __________________________

Does this student qualify for lower living standard?  _____ Yes  _____ No

Program Classification:  _____ JTPA 8%

_____ Single parent, never married with dependent children under 18
_____ Independent
_____ Immigrant
_____ Homeless
_____ Other (specify) __________________________

Is this student a displaced homemaker?  _____ Yes  _____ No
At the time of enrollment is the student:  _____ In a correctional facility?
            _____ In a community corrections program?
            _____ In any other institution?

Is the student a criminal offender?  _____ Yes  _____ No
### Test Scores

<table>
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<th>TABE (Pretest)</th>
<th>TABE (Scaled Score)</th>
<th>TABE (Post-test)</th>
<th>TABE (GED Converted Scaled Score)</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
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Reading: _____  
Math: _____

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Literacy: (Reading/Writing) _____  
(Reading/Writing) _____

Oral or Short _____  
Oral or Short _____

Total: _____  
Total: _____

---

Areas of GED/Required scores

1. Writing Skills  
2. Social Studies  
3. Science  
4. Interpreting Literature and the Arts  
5. Mathematics

Minimum score of 40 on each of the five tests and an average standard score of 45 on all five tests.
APPENDIX G
DATA SUMMARY SHEET
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<th>OCCUPATIONAL GOAL</th>
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<th>Post-secondary ed./Amp</th>
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<th>Obtain job</th>
<th>Improve/retain employment</th>
<th>Other</th>
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APPENDIX H

LETTER TO TRIBAL COLLEGE PRESIDENTS
President______,

This letter is to introduce myself, describe what I am doing, and request permission for access to some of your staff and records to assist me in completing a doctoral dissertation. My name is Karen Gillis. I am a former president of Fort Berthold Community College. Right now, I am working to complete my doctoral degree at the University of North Dakota.

While at Fort Berthold Community College, I observed the local and state process of the General Educational Development program, which was situated at the college. As a GED recipient myself, I felt motivated to learn more about the intent and underlying philosophy of the program, relevant theories and concepts which motivate people, and resulting programs and how there may be greater impact on people served by the community colleges.

Will you assist me by allowing me access to student records and conduct interviews with your staff? I can assure you that there will be the utmost confidentiality because I will not see the names of any of your GED students. With the assistance of your GED staff, the names of students and other identifying data will be blacked out on duplicate copies of records. In addition, I will come to your institution and transfer the record information to tally sheets so the actual records will never leave your premises. The personnel interviewed will not be identified in the study nor will your institution other than with a letter or number designation—for example, Institution A.

It is my belief that the data I analyze might assist you to be more effective in the way you use your fiscal resources to recruit and educate GED students. If you want to know more about my study, you can contact me at 701-777-4255 or 701-777-9051. If you prefer, you can contact Dr. Don Lemon, my advisor at UND, at 701-777-4255.

Thank you for consideration of my request. I will follow up this letter with a phone call to learn of your decision.

Respectfully,

Karen J. Gillis
Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership
University of North Dakota
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


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