

FULL CIRCLE: NATIVE CHEROKEE'S PERCEPTIONS OF MODERN EDUCATION

by

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(Under the Direction of JoBeth Allen)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to learn how enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation perceive education in current times and how their perceptions relate to the continuance and acquisition of culture and language. This qualitative study used a grounded holistic approach using Applied Anthropological Ethnography with Indigenous Theory. This research focused on themes of education, culture and identity, and discrimination and agency. The participants in this study consisted of twenty enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation. Eleven members had attended only local public school systems in the area. The other nine had attended the local public school system as well as either a boarding school or the Bureau of Indian Affairs run Snowbird Day School, which closed in 1963. An unstructured interview format was used to interview the participants, with the interviews lasting approximately 1.5 hours. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and a multilayer note-taking system was used to enrich the analysis. The transcribed data were treated as text with the data being analyzed for identifiers that could indicate something other than what the narrator offered, such as hidden emotions, double meanings, or the unacknowledged importance of a topic. An analysis of the data revealed that the Cherokee language is the key self-identifier of the participants and the issues of language, loss of

culture and identity, and discrimination were apparent either implicitly or explicitly in each of the themes. These concerns were present in the participants who attended only the local public school system as well as the participants who attended the Snowbird Day School along with either none or other educational sites. Therefore, continuity was maintained among all participants. It was concluded that the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation struggle with continued language and identity loss as well as feelings of discrimination in educational settings. This study has the potential to serve as information for policy making, curriculum planning, and other various purposes in education.

INDEX WORDS: Qualitative Research, Applied Ethnography, Language, Culture, Identity, Education, Cherokee Indians, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Literacy, Discrimination, Day Schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Snowbird Community, Reservation, Snowbird Reservation, Cherokee Reservation.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my husband Robert and our son Thomas. I could not have done this without you, nor would I even wanted to have tried. Son, thanks for the comic relief when I needed it the most. Robert, thanks for the patience, guidance, understanding, and encouragement. We have made this journey together and have now come Full Circle. I love you and will be forever in your debt.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to learn the perceptions that Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, specifically the Snowbird Cherokees, have on education and how those perceptions relate to the continuance and acquisition of culture and language. My decision to conduct this study evolved from my conversations with community members regarding education when I would travel to the Snowbird Reservation to visit. I would hear stories of how one child seemed to be struggling in school, another decided to drop out, and yet another enjoyed school. While observing the interactions of children and adults who lived on the reservation, I began to notice the teaching and learning practices that were interspersed in daily life. This led me to question if formal education was serving these Indian children in the way they learned best and to wonder how the community in general viewed education.

Sometimes my son and husband traveled with me to the Snowbird reservation. After one of these trips in the summer of 2004, we had the honor and pleasure of bringing home a friend my son had made over the previous two years to visit with us for a couple of weeks. Sitting around the breakfast table one morning, I overheard this young man, who was 15 at the time, tell my 14-year-old son that he would not be going back to school the following fall. I turned my full attention to him and asked him why he was going to quit school. Although his nonchalant answer of, "I don't really know, but a lot of Indian kids do," saddened me, it also produced questions. One of the questions I directed to him was, "What does your family think about this?" His

response of, “Oh, they have mixed feelings but are not surprised,” produced even more questions.

According to the 2005 Annual Report from the State Advisory Council on Indian Education in North Carolina, the highest percentage of teenagers who drop out of high school are Indian children. From these, the highest percentage belongs to Indian boys. On that particular morning, at my kitchen table, those statistics became very real. Sitting before us was a young man my family and I had grown to care about deeply. He told us that he was not going to return to school in almost the same manner and tone of voice he would tell us he was going to the movies or out for a swim.

As an educator, I felt as if my profession had failed this young man. He was not a bad student; on the contrary, he did fairly well in school. He made friends quickly and had several from high school with whom he visited on a regular basis. What, if anything, could have been done to keep this dear family friend from becoming part of a statistic that has increased over the past few years?

Cherokees at Risk

The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force (1991) was given the mission in 1990 to study the status of Native American Education in the United States and to issue a report with recommendations to improve the quality of educational institutions that American Indian and Alaskan Native children attend. They were also given the task of recommending changes for improvement of the academic performance of the children who attend those institutions. The task force report identified four reasons the Indian Nations were at risk:

1. Schools have failed to educate large numbers of Indian students and adults.
2. The language and cultural base of the American Native was rapidly eroding.

3. The diminished lands and natural resources of the American Native were constantly under siege.
4. Indian self-determination and governance rights were challenged by the changing policies of the administration, Congress, and the justice system.

The task force indicated that well-educated American Indians and Alaskan Natives would possess a strong self-determination and economic stability, which would allow them to contribute to a stronger American nation. The task force indicated that this could happen through sustaining a strong language and cultural base in Native American communities.

The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force (1991) cited schools as the main source for implementation of this monumental goal. Schools were seen as being vital to the cultural and social as well as intellectual health of communities. Literacy was also a key factor in the well-being of the American Indian people. Bergstrom, Cleary, and Peacock (2003) stated,

A serious concern is that the emerging research on American Indian, First Nations, and Alaska Native students may not find its way into classrooms in time to save languages and cultures and keep students in school. Some years ago, a study found a 50 year gap between the time most research was first reported and when results were first seen in the classroom. In many schools serving Indigenous children, this gap has persisted. (p. 177)

This gap is apparent in standardized test scores for the North Carolina Indian tribes.

According to the State Advisory Council on Indian Education (2005) report, on End-of-Grade and End-of-Course test scores for the previous five years, Native American students scored lowest even though these students had made improvements in the math and reading areas. In addition, Native American male and female students in North Carolina have the highest dropout rates of all the other ethnic and gender populations in North Carolina.

The most recent Research on the Snowbird Reservation was conducted in 1974, when Charlotte Neely ventured into the area and conducted the first ethnographic study since James Mooney's report in the 1800s. Neely (1991) published the book, *Snowbird Cherokees: People of Persistence*, as a result of her study. In her book, Neely described the daily lives and culture of the Snowbird people, who are at the same time often described as being the most traditional and the most adaptive members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Although Neely's book about the Snowbird People is very informative, she did not delve into the subject of formal or informal educational processes or perceptions. Subsequently, other than historical overviews, I have found no other study that informs the educational stance of the Snowbird Cherokees of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The scarcity of information on the educational beliefs and values of the Snowbird Cherokees is regrettable because it is the sort of evidence that educators and preservice teacher educators need if they are to support these students in academic success as well as to encourage native language and cultural development.

While the scarcity of information about Snowbird Cherokee students and the need to provide culturally relevant educational experiences is noted, these students continue to be in educational and cultural crises. Gallagher (2000) reported that 90% of American Indian students attend non-Indian schools. This is the case with the Snowbird Cherokees. Unfortunately, 100% of these Cherokee students living in the Snowbird Reservation community 50 miles away from the main Cherokee reservation (also known as the Qualla Boundary) attend non-Indian schools. Unlike other Qualla Boundary students, the Snowbird Cherokee students do not have the opportunity to attend the reservation school where the Cherokee language and culture are taught on a daily basis.

The public school system where the Snowbird Cherokee children attend does not teach the language of Cherokee nor does it teach the Cherokee culture. The non-English languages taught instead are French and Spanish. According to the Graham County Chamber of Commerce, out of a population of 7,346, there are 29 Hispanic residents and 0 French residents whereas there are 547 Cherokee residents. This leads to question how the Snowbird Cherokee people maintain their language and tradition if the children are not exposed to it on a daily basis at school.

Research Purpose

Because of the lack of information on education from the Snowbird Cherokee's perspective, the aim of this research was to learn how enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, specifically from the Snowbird Reservation, perceive their own educational experiences and the contemporary educational system and how they feel education relates to the continuance and acquisition of culture and language.

Research Questions

Four questions guided my research:

1. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina perceive the relationship of their education with their cultural traditions?
2. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive the role of education in teaching culture to youth?
3. What role does education play in maintaining traditional cultures, particularly language acquisition?
4. What role do teachers play in the lives of the Snowbird Cherokees' past and present lives?

Indigena as Theoretical Lens

Peter McLaren (2003) stated, “One of the first casualties of war is truth” (p. 289). In other words, history as it is written belongs to the winner of the war. There are many types of war and although not considered a physical war, I found that as I ventured further and further into this study, I began an internal battle with self. What I had thought of as “truth” from my European educated background became a casualty of my inner war because of new understandings as seen through an Indigenous lens. Being a White woman trying to honor her Cherokee heritage, which I will discuss later, I felt it important to lay aside my past assumptions and conduct this study through a new lens, the lens of Indigenous Theory. Other terms I have found for this theory are Native American Theory, Native American Critical Theory, Indigena, Indigenism, and Red Pedagogy, which will be used interchangeably in this study to coincide with the particular author whose work I have drawn from most heavily to emphasize that particular point.

When using Indigenous Theory, it is important first to understand the concept of the Circle. According to Mither (1999), many cultures use symbols to represent cultural ideas. For the Cherokee People and many other Native American Nations, the Circle is significant. The Circle emphasizes the relationship and connections people have to the Creator. It represents the wholeness of their entire beings including their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual selves (Klug & Whitfield, 2003). Throughout this study, I use the term Circle to represent Indigenous thinking.

Missionaries, no matter how pure their “Christian” intentions, expected the Cherokee Peoples to lose their own culture and adapt to the White, European ways. But to understand culture means to allow the “Other” to guide the direction and set the pace and boundaries for

revelation on their own terms. Researchers and missionaries many times approach indigenous cultures with a “You-listen-and-I-will-talk” attitude. This also tends to be the norm of academic models and methods. It is time for reconsideration of these approaches. Thus, Indigenous Theory has appeared over the past 10 years to meet this concern. Denzin (2005) stated,

Indigenism, a label once paradoxically manipulated to distinguish between the so-called civilized and the uncivilized (Ramos, 1998), now provides a framework for both critique of Western deployment of social science methods among native peoples and the creative genesis of new forms of systematic inquiry into community conditions, problems, and concerns devised by members of indigenous communities themselves. (p. 1090)

The recognition of a theory that is indigenous in nature is due to a number of factors. The most prominent is the rising number of native scholars in faculty positions where their voices can be heard globally. Another factor is the exposure to other cultures via new forms of media and ready access to different forms of mass communication (Denzin).

In the introduction to Sandy Grande’s (2004) book *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*, Tim Begaye called for educators to “analyze critically education as we know it and to reflect and recognize the intersection of traditional knowledge systems’ controversial intersection with the mainstream Western knowledge system” (p. vii). Grande (2004) , Paula Gunn Allen (1999), Craig Womack (1999), Gerald Vizenor(1993), Louis Owens (2001), Robert Warrior (1995), Elvira Pulitano (2003), Graham Smith (2003, 2005), and Linda Smith (2002) have presented works that represent the beginnings of an Indigenous Theory.

Pulitano (2003) recognized that Native American critical theory is generated in indigenous contexts, that there is no non-theoretical criticism, and that theoretical assumptions and implications are behind even the most practical forms of criticism. While such Native

American critical theory must take its place within the larger critical discussions that are already in place (Jahner, 1993; Krupat, 1981), Pulitano also recognized that “no critical theory produced from the so-called margin escapes the question of functioning within a dominant discourse, not even a Native American theory” (p. 4). Likewise, Owens (1998) stated,

We do not have the luxury of simply opting out, because whether or not we are heard by Said, Sollors, or others, we already function within the dominant discourse. To think otherwise is naive at best, for the choice was made for us generations ago. Half a millennium of European attempts to both eliminate and reimagine the Indian has resulted in a hybridized, multicultural reality clearly recognized in fiction as long ago as the 1920s and ‘30s by such Native American writers as Mourning Dove, McNickle, and Matthews. . . . The very act of appropriating the colonizer’s discourse and making it one’s own is obviously collaborative and conjectural. (p. 52)

According to Pulitano (2003), Indigenous Theory relies heavily on the Native American cultural and intellectual traditions that attempt “to create discursive strategies that might explicate the richly layered texts of Native American literary works, acknowledging the vitality of the oral narratives” (p. 7). In addition to Pulitano’s description, Grande (2004) characterized the theory of Red Pedagogy as having four factors. The first is that it always has “a quest for sovereignty and the dismantling of global capitalism” (p. 355). The second characteristic is that indigenous knowledge is always privileged epistemologically. The third characteristic is the earth is held as the “spiritual center” (p. 355). Finally, the fourth characteristic is “tribal and traditional ways of life” are always socioculturally grounded (p. 355).

As Begaye (2004) called for educators to analyze critically the dominant system, many indigenous scholars besides Grande (2004) contended that this has to be done in a framework for

sovereignty. “While the nationalist struggle of native peoples remains critical, it is also critical for this struggle to commence in and through a framework for sovereignty, that is, with the development of self-determined, self-directed communities” (Grande, p. 170). In identifying what makes a strong indigenous sovereign nation, Allen (1999) provided the following characteristics:

Wholeness with Diversity—Expressed as strong commitment and solidarity to the group combined with tolerance for difference.

Shared Culture—Clearly articulated values, norms, and traditions that are shared by the group.

Communication—Establishing an open and extensive network of communication within the community. Establishing clear channels by which government institutions are to communicate with the group.

Respect and Trust—People care about and cooperate with each other and the government of the community, and they trust in one another’s integrity.

Group Maintenance—People take great pride in their community and seek to remain part of it: They collectively establish clear cultural boundaries and membership criteria.

Participatory and Consensus-based Government—Community leaders are responsive and accountable to the rest of the community; all decisions are based on the principle of consensus.

Youth Empowerment—The community is committed to mentoring and educating its young people, involving them in decision-making processes.

Strong Links to the Outside World—The community has extensive positive social, political, and economic relationships with people in other communities, and its

leaders consistently seek to foster good relations and gain support among other indigenous peoples in the international community. (p. 82)

Through this framework, indigenous scholars such as Grande, Sarris, Owens, and Vizenor have posited that sovereignty can be strong among indigenous peoples. Grande (2004) stated,

sovereignty becomes a project organized to defend and sustain the basic right of indigenous peoples to exist in wholeness and to thrive in their relations with other peoples. Local (tribal) and global aims come together in solidarity around the shared goal of decolonization. (p. 171)

A strong community with capable leaders plays an integral part for what Grande called the search for “comfortable modern identities” within sovereignty (p. 171). In doing so, she also called for the theory of Indigena to be a “Fourth Space of Being.” To explain, she stated,

The proposed construct of Indigena is intended to guide the search for a theory of subjectivity in a direction that embraces the location of Native peoples in the “constitutive outside.” Specifically, it claims a distinctively indigenous space shaped by and through a matrix of legacy, power, and ceremony. (p. 171)

By having Indigena become a fourth space of being, Dirlik (1999) contended that it stands alone and does not mix with the opposite poles of either postmodernism or essentialism. Instead, Indigena embraces the reasoning that both the timeless and temporal are vital when theorizing realities relating to Native thought. Smith (2005) wrote that through this space, a community of support can be established for new research and examinations of indigenous knowledge.

When using Indigena as a theoretical lens, a person chooses to live and see differently. Grande (2004) described it as about

standing in defiance of the vapid emptiness of the whitestream, and about resisting the kind of education where connections to the Earth and Spirit world are looked upon with skepticism and derision. It is an assertion of the margin as more than a location defined by economic instability and political servitude. It is reimagined as a transgressive fourth space of both transience and permanence. (p. 161)

The basis of Indigena stands strongly on a connection between the past and the present. The historical struggles of legacy and power as well as ceremony inform the conceptions of this theory and are grounded in the intellectual histories of indigenous peoples (Perez, 1999).

Indigena also derives a strong connection between the land, self-identity, sovereignty, and self-determination. Deloria (1994) stated, “Most Americans raised in a society in which history is all encompassing . . . have very little idea of how radically their values would shift if they took the idea of place, both sacred and secular, seriously” (pp. 76-77). The thought process of “place” is central to the indigenous thought-world and is conveyed through tradition and language and through the relationship between human beings and the rest of nature (Grande, 2004).

When reading work that is written through an Indigena lens, the reader must separate himself or herself from individual belief systems of Indigenous Nations as opposed to the common thread of the circular Indigenous theory. In addition to the relationship of place, language, and tradition, the Indigenous theoretical stance stands on several distinguishing matrices of identity. It was in this spirit I found it essential to separate myself from past histories and accepted educational ideologies when I conducted this study. I focused on looking at the data and at myself as I worked, through a non-traditional and non-Western lens. Separation at times was not easy, but in doing so, I was able to discover educational events that appear to be non-substantial in Western thought, altogether monumental through an Indigenous lens.

As Critical Theory serves as a lens to view oppression and enhance empowerment of the oppressed, Indigenous Theory serves as a vehicle to protect the rights of indigenous peoples to live in traditional ways. Indigenous theory values the right of its people to live their life according to their belief system, whether it is one of their ancestors or of modernity. Deloria (1983) contended, “It is this allegiance to traditional knowledge that has protected American Indians from annihilation and absorption into the democratic mainstream” (cited in Grande, 2004, p. 172). Deese (2002) posited this thought in relation to a worldview that is pulsing with the rhythm and collaboration of the land, water, and Native People.

Another identifying feature of Indigena is the recognition of feminism. Indigenous understandings of the feminine are neither passive nor dominant but equally shared with understandings of the masculine. The life force of women through oral traditional history in many indigenous nations serves as a base for indigenous subjectivity in a woman-centered sense of the universe (Allen, 1986; Bierhorst, 1994; Grande, 2004). Explaining the difference between Indigena and Feminism, Grande wrote,

None of this is to say that American Indian women or men are immune to the patriarchal system that surrounds them, only that such traditions enable indigenous peoples to draw upon a reserve of ancestral knowledge that inherits what whitestream feminism has been unable to instill—a pervasive understanding of woman as power. Therefore, as indigenous men and women increasingly suffer the ills of patriarchy, it becomes even more necessary to build a sense of Indigena that conjures a decolonized sense of being in the world, one that sustains different ways of inhabiting the space of being ness, community, and family. Moreover, in times when fierce xenophobia is disguised as patriotic nationalism, it is incumbent upon all of us to conceptualize ways of being that operate

beyond the dispirited, displaced, and patriarchal notions of nationhood and citizenship.
(p. 174)

The full circle traditional systems were founded on balance and harmony in all aspects of life, including male and female. It was not until the European invasion that chaos erupted in the organized, cooperative, peace-centered foundations of relationships between the genders (Allen, 1986).

Indigenous Theory calls for a moving away from an imagined and romanticized past and a moving forward with a living and viable vision. Ethical researchers should consider their responsibility to the collective need of all and, as Grande (2004) contended, “to live poorer and waste less” (p. 178). Grande also called for researchers to “move beyond the anthropocentric discourse of humans-only and to foster battles for ‘voice’ with an appreciation for silence” (p. 176). Indigenous Theory calls for a freedom from exploitation and a life filled with spirit and a mind for everything and everyone that comes into one's path. Smith (2005), along with other writers (e.g., Bishop, 1998; Brady, 1999; Pihama, 2001), stated the purpose when defining indigenous research

as being a transformative project that is active in pursuit of social and institutional change, that makes space for indigenous knowledge and that has a critical view of power relations and inequalities. (p. 89)

The Indigena lens, this fourth space of being, this circular way of thinking, allows me to acknowledge that only the Creator is all being and that only the majestic Smoky Mountains can claim reverence. Indigenous Theory humbles my thoughts and allows a path to connect with tradition instead of severing from it. It allows me to understand and at the same time understand

that I know very little. It allows me to work for solidarity in a spirit free to appreciate the greatest message found in silence.

The Balance of Researcher and the Tribe

While this study is about the perceptions of education of the Cherokee Peoples on the Snowbird Reservation, I readily admit that I learned much more than only about the subject of education. I began this study as a complete novice in the Cherokee culture and although I can trace my Cherokee heritage through matrilineal lines to my great-great-grandparents, I would no more claim to be Cherokee than I would or could claim to be a person from another planet. While conducting this study, I was provided many learning opportunities, and the road along this journey has not been an easy one, nor is the journey complete. I was told from the beginning that learning is for life, but only if I choose to adhere to the lessons of the Circle and be willing to be guided. As in the spirit of Indigenous Theory, I was to listen and not talk. I was to allow the culture to reveal itself to me and allow myself to be “Other” for the sake of understanding. Many times, researchers measure culture based on their own standards and life experiences. I was not to do any of this. I was to come to this place of learning as a newly born baby with no prior conceptual framework of knowledge. One of the members of the family who hosted me while I was on the Snowbird Reservation, Diamond Sr., told me, “If you choose to step inside the Circle to learn, your heart and mind has to be open to experience living and understanding in a whole new way. Life is about balance and everything that you say or do affects that balance. You must learn to balance.” I did choose to step inside the Circle and found that leaving my past assumptions and thoughts aside was easier said than done. However, I find that as I walk further around this Circle, balancing becomes easier and I take pleasure and delight in being led to see, hear, and understand experiences in a whole new way.

Establishing myself as an ethical researcher and earning trust from these Cherokee people is one of the most important hurdles I have faced in the past few years and one that I continue to face. Too many outsiders have taken advantage of these people and have misrepresented words that were spoken in an informal conversation. Smith (2005) explained, "One area of research being vigorously contested by indigenous communities is that of research ethics and the definitions and practices that exemplify ethical and respectful research" (p. 96).

Unfortunately, I have been a personal witness to this several times over the past 3 years. I have witnessed the stealing of sacred objects and a desecration of the land. Even the youngest of children I've talked with in the Snowbird community knows and understands what an anthropologist is and does. When the term "anthropologist" is used, facial expressions and body language change subtly and probably unconsciously. The same holds true for the term "researcher." When first visiting the Snowbird Reservation, I was told from almost everyone I met, "I have never met a researcher I would trust." My response to them was, "You have now." They in turn responded, "Well, we'll see."

Genesis and Uniqueness of Study

I liken the summation of how my research began to having an out-of-body experience. I knew that events were happening and that they were happening to me, but I felt as if I were watching my life transpire before me on a huge theatre screen and I could not put the movie on pause even if I tried.

Having been in graduate school for a whole 2 months, I was reeling from the new material I had been reading and the new ideas to which I was being exposed. I was in the beginning stages of redefining myself as a scholar, and my comfort zone had been truly challenged. Part of my doctoral requirements was to learn a culture with which I was not

familiar, and I had decided to join a university-led program that had students living in a foreign city for a month to study and learn. I had chosen to study the Mexican culture and travel to Xalapa, Mexico, to stay for 4 weeks the following May.

Unknown to me at the time, a friend of mine had been visiting some long-time friends of hers on the Snowbird Cherokee Reservation and had related stories to them about me, my family, my work, and other information. When she began telling them about my graduate school journey and my plans for Mexico, they asked my friend the question, “Why would she want to learn about another culture when she does not even know about her own heritage culture?” Then they said, “Tell her she needs to come and live with us for the month of May instead and learn about our ways and the ways of her ancestors.”

When our mutual friend related this story to me, I will truthfully say, I was ignorant of who the Cherokee people were, much less who the Snowbird Cherokee people were and what part they held in history. I was very hesitant until I spoke with my major professor about this learning opportunity. If it had not been for her encouragement and excitement for this experience for me, I quite possibly may have missed out on this life-changing venture

One of the first and major lessons I learned about full circle living is that you do not receive without also giving. My time spent on the Snowbird Reservation has been one of tremendous receiving. I kept asking how I would ever “give back” to the people for all I was taking. The response I was given was, “You will know how and what when the time is right.” The more time I spent in the community, I found that many of my conversations focused around education. From these conversations, it was a natural progression that, as an educator, I felt the best way I could “give back” was to share something that I know best. It simply felt right. Through the natural occurrence of events, the research topic presented itself not only to me but to

various members of the community as well as my host family. This was also confirmation that it was the right thing to do.

Before I sought permission from the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians or the Institutional Review Board at the University of Georgia, I first asked permission to conduct this study from Mr. and Mrs. Diamond Sr., the couple who had graciously opened their home and family for me to live and learn. I promised them that I would be an ethical researcher and that if at any time whatever I was doing did not meet their approval, then I would refrain immediately and redirect my actions. I made a vow to myself that I would be a researcher the Cherokee people could trust, but I knew I had to earn that trust. With the encouragement of the Brown family, I knew that my life work would involve in some way the Cherokee people and education, and I strove to conduct my business in a manner worthy of the trust and encouragement that was bestowed on me by many.

It took a little over 2 years to gain permission to conduct this study from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. July 1, 2004, was one of the most humbling while exciting days of my life. Standing before the Tribal Council and having them bless this study was a day that will live in my memory forever. I have attempted to do my best to represent the stories and data accurately. For the people I interviewed and have had a personal relationship with since that initial drive up the mountain, my research ethic is very basic. It is about not only forming but holding true to that relationship. It is about giving back to the community and the individuals something they value, told in their words, illuminating their beliefs and experiences. Smith (2005) described,

the ability to enter preexisting relationships; to build, maintain, and nurture relationships; and to strengthen connectivity are important research skills in the indigenous arena. They require critical sensitivity and reciprocity of spirit by a researcher. (p. 97)

These community members provided a way for me to “know” and “understand” myself and them through a way of knowing that has survived hundreds of years. Although I may not have recognized it as a way of knowing because of the simplicity of the lesson, I will always strive to represent and respect the information given.

Another ethical principal that I adhered to is one of respect. My study is unique in several aspects in regards to Cherokee Indians. First, it was conducted within a small community located away from the main reservation where everyone knows everyone else and their day-to-day activities. Second, I had to maintain a balance between my Snowbird host family, the University of Georgia, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Council. By respecting the needs and requests of each of these entities, I found that this study was not easy to conduct. I was constantly asking myself if I was behaving respectfully and, if not, what I should do to make amends. Behaving respectfully in an indigenous community is not as easy as it sounds. Smith (2005) stated,

It is when we ask questions about the apparently universal value of respect that things come undone because the basic premise of the value is quintessentially Euro-American. What at first appears a simple matter of respect can end up as a complicated matter of cultural protocols, languages of respect, rituals of respect, dress codes: in short, the p’s and q’s of etiquette specific to cultural, gender, and class groups and subgroups. Respect, like other social values, embraces quite complex social norms, behaviors, and meanings, as one of many competing and active values in any given social situation. (p. 98)

Although experiencing some moments of insight during this research, I was quickly taught many of the protocols for respect but I never assumed that I was behaving in a respectful manner. I always tried to earn the approval and trust of whomever I was speaking with. For example, there was a situation where one community member was inadvertently included in a photograph in which they did not wish to be included. Although nothing was said at the time, I was aware that they did not feel comfortable being photographed. Out of respect for this person, I trashed the whole canister of film instead of having it developed and only throwing away that one photograph. I wanted her to be reassured I was more interested in her peace of mind than in my photographs. When hearing that I had destroyed the film, she came up to me, put her hand on my arm, smiled, nodded, and then walked away.

I was always conscious of the fact that the community I was visiting and getting to know were the descendants of the people who had first contact with Europeans. Many of the families who live on this small reservation can trace their ancestors back to the 1500s. The grapevine in this community is strong and fast and I had been checked out, talked about, and considered before ever crossing the threshold onto the reservation. I continuously self-reflecting and analyzed my actions as I gathered field-notes, conducted interviews, and visited among the people. This was necessary because I brought to this study no prior knowledge of the Cherokee full circle culture or ways of being. I was always conscious of my role as learner while participating in events and interviews. I was always determined to “listen” more than talk.

Being an Outsider Looking In

Over the past 4 years, my host family members have become my extended family, and it became harder and harder to separate the personal me from the researcher me. It became

imperative that I was cognizant of my personal biases at all times. It became increasingly more difficult to write from a researcher's point of view.

This task became more than I had originally bargained for and I experienced great conflict when considering what to write and what not to write. There were many times in this process when I knew a monumental event had taken place, but I could not write about it because of the subject matter. I was given a wonderful gift of trust that I did not take lightly. I promised myself as a human with high moral values first, then as a researcher/educator, not to misrepresent or take advantage of the stories and details handed to me. I realize that I alone am responsible for my participants' stories, and I hope that I communicate my understandings and representations in a way they will find resonates with credibility.

While being an outsider looking into a new culture is daunting to begin with, being an academic outsider invading the peace and tranquility of a small community is overwhelming. As a preservice educator at a medium-sized university, I brought to this study a bias of being an educator who was asking participants about their educational experiences. My relationship with this small community and how I viewed myself as an educator shaped the way I heard and interpreted their stories. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated that stories "are not neutral objects. They invite—even command us—into relationships with their tellers" (p. 187). Stories change the listeners' lives as well as the tellers'. I both adhere and embrace this statement and believe that by doing so, I limit the liability as a researcher in this area. Wolcott (2002) encouraged researchers to reexamine continually the stories they tell and their responsibilities to those who tell their stories.

I did not consider my bond with this small community always to be a limitation, but it did have an affect on the study. As stated earlier, in a small community, news travels quickly, and

although I tried to maintain confidence with the participants, they talked among themselves and told stories about each other and what they had discussed with me during their interview. This was not always the case, but it occurred more often than not. On the other hand, I felt humbled and honored that the participants were comfortable enough with me to overlook the researcher/participant role.

Summary of the Study

I have spent the past 3 years after my initial invitation gaining entrée into the Snowbird community, journaling, and participating in community and family events. Data for this study consisted of formal interviews, participant observation, field notes, my personal journal, informal conversations, traditional stories, and historical documents about their educational traditions. By stepping into the Circle of Indigenous Theory, I began to view the data as much more than simply “a story” or “field notes” or “formal interviews.” I began to view this data as circular in nature where it transcends the linear and becomes ever evolving.

I began this study by explaining Indigenous Theory. In Chapter 2, I review literature on the Cherokee People to allow the reader to gain an understanding of the Cherokee traditional way of life from a historical perspective. I also give a historical overview of the imposition of formal education and its relationship with American Indians, specifically the Cherokee People and the role education has played in maintaining their culture. This chapter also explores the dichotomy between the European linear ways of thinking as opposed to the Cherokee full circle.

Chapter 3 describes in detail the Snowbird community and the method and procedure of the study. In Chapter 4, I share results derived from various categorical themes and transgress the mainstream analytical method to allow the voices of the participants to speak for themselves. Finally, in Chapter 5, I provide a discussion of the results and implications for Cherokee students

who find themselves in a battle to maintain their cultural identity and language while living in a contemporary society.

Definitions of Terms

I use the terms *Indian*, *Native American*, and *American Indian* interchangeably throughout this study. Out of respect for the Cherokee Peoples that I have dealt with in the course of this study, I use the term Indian most often because it is the term they use. When listening to and learning from these people, I addressed them in the manner in which they like to be addressed. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are more than 562 tribes in the United States, and most members prefer to be addressed by their tribal affiliation. When the term Cherokee did not apply because of mixed tribal affiliations, I had been directed by several elders to use the term Indian. I honor their wish and hope my doing so does not offend others.

According to Dial (2004),

The term Indian comes from Columbus' erroneous geographical assumption that the indigenous peoples he encountered on the North American continent were inhabitants of India. Native American is the first term used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1960's to refer to American Indians, Alaska Native tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders that the Bureau served. American Indian is the term that is preferred over the term Native American by Indigenous peoples to refer to the legal language of documents and treaties that refer to them as Indians and not Native Americans. (p. 42)

Cherokee ᎠᎨᏰᎦ refers to the Ani'-Yun'wi-ya, the "real people," or the "principal people."

Cherokee Nation refers to the enrolled members of the Cherokees of Oklahoma. They are also known as Western Cherokees or Oklahoma Cherokees.

Culture refers to “the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created and shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors (which can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and/or religion) and how these are transformed by those who share them” (Nieto, 1996, p. 390).

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians refers to the enrolled members of the Cherokees of North Carolina. They are also known as The Eastern Band, Eastern Band of Cherokee, EBCI, or Eastern Cherokees.

Enrolled Member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is a term used for Cherokee descendants who have documentation of lineage from the 1924 Baker Roll and having a blood quantum of at least 1/16 percent.

Indian Territory refers to the relocation site where Cherokees were forced to move during the Trail of Tears. It is now known as the state of Oklahoma.

Qualla Boundary is the proper name of the Cherokee Indian Reservation. The reservation contains approximately 57,000 acres and additional tribal lands are found in the Snowbird Community of Graham County, NC, and in Cherokee County, NC.

Snowbird Cherokee refers to the Cherokee Indians living in the Snowbird Community.

Trail of Tears refers to the forced removal of the Cherokee People from their homeland in the Southeast to Indian Territory or what is now known as Oklahoma.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While eating a meal consisting of traditional bean bread, fatback, pinto beans, fried chicken and ramps, a green vegetable the locals consider a mountain delicacy, I was taught one of many life-changing lessons from my visits to the Snowbird Reservation. At the home of Mr. Diamond Brown Sr., Saturday night is usually filled with what they call “music making” at the Snowbird Trading Post, a small business owned and operated by the Browns and located beside their home (see Photos 1 & 2). On this particular night, the music making was cancelled, but a few family members and friends had gathered and were scattered throughout the house eating and visiting. I was sitting at my usual place on the den loveseat and Diamond Sr. was sitting on the sofa. He and I were talking while we ate, both of us paying occasional attention to a John Wayne movie playing on television. During one of these times, John Wayne began proselytizing to a group of settlers traveling west how Indians were savages and heathens. While I gave a cry of outrage, Diamond Sr. laughed. Turning to him, I told him I did not understand why he enjoyed watching John Wayne movies because they never cast Indians in a good light. He replied, in effect, “In order to understand where you are in the Circle at the moment and to be guided where the Circle will take you in the future, you must first understand where you have been and how you got there.” It is with this lesson learned of negotiating within the Circle that I present this chapter.

In relation to full circle teaching, this review of literature is divided into four parts. First, to give insight into present Cherokee students’ heritage and form a basis for future curriculum



Photo 1. Snowbird Trading Post. “Music Making” is held at the Snowbird Trading Post on Saturday evenings from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Community members as well as visitors are welcome.



Photo 2. Diamond Brown Sr. getting ready for “Music Making” night.

change, I provide a historical overview of the Cherokee people and their culture. In this same context, I next chronicle an overview of Indian education and policy and how the forced imposition of the dominant culture has had an effect on modern Cherokee education. In the third part, to emphasize what has been lost culturally through linear educational assimilation, I present literature on Indigenous methods of teaching and learning. Finally, to give credence for future policy change and better meet the needs of Cherokee students, I present literature that addresses how Indians, specifically the Cherokee People, live in two worlds.

The Principal People

How It All Began

The origin of the name “Cherokee” is debated by many anthropologists (Adair 1775/1998; Mooney, 1900/1990; Thornton, 1990). Some scholars assert that the name Cherokee means “cave people” because the people are said to have come from under the ground (Reid, 1970) while others contend that they lived in a land with mountains full of caves (Perdue, 1998; Thornton). Mooney asserted that the term first appeared as *Chalaque*, from a report of DeSoto’s expedition, and then as *Cheraqui* in a French document in the late 1600s, and then finally as *Cherokee* in an English report in the early 1700s. Eighteenth-century Trader James Adair wrote that the term Cherokee came from the word *Chee-ra* meaning sacred fire, forming *Cheera-tahg*, or “men possessed of the divine fire” (p. 237). Today, the Cherokees call themselves “Ani-Yun-Wiya” meaning, more or less, “the real people” or “the principal people.” In the written language, it is spelled ᏍᏏᏉ and pronounced *Tsa-la-gi*, which is possibly a derivative of the Creek tribe’s name for the Cherokee people. Some interpretations of this wording have meanings such as “the cave people, or the mountain people” (Finger, 1984; Thornton).

According to ancient Cherokee beliefs, the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina, considered the homeland, were in the center of the world, and the Cherokee people have been there from the beginning of the earth's creation. The Cherokee elders say, "Man was made of earth. The Creator, having made man of earth, blew into his mouth and that breath became soul" (McLoughlin, 1984, p. 254). Anthropologist James Mooney (1900/1990), who lived among the Cherokee for several years in the late 1800s, recorded many of the Cherokee beliefs. One of them was their Creation story of how the earth was formed. In this story, the Ani-Yun-Wiya's earth was an island floating in a sea of water that was attached at the four cardinal points to cords hanging from the sky. The cords were made of rock, and before the "earth island" was made, everyone lived above the rock sky where it was overcrowded. Being overcrowded, the people wanted more room and the Water Beetle volunteered to venture into the sea of water and explore. The beetle did not find land but came back with mud. This mud began to grow until it became the island we call earth. At first the earth was flat, soft, and very wet. All the animals wanted to get down to the earth so they sent out different birds to see if it was dry. When the buzzard's turn came, he became very tired and began to flap his wings. Where his wings hit the earth, a valley was formed and where his wings turned up, a mountain was formed. When the other animals saw this, they called him back. Finally, when the earth was dry enough, the animals and plants were able to come to the earth and live.

Men came after the animals and plants. At first there were only a brother and sister until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply, and so it was. In seven days a child was born to her, and thereafter every seven days another, and they increased very fast until there was danger that the world could not keep them. Then it was made that a woman should have only one child in a year, as it has been so ever since. (Mooney, p. 240)

The mountains the buzzard had made were home to the Cherokees, the principal people, for at least one thousand years prior to European arrival (French & Hornbuckle, 1981; Mooney; Perdue, 2005).

Historical Perspective

In searching the literature for a historical perspective on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, I found that the most noted scholars, such as John Finger, Michael Green, Charles Hudson, William McLoughlin, Theda Perdue, and Richard Thornton, relied heavily on the works of James Mooney as a foundation for their information. Finger (1991) stated,

Any scholar working on the Eastern Band of Cherokees inevitably follows in the footsteps of James Mooney; the redoubtable ethnologist who began his fieldwork in the 1800s and published what is still an essential sourcebook of information and insights concerning these people. (p. xii)

As part of his job with the Bureau of American Ethnology, Mooney lived among the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina for parts of the years 1887-1890 and for interval periods for the rest of his life. His entire career was spent gathering materials related to history, oral traditions, art, language, religion, and daily life of the Eastern Cherokee and other tribes. Two of his reports to the Bureau about the Eastern Cherokees were published in book form. Mooney's book, *The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, was published in 1891, and his book, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, was first published in 1900.

Having read the works of James Mooney as well as other noted scholars on the subject of the Eastern Cherokee Indians, I concurred with Finger (1991). It is in this perspective that I no longer cite directly from the works of James Mooney unless no other scholar addresses a

particular subject. However, my work, like that of others, uses Mooney's publications as its cornerstone and base of knowledge.

A Stolen Past

Perdue (1989) suggested, "In order to analyze change over time, we need a cultural baseline, a starting point from which to plot change" (p. 8). Although I began this chapter with a Cherokee Creation story, I proceed with the 1700s as the baseline to compare change. Before this point in time, the Cherokee people had not been in direct contact with Europeans to a great extent but had nevertheless been drastically affected by their presence (Finger, 1991; McLoughlin, 1984; Perdue, 2005; Thornton, 1990).

Most writers of Cherokee history agree that the Cherokees encountered other Europeans after DeSoto in 1540, but there is very little documented information until over 100 years later (Finger, 1991; McLoughlin, 1984; Perdue, 2005; Thornton, 1990). As well, the total population of the Cherokee Indians in the year 1650 varies. James Mooney (1900/1991) estimated the total population to be around 22,000. While the total is not known, scholars do contend that between the time of European contact to the middle 1600s the Cherokee population declined an estimated 90% to 97% (Finger; McLoughlin; Perdue; Perdue & Green 2001).

The large decline in the Cherokee as well as the entire Native American population is a result of the deadly pathogens, such as smallpox, typhus, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, influenza, malaria, mumps, and yellow fever, brought to North America by the Europeans. Because the Cherokees had little or no immunities to these diseases, many times if a person did survive one disease, there was not enough recovery time before another hit. Dobyns (1983) estimated that a quarter of the Native American population was wiped out because of an outbreak of the measles in Florida in the year 1596. He also estimated that an epidemic swept through North America

every four and a half years. Perdue (2005) estimated that, in 1978, a single smallpox epidemic killed at least one-third of the Cherokees.

Because entire families and even towns were wiped out by disease, a large amount of history was lost and the Cherokee people underwent dramatic cultural change. Perdue (1998) essentialized that the time period before European contact was dramatically different from the people and culture that was predominant in the Southeast two centuries later.

The diseases stole the Cherokees of much of their past. When the older people of the villages died, they took with them many of the oral traditions they had not been able to pass to the next generation (Perdue, 2005). Because of this loss, the culture of the Cherokee Indians described in the following part of this literature review is based upon the descriptions and documented perspectives of my late 1700s baseline.

Selu and Kanati: Genesis of Harmony

A traditional Cherokee village consisted of anywhere from 60 to 300 people with an average being 150 (Finger, 1991). Homes were large and rectangular with wooden sides and mud-plastered walls. These were permanent dwellings, and although the men might travel distances to hunt, the Cherokee did not relocate their homes. The center of the village was where the council house was located. This was a seven-sided structure with a fire located in the middle. The council house was a very important part of the village and was where most of the village business was conducted and important decisions were made.

Each Cherokee person belonged to one of seven Clans, and because the Cherokees were a matrilineal society, clan members descended from the mother's side. According to Evans (1979), "this relationship seems to be as binding as the ties of consanguinity" (p. 12). At one time there may have been other clans (Perdue, 1998); however, the seven clans historically known are:

Dhḡḡ *A-ni-wa-ya* or Wolf; **Dhʏḡḡ** *A-ni-gi-lo-hi* or Long Hair; **DhDḡ** *A-ni-a-wi* or Deer; **Dhḡḡ** *A-ni-wo-di* or Paint; **DhAḡḡ** *A-ni-go-da-ge-wi* or Wild Potato, **DhHḡḡ** *A-ni-sa-ho-ni* or Blue; and **Dhḡḡ** *A-ni-tsi-s-qua* or Bird.

In one household there were usually several generations of families living together, all from the mother's clan. The husband joined his wife's household and lived with them. His children belonged to their mother's clan and although the father had a part in their raising, the wife's brother had the main responsibility of teaching the boys. Perdue (1998) explained, "Children were not blood relatives of their father or grandfather; a father was not related to his children by blood" (p. 42). When the boys came of age, the mother's brother or other male relative of their clan took over the traditional teachings. The woman continued teaching the girls in the ways and traditions of her people (Allen, 1986).

Because clan relationships and the family unit were an important factor in the culture of the Cherokees, children were raised by the members of the entire household and other members of the village. The role of *mother* was more social in nature than biological and children had many "mothers" consisting of maternal aunts and other female clan members. The behavior in which the children reacted to all their mothers were the same as if a child only had one mother (Perdue, 1989). In this respect, cousins living in the same household were viewed more as siblings rather than being from two families. The view that the family unit, or clan as a whole, was greater than the single person was an important guiding factor in raising and teaching the children (Fixico, 2003).

The duties and responsibilities were shared and divided among the village people. Work was based on gender, and the women were the farmers and the men were the hunters (Finger, 1991; McLoughlin, 1984; Perdue, 2005; Perdue & Green, 2001). This division of labor was

based on the Cherokee myth of the first woman and the first man. The first man, Kana'ti, was a hunter and had been responsible for providing meat to his family. The women farmed because the first woman, Selu, gave birth to corn in her storehouse and then became the source of corn (Awiakta, 1993).

Even though the chores were divided by gender, this was not to say that the women and men did not help each other. Men assisted the women in helping clear fields and the women cured animal skins men brought from hunting. Although each household usually had a garden near the home, the women of the village worked together in a larger field to produce food for the entire village and the men hunted in groups for the entire village (Perdue & Green, 2001). But the job each gender performed was much more than just about sexuality. The premise of job distribution was based on balance and order of life (Perdue, 1998).

Ways of the Ancestors: Living a Balanced Life

Men and women knew very little about how each ran their lives. Each gender performed different tasks and had a separate code of behavior, sacred ceremonies, and family expectations. According to Perdue (1998), "Cherokees always understood their society in more absolute terms and tried to conform to those expectations" (p. 17) and, although they had basically different lives, they lived together in an unspoken balance and harmony.

The Cherokee People understood the world as a system that had continuous opposing factors. In this system, winter balanced summer, farming balanced hunting, plants balanced meat, and men balanced women. Unlike the European belief that women were subservient to men, the Cherokee held the belief that a gender hierarchy would leave the world out of balance. Perdue (1998) explained, "Men did not dominate women, and women were not subservient to men. Men knew little about the world of women; they had no power over women and no control

over women's activities" (p. 13). In this regard, women were just as important as men in the Cherokee culture and held just as many leadership roles. But much of the history of Cherokee women will never be known because the men did not know or understand the women's lives. Historians generally agree that most history of the Cherokee People has been told from a man's perspective. When James Mooney lived among the Cherokees, most of the stories and myths gathered came from a tribe member by the name of Swimmer. As was traditionally known, Swimmer did not know much about the lives of the women and consequently not many facts were recorded.

In striving to keep their world and lives in balance and harmony, the Cherokees believed every task or action was a direct reflection of that balance (Allen, 1986; Awiakta, 1993; Garrett & Garrett, 2002; Perdue & Green, 2001). Separation of spiritual life and daily life was nonexistent and the well being of the entire community was dependent upon the balance of spirit and daily routine (Perdue, 1998). An example of this would be bathing. They bathed for spiritual cleanliness as well as for physical cleanliness. Another example was a work ethic. When the women worked in the gardens, they would sing sacred songs and offer blessings to thank the Creator for the food (Awiakta, 1993; Perdue & Green, 2001). When hunting, the men would give thanks to the animal for giving its life to nourish the people and offered its liver to the fire for thanksgiving (Finger, 1991; Perdue, 1995).

Historically, Cherokee children were taught traditions and ways of life through storytelling. Because balance of life is the key to the Cherokee way of being, the story of Selu, the first woman, and Kanati, the first man, is often told to teach this ethic. They represent balance among the genders and are a principal guiding factor in the Cherokee way. Awiakta (1993) stated,

Balance is the human dimension. . . . for the individual, regardless of gender. And for the community, where traditionally the Cherokee, like many other Native peoples, have applied the principle of gender balance to all levels of their society, from family to ceremonies to government. Woman and man represent cardinal balance in nature. Among these balances are: the balance of forces—continuance in the midst of change; the balance of food—vegetables and meat; the balance of relationships—taking and giving back with respect. (p. 25)

The Circle as a Symbol of Balance

Allen (1986) suggested that the geometric shape of a circle is representative of the Cherokee way of life. She proposed that the concept of balance is cyclical in nature, stating, “the Indian universe moves and breathes continuously” (p. 59). Fixico (2003) also addressed this concept: “The Circle of Life includes all things and they consist of spiritual energy. All around us are circles and cycles” (p. 42). The circle is representative of the Cherokee belief that everything is alive and the entire universe is connected in some form or another. Garrett and Garrett (1996) further explained that everything around is connected by the circle of life and gives off an energy that is spiritual and equally important to one another. The balance of the universe is interwoven with the elements of earth, sky, sun, moon, and stars, including all plants, animals, rocks, and minerals. People's relationship to these things is sacred and should be honored and shown respect in everything they do or say. For example, although rocks are not usually thought of as a living entity in Western thought, the Cherokee view the rock as living and breathing. Allen (1986) contended that American Indians view all creatures as relatives and, for the purposes of tribal relationships, that view is an essential part of living a balanced life. The

circle of life, or balance, is not physical, but is alive. Every life form that is recognized, including animals, plants, wind, water, and rocks, is part of this greater life.

Although the formal structure of a circle can be seen visually in Cherokee life and tradition, such as in the medicine wheel and the historical council house, the circle is a symbolic representation of balance. According to Garrett and Garrett (2002), the circle is representative of knowing, being, and doing, and the concept of a circle “embodies the realm of our life and its constant motion” (p. 15). Cherokee People did not consider themselves to be superior to nature and they adjusted their way of life and culture to flow with the cycles of the seasons and natural occurrences. Fixico (2003) stated, “Nothing is transfixed. Nothing is secure or stable or permanent and Indian people have accepted this situation” (p. 44). Acceptance of change and walking in the Circle of Life is what has helped the Cherokee People to remain strong in their belief systems throughout history.

American Indian Education and Policy

Today there is an increasing number of Indians who are successfully attending universities and colleges in spite of the fact that the Indian population continues to have the highest percentages of dropout rates for minorities in the United States (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). For example, the North Carolina state dropout rate for American Indian students in grades 1-12 declined over the years from 2000-2003 but reversed in 2004. In its 2005 annual report, the State Advisory Council of Indian Education documented,

In 2004, as the state average dropout rate increased from 1.66% to 1.71%, the number of American Indian dropouts in grades 1-12 increased from 2.73% to 2.85% in the year 2003 then increased again from 2.85% to 2.97% in 2004. (p. 25)

As such, even if an American Indian student graduates and attends an institute of higher education, the attainment ratio of achieving a college degree continues to be the lowest of any ethnic population (National Center for Educational Research 2003).

For educators to avoid repeating the past failures of educating Indian children, they must be aware of and understand the programs that did not work in the past. In turn, there were and continue to be programs that work well, and it is just as important for educators to be aware and understand these programs. Reyhner and Eder (2004) stated that educators “must know the roots of Indian resistance to schooling and the educational empowerment that Indians are striving for” (p. 12).

European Contact’s Influence on Education

Though the Cherokee People did not become an extinct nation, they, too, were greatly affected by European contact. When over half of the Cherokee population was killed from exposure to disease, the tribes were forced to readjust many ways of living in order to survive as a people (Perdue, 1989; Szasz, 1999). In helping the Cherokee Peoples adapt to the White way of society, the government recognized and seized the opportunity to expand its land base. Many key government officials and White settlers believed the Cherokees were savages, suggesting that the only way the Cherokees could be saved from destruction and extinction was if they adopted the “civilized” way of living (Deloria & Wildcat, 1999/2001; Finger, 1991). According to the governmental policy that was adopted, the “civilized” way of living fell under the European-influenced, White definition of farming, forcing the Cherokee to work within territorial boundaries established with fencing and to use plows like their White neighbors (Smith, 2002). In addition to adapting physical living conditions to conform to the White definition of civility, prevailing Nineteenth Century thought also assumed that the Cherokee must be converted to the

Christian religion. Eurocentric missionaries thought that when the Cherokee People were exposed to the Christian religion, the English language, and what they believed to be “civilized living,” their lives would be changed for the better (McLoughlin, 1984). In a 1936 report, historian Althea Bass explained that missionaries to the Cherokees had “supposed that non-Christian nations, given the opportunity to learn English, would embrace it promptly” (cited in McLoughlin, p. 32). When the Cherokees resisted missionary’s attempts at “civilization” the missionaries many times viewed the Cherokees as being mentally deficient as well as morally and culturally lacking (McLoughlin). These false assumptions led to multifaceted negative factors influencing the educational practices to which many Native Peoples were subjected.

The U.S. educational system is one of the most powerful control and socialization organizations in modern existence (Huff, 1997). The Europeans believed that combining socialization skills and educational aspects of schools would create a positive environment promoting both academic and personal growth for Native American children. In reality, however, these beliefs fostered a European means to force Native cultures into oppression, creating a dominant White culture through designed control of the educational system. Reyhner and Eder (2004) stated, “Schooling in European ways was meant to destroy Indian tribal life, rid the U.S. government of its trust and treaty responsibilities, and repay Indians for land taken from them” (p. 4). Today, unfortunately, not much has changed. As Cherokee author Huff explained, “The reality is that this nation organizes its time, money, ambitions, and classrooms to legitimize only one language, culture, religion, history, and ideal. In this tug of war, no one wins. The losers are children, all children” (p. 21).

Missionaries and Mission Schools

For the Cherokee, the tug of war that continues to exist today began at the first moment of European contact and became progressively worse as mission schools and boarding schools were formed. These schools were funded by governmental agencies to assimilate Indians into the main culture. Fifty years before the Merriam Report, the United States Congress along with the Bureau of Indian Affairs provided a plan to reconstruct the Indian's concept of life or what was known as his or her "system of values" (Szasz, p. 8, 1999). The belief of these two agencies was that if the value system of American Indians, which was expressed in the education of the children and respect of land, could be changed, they would become more like their White neighbors.

Historically, the Cherokee Peoples as a whole were well educated and were the most successful in accepting civilization. Huff (1997) explained,

The Cherokee were wealthy farmers. The Cherokee Nation engaged in extensive international trade, owned businesses, provided tribal social services, and operated two hundred bilingual schools. Cherokee independence was legendary. They had long since left behind the simple wigwam of the eighteenth century and built homes much like those of their white neighbors. (p. xiv)

No matter how educated the Cherokee People were, they were still viewed as *savages* by the dominant society and were forced to endure *civilization* efforts that contradicted their way of life (Huff; Szasz, 1999). One of the first of many educational civilization efforts came in the form of Christian mission schools.

Even though the federally funded schools on the Cherokee reservation were mission schools, the Cherokee People were very involved with the education of their children. The tribal

controlled missionary schools steadily grew from 1802 and were managed by Indian graduates of Eastern colleges. The schools provided very structured instruction and “used advanced students as monitors to teach younger students” (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 53). The goal of the education, which consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, and morals, was to give students information and develop memory.

The Christian mission schools of the early 1800s were viewed as extremely rigid institutions, counterproductive to the Cherokee and other American Indian tribe’s ways of being (Child, 1998; Deloria & Wildcat, 1999/2001; French & Hornbuckle, 1981; Finger, 1991; Perdue, 1989; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). McLoughlin (1984) agreed with Huff: “Few Cherokee found the Christian religion particularly relevant or helpful when they first heard it” (p. 22). Although Christianity lacked the balance and harmony between self and nature that is vital to the Cherokee way of life, it appeared to value education, so the Cherokee tolerated the missionaries up to a point. They wanted the education without the Christianity in order for their children to learn English so that the “White man” could not cheat them (Huff, 1997; Reyhner, 1992; Szasz, 1999; Wax, Wax, & Dumont, 1989).

An example of limited Cherokee tolerance for the mission schools took place in 1828 when the Cherokee Council sent a letter to Boston warning the Mission Board of their displeasure with Bible-centered curricula at the Brainard Mission School on the Cherokee Reservation. The Cherokee Council warned that if their children did not receive more academic instruction and less Bible, they would choose to close the school. (Huff, 1997). The written syllabary developed by Sequoyah in 1820 (French & Hornbuckle, 1981; Finger, 1991; Perdue, 1989; Reyhner & Eder, 2004) provided evidence that the Cherokee People were quite capable of running their own schools and teaching their own students. After The Trail of Tears, the

syllabary enabled the Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory to develop a kindergarten through college system of education that was the first bilingual and bicultural system in the nation (Huff). This educational system produced a 90% literate population within a 10-year span. (Coates, 2004; Huff; Reyhner, 1992). Huff maintained, “Even today, that record cannot be matched by most states. . . . by the end of the Nineteenth Century, most Cherokee were literate, better educated than their white neighbors, and in control of their destiny” (p. 3).

Cherokee Education System

In the 1840s the Cherokee Council set up a public school system, a major accomplishment that included construction of two seminaries (high schools), which opened in 1851. One school was for male students and the other for female students. According to Reyhner (1992) and Perdue (1989), the Female Seminary was patterned after Mount Holyoke Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where some of the missionaries to the Cherokees had gone to school. Although the school was in operation for 40 years and served approximately 3,000 students, there were only 212 graduates. Students who graduated had a propensity to marry White men or other Cherokees with less of a blood ratio. In earlier years, over half of the graduates became teachers who taught in the Cherokee public school system. Twenty eight graduates taught in the seminary where studies included Latin, algebra, grammar, science, grammar, botany, and music (Reyhner, 1992).

The Cherokee people have historically adapted to new ways of life since the time of European contact. Because of this, a person is led to believe by the success of these schools that, if left to their own devices, the Cherokee tribe would have assimilated themselves (Wax, Wax, & Dumont, 1989).

Cherokee control over their schools was very short lived. In 1892, the federal government, impatient to “Americanize” Indians, gave money to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to build 106 boarding schools located off the reservations (Huff, 1997; Reyhner, 1992; Szasz, 1999; Wax et al., 1989). In addition to establishing boarding schools, Congress abolished the Cherokee tribal school system that had been so successful. Huff suggested that the dissolution of the system led to social as well as political and economic destruction for this tribe. Huff further suggested that the literacy rate plummeted from a 90% literacy rate in the Nineteenth Century to over half the tribe being functionally illiterate within the 7 decades that the federal and state governments had control over Cherokee education.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools

The boarding schools had a tremendous impact on the education of Cherokee children as well as other Native American children. The government, under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, took over the Quaker-run school located in Cherokee in the year 1892. Although there was a boarding school built in Cherokee, North Carolina, many of the Cherokee children were taken to other schools across the nation, including Carlisle, Haskell, and Hampton. By the time Carlisle closed in 1918, over 200 Eastern Band of Cherokee students had attended (Finger, 1991). According to Finger, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.) reminded Cherokee students often that attending the Carlisle school was a privilege. B.I.A. Agent James Henderson made the following entry in a report to the Cherokee entered in January 1917:

Do you realize that you have a better opportunity to make something of yourself than any poor white boy on or near the Cherokee Reservation? Should you return to Cherokee the only opening for you would be shoveling dirt and hammering stone with the negroes on our public road. (p. 29)

When the Carlisle boarding school closed, many Cherokee attended other schools while others moved to the school in North Carolina. Although the boarding school in Cherokee was typical, it was reported to be less domineering in its discipline system (Coates, 2004; French & Hornbuckle, 1981).

According to Cherokee historian Carl Lambert, as told to his niece Karen French Owl in 1981, the Cherokee Boarding School operated in military fashion. Much like other boarding schools, the school was self-sufficient (Child, 1998). The children were assigned work detail in the dairy, kitchen, bakery, and garden areas. The children provided much of the food for the school and maintained school facilities. Academic classes consisted of mathematics, reading, and grammar. The girls were taught home economics and the boys were taught agriculture. English was the only language permitted and the children were punished if their native language was spoken. Punishment ranged from washing out their mouths with soap to beatings in violation of the “English only” language rule (Child, 1998; Huff, 1997; Reyhner, 1992; Szasz, 1999; Wax et al., 1989).

The Merriam Report and The Johnson O'Malley Act

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was scrutinized by several agencies in 1926. One of the first and most vocal attackers of the B.I.A., especially the educational system, was a group titled “The Committee of One Hundred.” The committee consisted of philanthropists who were interested in Indian affairs. Because of the concern raised by this committee, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Hubert Work, asked the Brookings Institute, under the direction of Dr. Lewis Merriam, to study the Bureau.

The educational portion of the committee’s report was conducted by nationally known educator, Dr. W. Carson Ryan. Ryan was a believer in John Dewey’s “progressive education,”

purporting that education must be integrated with experience (Huff, 1997; Reyhner, 1992; Szasz, 1999). Because of his guiding principle in progressive education, Ryan found that Indian Education lacked the necessary standards for the students. He was critical with members of the teaching staff whose credentials would normally be considered unacceptable in the public schools system (Huff; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Szasz). He was also critical of the living conditions in the Indian schools, finding the health conditions very poor and malnourishment widespread. The ultimate recommendation of the Merriam report was the education of Indian children in the public school system where older children should be educated in non-reservation boarding schools and younger children should attend community schools near their home (Child 1998; Huff; Reyhner & Eder; Szasz). The report also included reforms such as providing parents and youth with the necessary tools and abilities to assist them in living in two worlds, both Indian and non-Indian.

John Collier was named the new “reform commissioner” of Indian affairs in 1933 and became an ally to Carson Ryan in his goal of Indian rights. In 1934 Collier was able to present to congress and have enacted both the Indian Reorganization Act and the Johnson O’Malley Act. The Indian Reorganization Act, also known as the “Indian New Deal,” called for an ending of allotment of Indian lands and tribal self-government, and the Johnson O’Malley Act authorized states to pay for the education of Indian children in the public school system (Huff, 1997; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Szasz, 1999). The Indian New Deal also stressed educating Native people while valuing Native culture.

By 1939, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians school system stressed the importance of reservation life rather than outside schooling. As well, the Cherokee boarding school placed an emphasis on vocational education and arts and crafts. With the Collier regime attempting to

provide elementary education for children without disrupting family ties, Cherokee children attended schools in their local communities, which helped to decrease the number of students at the Cherokee Boarding school. The children had easier access to schools that had been modernized in locations such as Big Cove, Bird Town, Soco Gap, and Snowbird (Finger, 1991).

In the 1940s attitudes were once again focused on assimilation rather than cross-cultural advocacy. World War II had a major impact on funding and caused schools to deteriorate because of budgetary cuts to the reservations and the policy of “de-Indianizing the Indian” became once again popular (American Indian Education Foundation, 2003). In 1950, President Harry Truman appointed Dillon Myer as commissioner of Indian affairs. Myer pushed a program of Indian emancipation and encouraged students to attend public schools and off-reservation boarding schools once again.

The Cherokee Boarding School, also known as Cherokee Central School, was taken from boarding school status to a day school by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in July of 1954. A busing system was established for the “day” schools, enabling Cherokee students to ride a bus to the day school on the reservation and return home at night. Parents and students liked this system much better. According to Finger (1991) there were four “day schools” for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians: one in Big Cove and Bird Town on the Qualla Boundary and at Snowbird Gap and Little Snowbird, near Robbinsville, North Carolina.

The Kennedy and University of Chicago Reports

In the 1960s, two primary studies were conducted on Indian Education. The first of these studies was produced in the year 1969 by the Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education. This study, known as the Kennedy Report, has a title that summarizes the essence of the entire seven-volume findings: *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, a National Challenge*. Robert

Havighurst from the University of Chicago and Estelle Fuchs from Hunter College researched the second study from 1967 to 1971 and included a summary in their book, *To Live On This Earth*. Both reports found that dropout rates were two times the national average of non-Native students, achievement rates were three years below the norm, and many teachers believed that Indian children were of low intelligence. This reflects the same beliefs of the European settlers previously cited by Huff (1997).

At the same time these studies were being conducted, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had begun to take a harder look at Indian Education and Indian educators slowly began to become activists (Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Szasz, 1999). The B.I.A. established an Indian Advisory Board for each Indian school and began to contract with individual Indian groups to be in charge and operate their own schools. The first two independent school experiments were located at the Navajo Community College, and they received a great deal of fame. One of these, the Rough Rock Demonstration School, was opened in 1966 as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. It demonstrated that Navajo parents and the community were concerned for the education of their children (McCarty, 2002). After the opening of these two schools, many more tribal run schools followed.

During the 1960s the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians continued to rely on federal support for education but at the same time negotiated cooperative programs with local White systems. For example, the Graham County Board of Education was attracted by the federal subsidies that would accompany admission of Indian children into their schools and invited the parents of Snowbird to send their children to the Robbinsville schools. According to Finger (1991),

Most were eager to do so because Indian children would be bused to a new twenty-room elementary school and given daily lunches. The local BIA school finally closed in July 1965. By that fall some seventy-seven Cherokee pupils were attending school in Robbinsville. (p.152)

Once again, the Snowbird Cherokee children were forced to accept the education that was put before them and whether eager or not, the Snowbird parents had no choice but to send their children to the Robbinsville school system because of the closing of the B.I.A. school. To reassure parents as well as tribal officials that the children were welcomed into the school, Agent Jensen reported they were “well received and well thought of in the Robbinsville community” (p. 152). However, on the main reservation, a campaign to construct a new B.I.A. high school was in full force by the residents.

The 1970s to Present Day

The 1970s, under the direction of Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter, saw many laws enacted to provide means for Indian people to have a voice in educating their children (Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Szasz, 1999). The Indian Education Act of 1972 provided legislation for direct financial support for the education of all American Indian and Alaskan students in public, tribal, as well as B.I.A. schools. This legislation advocated the development of educational structures that were responsive to the needs of Indian people.

Although the new school that opened on the Cherokee reservation in the mid 1970s was a showcase for the B.I.A., Cherokee education “lagged badly” (Finger, 1991, p. 152). Low socio-economic standards on the reservation made it difficult for families to provide their school children with materials needed to be successful. As well, over 50% of the reservation homes were considered substandard and had poor sanitary conditions, resulting in many Cherokee

children's having poor health. Diseases such as obesity and alcoholism were on the rise and standardized test scores were dropping. Alcohol was a contributing factor to 92% of school-age children being arrested in 1969 and the California Achievement test concluded that over 31% of students were below grade level, especially in reading comprehension. Finger further suggested,

Mostly because of this, Cherokee pupils also ranked very low on a battery of so-called intelligence tests. A survey showed that more than 45 percent of students in their senior year had no plans beyond graduation, while 46 percent of junior high pupils believed school was a waste of time and attended classes because someone forced them to.

Delinquency and unplanned pregnancies were other common problems for school-age Cherokees. (p. 153)

Because of these problems, the Cherokee Tribal Council advocated the administration of corporal punishment and expelling problem students. This new policy was representative of European methods and went against traditional beliefs of indulging children and not using physical punishment for disciplinary techniques.

There were setbacks in funded programs for Indian Education in the 1980s and 1990s under the Presidencies of Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. The B.I.A., however, was persistent in their endeavors for progress. Szasz (1999) explained,

Despite the setbacks for Indian education that characterized the Ronald Reagan presidency and, later, the Republican controlled Congress empowered in 1995 during President William J. Clinton's first term, Indian Country was not deterred from establishing its own goals for education. (p. 201)

The tenacity of the Indian Peoples once again was successful, and finally, in the 1990s, Native American educational reforms began to take steps in a positive direction. President George H.

W. Bush signed the Native American Languages Act in 1990. According to Reyhner and Eder (2004), it was important in three ways:

First, it was a continuation of the policy of Indian self-determination. Second, it was a reversal of the historical policy of the U.S. government to suppress Native languages in BIA and other schools. Third, it was a reaction to the attempt to make English the official language of the United States. (p. 309)

Also during 1990, Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos gave the report of The Indian Nations, which provided ten goals for Native Education. These goals included maintaining Native cultures as well as language, restructuring of schools, greater parental and community involvement, and promoting alcohol and drug free schools. In 1998, President Clinton produced six goals for the improvement of Indian Education that reinforced the Task Force objectives and added the goals of improving science and technology education, increasing high school completion rates, and reducing factors that hinder education such as poverty and substance abuse (Reyhner & Eder 2004; Szasz, 1999).

Present Day Education

At present, there are 65 schools in operation under the direction of the B.I.A.. Two of these are located on the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina, an elementary school and a high school. According to Reyhner and Eder (2004) in the 2003 School Report Cards, these 65 schools had an average of 90% attendance rate.

In math 44 percent of students were considered proficient and 6 percent advanced. In language arts 45 percent were considered proficient and 5 percent advanced. These BIA-funded schools reported 3,496 incidents of substance abuse and 8,471 instances of

violence, both figures represented significant decreases from the previous school year. (p. 320)

As well, President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has had a critical impact on Indian Education. Under this law, testing has become one of the main procedures for evaluating success. Because testing is geared toward the dominant culture, it is feared by many educators that testing "at risk" students and mandating they meet high educational standards will lead to a higher rate of dropouts. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) requires North Carolina, where the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians resides, to establish a set of standards for determining whether the state's schools are making adequate yearly progress. American Indians are one of the listed *subgroups* that NCLB mandates to demonstrate yearly progress. While it is a worthy goal in theory and even occasionally in practice, the push to meet an ever increasing need to *pass the test* places more emphasis on linear education instead of moving away from linear education. According to the No Child Left Behind Act, if even one subgroup in one subject area in a school does not meet NCLBA standards, the school will not meet adequate yearly progress (State Advisory Council of Indian Education, 2005).

Schooling for present-day Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians continues to be a tribal priority, and if a student does not attend the B.I.A. run elementary or high school on the main Qualla reservation, they attend the public system in Bryson City, Sylva, or Robbinsville. The B.I.A. continues to compensate those systems for each of the Cherokee students in attendance. Unfortunately, dropout rates are still high and although graduation rates are increasing, fewer than half of Cherokee high-school graduates continue their education despite the fact that federal and tribal funds are readily available to assist them in their educational pursuits.

The educational history of Cherokees and other Indigenous populations is discouraging, and today there are still no simple solutions to the problems regarding Indian Education. Many efforts by Indian people to wipe out centuries of educational repression and oppression are ongoing. Reyhner and Eder (2004) stated, “Those attitudes and suspicions must be allayed and not allowed to cripple badly needed reforms in the education of Native children” (p. 330). It is an ongoing challenge to determine if the failures for success in educating Cherokee students lie within the realms of cultural conflict, distrust of the educational system, or identity confusion. Mainstream education forces a compromise between Indigenous identity and cultural conflict that policymakers and educators either are not aware of or choose to ignore. By understanding the role identity plays for Cherokee people, programs might be developed that may assist in bridging their world.

Traditional Methods of Education

Family and Community

Traditional teaching methods among Indian families were in many ways informal in nature, taking place within the realms of social and spiritual situations in everyday life. Teaching was seen as part of the total or circular way of life.

What is the purpose of education? It is not primarily the acquisition of specific skills or factual knowledge. Rather it is learning how to be a human being. That is how to live a life of the utmost spiritual quality. A person who has developed his character to the highest degree, and who is on that path, will also be able to master specific skills. But if they don't have that spiritual core, they will use those skills to hurt other people . . . so knowledge without the spiritual core is a very dangerous thing. (Forbes, 1979, p. 10)

In these informal educational methods that took place in every aspect of life, researchers have shown that in many Native American traditions, communities play a vital part in the education of their children and that education is communal in nature (Cajete, 1994, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 1999/2001; Garrett & Garrett, 1996, 2002; Pewewardy, 2002). The familial teaching method used in many Native families would be in modern terms considered as holistic (Cajete, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat) and the opposite of what is practiced in schools in the dominant society today. Cajete (1994), Garrett and Garrett (2002), and Pewewardy all agreed with Deloria and Wildcat that the European American culture does not place great emphasis on family, tribe, and elders in terms of most Native American education.

The meaning of family is different for many Native cultures than it is for Western society (Garrett & Garrett, 2002; Pewewardy, 2002). In a traditional Cherokee culture, family is extended far beyond immediate relatives. Family may include cousins several times removed, clan members, tribe members or even community members. Pewewardy contended that,

Although the Indian family structure varies from tribe to tribe, some generalizations may be made. In particular, many American/Alaska Native students see the family as an extension of themselves. Relatives like aunts, uncles, and grandparents who may live in separate households often make major contributions in raising children. The extended family concept may also include cousins and, occasionally, formal adoptees from outside the family unit. (p. 20)

Pewewardy (1994) also wrote that, in traditional views, the tribe, through the family and extended family members, is responsible for the education of its children.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory that all learning is arbitrated socially parallels Cherokee as well as many other Native American traditional methods through family teachings. Thus,

Cajate (1999) proposed that every family event or private visit is a learning opportunity. Lessons learned are intertwined within the situation happening at that moment and within the environment of the learner. Many scholars believe that the structure of teaching and learning is informal in nature and ingrained in daily activities (Cajete, 1994, 1999; Garrett & Garrett, 1996, 2002; Klug & Whitfield, 2003).

When families teach, an underlying guide is the harmonious balance between self and nature. Using nature and balance, Cherokee culture contends that the entire universe is connected in some form or another and all people are family in the Circle of Life (Garrett & Garrett, 1996). Just as the Cherokee Creation story at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, many Native American Peoples believe they are connected to their surroundings and nature in a way that is vital not only to everyday life but to life itself. I have been taught by my Cherokee Elders that all things are connected and each movement I make, each choice I make, and each word I say has an impact on everything around me (Garrett & Garrett). It is this context of thinking and believing that guides families when teaching their children. Traditional Cherokee teaching methods usually include observation, play, and storytelling, all of which maintain the theme of balance and harmony with nature.

Observation and Play

When educators hear the phrase “learning by doing,” most instantly think of John Dewey. This learning method in the same context is one of the traditional teaching strategies used by the Cherokee People as well as many other Native American nations to instruct their children. Cajete (1999) called this *experiential learning*. He suggested that this type of learning is the most basic and holistic form of learning that is humanly possible and is in one form or fashion part of every

Native American context of learning. This concept of learning is more internal in nature and is predominantly non-verbal as well as unconscious.

In traditional teaching methods through experiential learning, the children learn many aspects of daily life through play (Reagan, 2005). A family member shows the child a task and then allows the child, through play, to mimic his or her interpretation of what has been observed to process the information. A few examples in the traditional Cherokee family might include a grandchild's observing a grandfather's repairing a lawnmower and then replicating his actions, a child's helping hoe the garden with her aunt and then quitting when he or she becomes bored, or a child's watching a relative involved in an art project. Older children are given a task to complete. The child may be given a piece of the garden to tend or an art project to complete. The child would observe the adults working and attempt, through play, to replicate their task without attention being drawn to their progress or completion, thus eliminating the fear of failure.

Deloria and Wildcat (1999/2001) indicated that the Native American method of observation produces a more realistic knowledge. They also contended that most Native Americans acquire information in an entirely different way because it is “pure” observation instead of the Western scientific method of investigation. Being aware and observing their surrounding they explained, “Indians look for messages in nature, but they do not force nature to perform functions that it does not naturally do” (p. 27). Because true observation does not manipulate the outcome of an event, demand certain aspects, or have specific learning objectives for the child, many outsiders view this as having a permissive child-rearing method (Wax et al., 1989). In true observation methods, there are no learning goals. The child learns what he or she needs to learn at that particular moment and the end results are not questioned by the parents or the person who is being observed.

On one of my first visits to the Snowbird Cherokee Reservation, I both witnessed and experienced the teaching method of observation, what Cajete (1999) called *experiential learning*. I joined my host family one afternoon as we gathered at the kitchen table for coffee and conversation. While sipping my coffee, I watched as one of them cut open the tops of dried gourds and cleaned them for future art projects. Conversation at the table consisted of generalities and nothing in particular. After watching two of the gourds completed, I was casually handed a knife and gourd of my own. My host positioned herself so that I could see her actions better but never verbalized that she was doing so in order for me to observe better. I remember being startled by the action but picked up the knife and began to proceed to the best of my ability. After completing my first gourd, my host positioned herself in her original place at the table and handed me another gourd. I then began to work by myself and during the process was given a nod of approval from time to time. After an hour we had finished preparing all the gourds. I will always remember feeling in awe that I not only had learned a new skill but also had learned the process without anyone's having discussed even one step. Later that afternoon, I witnessed this teaching method again as a great uncle and his nephew worked on the engine of a car. While they were talking about generalities, the uncle would tinker on the car for a minute as the nephew watched. The uncle would then step back and the nephew would tinker while the uncle watched. When the uncle was satisfied that the nephew knew what to do, the uncle would move away so the nephew could work on his own and process the information learned.

For a traditional U.S. teacher, this was a new and amazing concept for me to internalize. I felt as though I was participating in a type of choreographed dance with no penalty of critical evaluation should I happen to stumble. I learned much more than a simple skill that day. I also learned a life lesson that means something only to me but is far more valuable than many lessons

I have learned in a classroom. This methodology, in my opinion, is the ultimate example of John Dewey's "learning by doing" philosophy.

Oral Tradition

One of the most prominent ways a great number of Native American families teach their children is through storytelling (Bruchac, 2003; Cajete, 1999; Deloria, 1992; Duncan, 1998; Garrett & Garrett, 1996). Storytelling is an effective way to teach everyday values, traditions and culture and is a vehicle for true understanding. Fixico (2003) explained,

"Story" is the basis of American Indian oral tradition. Story is the vehicle for sharing traditional knowledge and passing it from one generation to the next. Its purposes include sharing information, providing lessons in morality, confirming identity, and telling experiences of people. (p. 22).

Cajete (1999) agreed with Fixico and suggested that through storytelling, each person is introduced to different levels of meaning and codes of conduct which were meant to partially answer the "why" of the "way of the people" (p. 56).

Combined with experience, storytelling is an effective way to achieve basic education as well as give focus to events and situations that are judged important. The art of storytelling is often used alone, though in most Native American traditions storytelling is intertwined in dance, history, song, and art. The Cherokee People have used this very effective teaching tool for generations, and many families can trace their family stories for hundreds of years (Duncan, 1998).

In Cherokee culture, storytelling is for both children and adults. Differences in storytelling lay in how the story is presented and the level at which the story is assimilated. Nationally known storyteller Gayle Ross stated that Cherokee stories were traditionally used to

increase memory and verbal abilities of the children as well as to encourage them to think with their whole brain (personal communication, April 2004). This is the same concept that Cajete (1999) called *coding*:

“Coding”—the use of metaphor and symbolism within the contexts of particular stories—allowed and encouraged listeners to fully exercise their creative thoughts toward creative synthesis. They had to “read between the lines” to discover the underlying shades of meaning, concepts, and ideas. In short, they had to listen with their whole mind. (p. 56)

When a story is told, each person will take from it a different interpretation. In Cherokee tradition, this is neither right nor wrong; it is simply the way it is meant to be. Each person, either child or adult, will take from the story what they need to at the time and then at a later date, will take another meaning (Ross).

Just as the method of learning by observing, storytelling is intertwined in everyday life. Stories pop up during general conversation or as an afterthought. Duncan (1998) stated,

They make a point or teach a lesson relevant to the events or the conversation in progress. For example, if a child starts bragging, at some time either then or maybe later that day the story about the possum’s losing his tail will come up—told in a way that doesn’t embarrass the child with a direct rebuke, but in a way that makes the child understand that the moral of the story is meant to apply to him or her. (p. 15)

Using stories to guide, to direct, and to teach is of utmost importance but never would be used to humiliate or punish a child (Cajete, 1999).

According to Gayle Ross (personal communication, April 2004), each and every story has its own meaning and reason behind it, and when a child listens to these stories as they grow, they learn not only the morals and lessons: They learn what it means to be Cherokee. Duncan

(1998) agreed with Ross when she stated, “In learning all these lessons, we also learn the place of a Cherokee person in relationship to the rest of the world” (p. 13). Teaching through story to find our place in the world is part of the Cherokee perspective of balance of the Full Circle (Garrett & Garrett, 2002).

The oral tradition of storytelling is also intuitive in nature and conveys what is important to the community (Fixico, 2003). The same story can be used simply for entertainment one time and as a teaching story at another. Many traditional teaching stories have a human subject and an animal subject that relate a tale of what they did or what happened to them but never about what they accomplished. This is an example of what Fixico deems as the difference between the American Indian mind and the Western linear mind:

This kind of oral tradition weaves together the community, telling us about the human beings, animal beings, and other beings. As certain stories are repeated, and others are not, then sorting out what is important, according to the people are reinforced by the retold stories, (p. 24)

In linear thinking, the focus would be on the ending or moral of the story, in Indian Thinking, the focus would be on the process and what happened along the way.

In telling the same story several times, in different ways, a sense of community is also reinforced and has a bonding effect for anyone who is involved or listening. An example of this would be some of the stories my host family enjoy telling about me when I meet a new person from the community or when we are at a family gathering. Many times the story told about how I turn my blinker on out of habit every time I go around a mountain curve or my first experience with gathering chickens becomes the way I am remembered by community members. When

meeting someone again after the initial visit, it is not uncommon to have someone say to me, “Oh yes, you are the chicken lady” or greet me by saying, “Well, hello, blinky.”

Walking In Two Worlds

Historically, in discussions of educational thoughts and methodologies in America, Western educational thoughts and methodologies have dominated the school systems (Reagan, 2005). When looking at the literature, I discovered many excellent works concerned with the education of American Indian children (e.g., Klug & Whitfield 2003; Cleary & Peacock, 1998; Reyhner, 1992; Swisher & Tippenconnic, 1999). However, except in very few cases, this literature focuses on education after European contact. In part, Reagan contributed this to ethnocentrism, in which members of the dominant culture view their culture as superior to others'. In this sense, the United States has focused on a single education tradition, one of a White, male society, and has excluded the education styles of the first inhabitants of this land. Fixico (2003) stated, “The wars fought between Indians and whites were more than just over land---they were wars of the mind” (p. 15). In losing this educational battle, American Indian students have been subjected once again to walk in two worlds while being educated in the mainstream system.

Linear Education in a Circular Mind

Fixico (2003) described the U.S. educational system, which has been put into place by the dominant ideological system, as a "linear thinking system." This linear way of thinking is in direct opposition to the Cherokees' and other American Indians' innate thinking processes. Fixico contended that, from an opposing point of view, the linear way of thinking and perceiving the world is the non-Indian way that most Native Americans have had to learn in schools and while working with other Americans. He also suggested the main root of the problem, besides cultural

and racial differences, are the differences found in “thinking” between Indians and Whites. He proposed, “Their philosophies, ideologies, logic, and world views proved distinctively different due to the separate evolutions of the human mind set in the Eastern Hemisphere and Western Hemisphere during the pre-Columbia era” (p. 45).

Cherokees do not make a distinction between their everyday life and their spirituality (Weaver, 1998). However, this is exactly what is expected of Cherokee students as well as other American Indian students. Cherokee author Russell Thornton (1998) stated, “Native Americans often must choose between life in Native American post-colonial societies and cultures and life in more mainstream American society. The choice is not always easy” (p. 5).

Fixico (2003) stated that “Indian Thinking is seeing things from a perspective emphasizing that circles and cycles are central to the world and that all things are related within the universe” (p. 1). The concept of Indian Thinking is more than simply processing original thoughts but is equated to an emergence of the conscious with the subconscious. It is the concept of seeing, listening, feeling, and being aware of your surroundings in the physical sense as well as spiritual sense.

Indian Thinking is a shift from the standard form of European linear education methods that are prevalent in school systems today. According to Fixico (2003),

Although many Native Americans have been educated in mainstream public schools, American Indians who are close to their traditions still “see” things from an Indigenous perspective. This logic derives from their natural ethos as a people whose communities still believe in the old ways of life, and they remain viable in the twenty-first century. (p. 17)

While Indian Thinking takes the form of a circular thought pattern and includes abstract thinking, Linear Thinking involves more rationalization with intuitiveness becoming less relevant. When Indian students who think traditionally have to function in an educational system that does not understand nor encourage circular thinking, the cooperative effort between the subconscious and unconscious is greatly undermined. Many times this disjunction exhibits itself in the form of school failure or dropout.

When Indian students are taught by non-Indian teachers using linear educational methods, problems occur. A historical example of this is the results from the Indian Boarding School Era. The main purpose of the Indian Boarding Schools was to remove the Indigenous circular thinking patterns from the Indian students and replace it with European linear thinking patterns (Child, 1998). Because they were taken from their homes and forced to live a way that was foreign to them, many of the children became sick and died without ever being able to return home. Russell Means contributed this to rebellion against linear thinking. He explained,

It is natural that an Indian mind would rebel against the linear way of doing things. It is a different kind of logic and it rebels when the linear way of teaching is forcefully imposed in the classroom. (quoted in Fixico, 2003, p. 95)

At present, the modern system of education is unconsciously continuing in this process and forcing Indian students to be educated in a form that is not natural to their tradition and culture. For example, linear educational methods are predominately task oriented whereas the Indian balanced educational method would be more social oriented. As well, linear teaching methods are usually geared to auditory learners when culturally, most Indian children are taught through demonstration and observation (Gilland, 1999).

Because the dominant educational system usually assumes that *education* and *schooling* are the same, many potential learning opportunities have been ignored. Sociologist Timothy Reagan (2005) proposed,

Because scholars have tended to equate “education” with “schooling,” and because they have consistently focused on the role of literacy and a literary tradition, many important and interesting—indeed fascinating—traditions have been seen as falling outside of the parameters of “legitimate” study in the history and philosophy of education. (p. 6)

Nonetheless, Deloria (2001) contended that most American Indians have received a formal education and have been able to hold on to many of their traditional beliefs, values, and practices within their communities and reservations. However, Deloria also contended that “this condition, the separation of knowledge into professional expertise and personal growth, is an insurmountable barrier for many Indian students” (p. 43). This problem is a major disservice to Indian students who have to walk in two worlds and continually have to sort out the different parts of their experiences. Problems arise and many times become overwhelming for them to decipher because in a traditional Indian society there is no separation.

Conclusion

History has shown that much of, if not all, Native American education has been a process of assimilation. It has, for the most part, emulated the adage of an attempt to place a square peg into a round hole. From the first European contact, there have repeatedly been many laws and regulations enacted in an effort to “educate” the American Indian. Only in limited instances have these mandates been proven successful, perpetuating the lingering Native American legacy of oppression. Gloria Snively (1990) contended, “If schools are to do justice to Native students they must not represent a culture that ignores and denigrates the indigenous culture” (p. 56). She

further posited that education, teachers especially, needs to respect oral traditions and view them not as myths and legends but as being intellectually distinct. Children receive a negative message if the values, beliefs, and traditions handed down to them via stories is ignored by the school curriculum. These beliefs and values are not supported in linear type textbooks, which do not support full-circle curriculum. While there is presently no agreeable resolution, a majority of Native American cultures and languages continue to slip through the holes of governmental politics, red tape, and school curriculum.

History has also shown that before European contact, many Native American tribes, especially the Cherokee People, had very successful and sophisticated educational methods. Even following initial European contact, the Cherokee People had a literacy rate far above their “White” neighbors. In this study, my concern lies not with the present educational practices and methodologies but with the educational ideas and practices that were in place before European contact, many of which Reagan (2005) explained, “continue to play roles in Native American cultural and childbearing practices even today” (p. 117).

The ideas put forth by Cajete and Garrett and Garrett indicate that a broad definition of family continues to be a prominent factor in the education of Cherokee as well as other Native American children outside of formal education. Through holistic teaching methods such as observation, storytelling, and spirituality, traditions continue to be passed from generation to generation. The values, morals, and life lessons that are taught through these holistic methods are ancient and unchanging. The stories told, while entertaining, hold varied lessons for any individual who hears them. These are the same stories, the same ceremonies, and the same spiritual beliefs that have been passed down century after century.

As evidenced in the literature discussed in this chapter, since European contact, the Cherokee People have not lived in a society that honors their culture. For instance, the United States educational system is based on separation of church and state, while the very essence of the Cherokee culture is about spirituality. In attempting to live within the Circle while being educated in a linear world, Cherokee students engage in a complex cultural conflict.

While reviewing the literature, I often thought the holistic Cherokee family teaching methodology described was too simplistic. I reflected that perhaps I was missing an underlying message or theme. I woke one morning in the early dawn remembering a lesson that I had been taught by my Cherokee host family and realized the answer to my dilemma was, indeed, quite obvious. I have been told time and again by Cherokee elders that the true beauty of the Native American way of life is in its simplicity. If a person's inner spirit is out of balance, then every other part of their life will be in conflict. There are no hard rules or encrypted messages that complicate the educational process. A child's education should balance with his or her inner spirit. Respect of others, nature, and self is essential to life and must be reflected in all that is said and done.

Summary

For policy makers, educators, and anyone else involved in the education of present Cherokee students, an understanding of the past is vital. This chapter gave a historical overview of the Cherokee people as well as a historical perspective of American Indian education and policy. Traditionally, family, storytelling, and hands-on experiences played major roles in the education of Cherokee children. However, because of socialization of the children through European methods of education, a decline in the traditional culture and language was rapid. This

decline continues to be a critical problem today, and, unfortunately, insensitivities of the needs of these students still exists.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of my research design and continues with my role as a researcher; a description of the setting of the study, participant selection, data sources and collection methods; and data analysis. I also discuss limiting factors of the data collection and analysis as well as my rationale for honoring the circular way of understanding. I conclude this chapter with considerations regarding validity and reliability. This study was designed to learn how enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive education in current times and how it relates to the continuance and acquisition of culture and language.

In the realm of inquiry, qualitative researches confront the “science” in the natural and social sciences and strongly affect a research project that involves an Indigenous community. It can either strengthen sovereignty and add to the community or it can undermine both (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002). Because people’s experiences were explored and viewed through a circular Indigenous lens, I used a methodology of grounded, holistic inquiry. I used methods that were both qualitative and phenomenological in nature. The questions I explored were the following:

1. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina perceive the relationship of their education with their cultural traditions?
2. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive the role of education in teaching culture to youth?

3. What role does education play in helping to maintain traditional cultures, particularly language acquisition?
4. What role do teachers play in the lives of the Snowbird Cherokees past and present?

Indigenous theory, as discussed in Chapter 1, served as my guide for the methodology and implications discussed in this chapter. I attempted to conduct a study that was as meaningful and valuable to those being researched as it was for me. Minesuah and Wilson (2003) stated,

Native intellectuals insist that scholars be accountable to tribes for how they portray their histories and cultures. We also argue that work published on natives should be for the benefit of Natives, not just for the author. Those who maintain the colonial power structure, however, do not want to connect the past to the present, use Native perspectives in their data-collecting analyses, or utilize Indigenous scholars' theories. Instead they either focus their research on Natives of the past with no concern for their descendents, or they analyze modern Natives using white theories that usually have no basis in reality. Those of us in the academy who are adamant that we have enough information about Natives from the white perspective will therefore continue to face obstacles, both blatant and secretive. (p. 146)

Indigenous communities have been intruded upon and have not benefited from many of the research projects done in the past. I kept that thought in the forefront of my mind as I embarked upon this study, and I tried to give back to the community as much as I received. It was in this thought that the methodologies selected to inform this study took into consideration the approaches that best support Indigenous paradigms.

Research Design

Applied Anthropological Ethnography

Ethnography, the basic method of anthropology, is the earliest clear tradition of qualitative research (Bernard 1998; Chambers 2000; Patton 2002). As of today, many anthropologist use ethnographic methods to study current society and social problems. Examples of these would be poverty, education (Spindler & Hammond, 2000), conflicts between international borders (Hart, 1999), and understandings of culture in school settings (Jervis, 1999). The cornerstone of applied ethnography is the importance of understanding culture, particularly in relation to change of all types (Chambers).

According to Sanders (2005), applied ethnography can be described by several characteristics, such as its taking place in natural surroundings, its research process being open to change, its combining a range of research methods such as observation and open-ended forms of inquiry, its having a goal which is more likely to be exploratory rather than evaluative, and its aiming at discovering the local person's or "native's" point of view. It can also show how inequalities play out at many different levels, such as organizational and interactional. Many times what is perceived by the participants and what is observed by the ethnographer is very different. Using Applied Ethnographic methods, observers have the ability to make comparisons between what is real and what is stated. Looking at the data to discern and analyze what people do as compared to what they say can have tremendous implications between rhetoric and practice in the social world.

The effective application of ethnography seems related to the extent to which the research client is actively involved in the research effort and the extent to which the ethnographers

are willing to server as advocates of their research and to communicate their findings in different ways to a variety of stakeholders. (Chambers, 2000, p. 863)

Chambers also argued that “criteria of utility are as vital for effective applied research as might be the more usual and variable criteria for establishing scientific reliability and validity” (p. 863).

Chambers (1985) identified five such criteria, which are as follows:

- *Accessibility*. Findings should be easily available to stakeholders.
- *Relevance*. Research should be relevant to stakeholder goals.
- *Significance*. The researcher must understand that the importance of findings will vary in meaning from group to group and be responsive to those claims.
- *Credibility*. The researcher must adhere to a criterion of credibility and response to the evidentiary material favored by stakeholders.
- *Prospect*. The researcher understands that stakeholders are many times more interested in possibilities instead of status quo.

Through the use of these five criteria, applied researchers will not only serve as advocates to the research cause but also convey their findings in multiple ways to a variety of stakeholders.

By using applied ethnography in this phenomenological study, I was able to immerse myself in the data to discover important patterns, themes, and relationships and to utilize a set of flexible analytic guidelines in which to build inductive theories. This type of research was greatly influenced by anthropology’s study of marginalized populations and the desire to describe their traditions and cultures before they disappeared (Chambers, 2000). As well, according to Bernard (1998), the greatest strength of this field is that it “provides ethnographers the methods and tools to understand culturally-based needed values, perceptions, beliefs, knowledge, models, and reasons for behavior” (p. 725). As such, Applied Ethnography was well suited to this research

purpose and it enhanced my desire to inform the EBCI of any information they may deem useful to help with future educational decisions.

Role of the Researcher

In my roles as a researcher, Cherokee descendant, participant observer, and community guest, I had to learn to balance within the Circle. There were several times when I had to readjust my “sense of being” to meet the needs and situation at the moment. My role as researcher was one I was becoming familiar with and as a neophyte, I fully utilized the motto “learning by doing” taken from the Future Farmers of America organization as conceptualized by Dewey (1938). My role as Cherokee descendant, while not new in personal concept, was new in the context of culture and protocol. As a participant observer and community guest, I had to merge the descendant role and researcher role at times and then separate them at others. I had to learn when to ask questions and when to be silent, which for me was very difficult at first. I had to learn what to ask and what not to ask, which was even more difficult for me. I also had to “take off my wristwatch,” which was the most difficult adjustment, and learn that “Indian time,” as stated by Diamond Sr., “is controlled not by man but by the Creator.” Events happen when they are meant to happen and not before. I was told often, “Forcing something or an event to happen is not the way it is done. Learn to be patient.” These readjustments of self and time were not uncomfortable, but just new.

Most participants wanted additional time just to talk after the formal interview session ended. Because my host family is well known and loved within the community, most of my participants questioned me about their well-being and often related funny stories or incidents that they did not want taped. I often had to re-explain, before and also again after the taping session was over, where I was from, what I was doing in the community, and why I was there. I also had

to explain my family heritage and establish what I knew about my Cherokee heritage. This was a form of contextual discourse as described by LeCompte and Preissle (1993) to discover shared beliefs, practices, folk knowledge, behaviors, and social mechanisms.

Many instances when I was in the participant's home or in a community gathering, I quickly switched roles from researcher to learner. My participants' became the elders and I readily accepted the role as student. I was constantly aware of what Jorgensen (1989) called a "unique advantage" (p. 29) as a participant observer. I also had to make sure in many instances that I was neither seen nor heard unless asked. For example, when a person I had not been formally introduced to yet stopped by the home of the Browns, I would either take a walk outside, go to my camper, or sit at the kitchen table until I was invited to join the group. Even then, I did not merge in the conversation until directly told to do so or a question was addressed directly to me.

Site and Sample Selections

Setting

The Federal Government forced removal of Cherokee Indians living in North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and surrounding Southern states to Indian Territory or what is now known as Oklahoma in the year 1838. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians trace their heritage from an approximately 1,000 Cherokees who managed to escape this forced removal by hiding in the nearby mountains. In the year 1925, the Federal Government placed a portion of the seized land into a trust so that it would remain in Cherokee possession. The land given back to the Cherokee people consisted of 56,688 acres scattered across five North Carolina counties (Cherokee, Graham, Jackson, Macon, and Swain). The "main reservation" in North Carolina is the Qualla Boundary. Many people know it simply as "Cherokee." The Qualla Reservation or "Cherokee"

has five political townships (Big Cove, Wolftown, Birdtown, Painttown, and Yellow Hill), which are located on the main reservation land in Swain County. The Snowbird political township is located 50 miles west of the main reservation, in Graham County. Another small township that is usually connected politically to the Snowbird community, Tomotla, is located in Cherokee County.

At present, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has an enrollment count of 12,500 members with about half of them living on the Qualla Reservation. According to the Graham County Chamber of Commerce, the Snowbird Reservation located near Robbinsville is home to approximately 500 enrolled Cherokee members. For the purpose of this study, I focused my research on the Snowbird community not only for its small population but for several other reasons as well. Snowbird is different from the main Cherokee reservation because there is a lack of tourism. Its reservation lands are scattered into individual tracts, and when traveling along the Snowbird, Little Snowbird, and Buffalo Creeks, a stranger to the area does not recognize when they are and are not on trust land. There is only one store located on the reservation, which is owned and operated by enrolled members of the EBCI, and tourists usually have a difficult time locating it.

Although the Cherokee are one of the most studied groups of Native Americans, most studies have focused on the main Qualla Boundary. The last study conducted in the Snowbird community was done by Sharlotte Neely in the 1970s, and it did not pertain to education. Neely (1991) observed,

The way Snowbird reservation lands are intermingled with white-owned lands has resulted in the inability of Snowbird Cherokees to withdraw physically from the larger white American world. At the same time, the location of Snowbird lands more than fifty

miles from the Qualla Boundary has imposed a kind of isolation from other Eastern
Cherokees. (p. 14)

I found it interesting that although the Snowbird Cherokees are known for being the most traditional, the children are educated in the local school system because of an absence of a tribal school located on the reservation. If Snowbird children wish to be educated at a tribal school, they would have to travel an hour to the main reservation. This fact was one of the main reasons I focused my research in the Snowbird community.

The Snowbird community surrounded by the Snowbird, Unicoi, Yellow, and Cheoah Mountains, also known as the Great Smoky Mountains, are the entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Attempting to describe these majestic mountains equates with trying to describe the very essence of life. I have found that the Snowbird Mountains are beautiful all year and each season brings such an incredible beauty that I cannot choose which is my favorite (see Photos 3, 4, 5, & 6). In spring, I enjoyed seeing the beautiful dogwoods bloom and the smell of wildflowers. Summer brought the bloom of the mountain laurel which is a spectacular sight to behold. The mountains in fall were bursting with glorious color and then winter brought a peace that was laced with serenity as I walked through the snow. Being much better wordsmiths than I, many writers have shared their descriptive portrayals of the Snowbird Mountains. My favorite comes from Traveller Bird (1972), who described the Snowbird Mountains this way,

A series of mountains rise out of the great Appalachian Range in Graham County, North Carolina, southwest of the Great Smoky Mountains. For my people, the Eastern Band of Cherokees, it is an old, old landmark, and they gave it the name Snowbird Mountains because it is said that long ago there once lived on the highest peak a giant white



Photo 3. The Snowbird Mountains in the fall.



Photo 4. The Snowbird Mountains in the winter.



Photo 5. The Snowbird Mountains in the spring.



Photo 6. The Snowbird Mountains in the summer.

Snowbird who was the grandfather of all the little snowbirds we see today. To me this region is the top of the whole world—the land of the Sky People, it was said. The sky-line is in all directions and close at hand. It is a land of cold, rushing rivers, small creeks, deep gorges, dark timber, and waterfalls. Great billowing clouds sail upon the mountains and in early morning a blue-gray mist hangs just above the treetops. Winter brings ice and snow. Spring and summer, a profusion of colors. The white Cherokee rose tipped with pink is the first flower to bloom. Then from the Earth Mother come the purple violets and brown, sweet-smelling sweet shrub. Still later, the mountains flame in orange and yellow honeysuckle and red and white rhododendron. (p. 4).

Selection of Interview Participants

For the purpose of generating names of possible interview candidates, I sought guidance through the Cultural Preservation Office of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Under the direction of the Junaluska Museum Director T. J. Holland and my host family, I was able to interview 20 participants. Six of the interviews took place at the museum, one in a participant's office, three at the local Senior Citizens Center, and one at a local restaurant. The other interviews took place in the participants' homes or the camper provided for me by my host family when I visited the reservation (see photo 7).

Even though I was not in charge of selecting my participants, the representation of the overall Snowbird community was well established. The director of the Junaluska Museum as well as my host family voiced their desire to have a well balanced participant list consisting of people who would be able to answer the questions to this study in a way that would be reflective of the Snowbird community's views on education. I found this to be evident as I interviewed the participants. Although the basic backgrounds and school experiences varied with the



Photo 7. The Junaluska Museum

participants, the themes that were identified in these discussions were consistent and the saturation point in the data collection was clearly established.

Description of Interviewees

A detailed description and disclosure of the interview participants will be limited for several reasons. This limitation is warranted primarily because of the small number of enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation. Because the community is rather small, to provide large amounts of detail could possibly identify the participants. While all of the participants were aware that their identities could be revealed and most of them did not object, I feel it is the best interest of this study to keep them from being identified. Several of the participants revealed their part in this study among themselves and all

but two of the participants used a pseudonym for this study. The pseudonyms are used to maintain confidentiality for each of the participants unless they chose to reveal their part in this study. The names of my host family, and of the curator of the Junaluska museum, T. J. Holland, have not been changed.

Of the 20 participants, there were 4 men and 16 women ranging from age 23 to 75 (see Table 1). Because the participants were selected for me, I did not attempt to sample participants based on gender, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, or career positions. However, there were four specific stipulations I requested in order to participate in this study. The first and second were the participants had to live in the Snowbird community and be an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The third was the participant had to be 18 years of age or older. The fourth stipulation was the participant must have been educated in the Snowbird community. Of the 20 participants, all of them currently lived in the Snowbird community and were over the age of 18. All participants were enrolled members of the EBCI and all but one had been educated in the community. I didn't learn this participant had not been educated in the Snowbird community until well into the interview process and because of the context in which my participants were located for this study, I did not feel the necessity to turn the non-member participant away. Also, I wanted to include the information gathered from all participants because of the way in which they informed and participated in this study.

The educational backgrounds of the participants were diverse and ranged from fifth grade to a Master's degree in education. Of the nine participants who did not complete high school, all but one had completed a G.E.D. One participant had attended the Snowbird Indian Day School, which closed in 1963, and Boarding School in Cherokee, North Carolina. Eight participants had

attended the Snowbird Indian Day School and ten had attended only the local public school system. The remaining participants had attended school in a nearby community.

Table 1
Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Education
Sally	Female	26	Local public elementary & high schools, some college
Bear	Male	29	Local public elementary and high schools, 3rd & 4th Cherokee Elementary, college (graduated)
May	Female	48	Snowbird Day school, local public elementary & high schools through 10th grade
David	Male	58	Snowbird Day School, local public high school
Jane	Female	40	Local public elementary and high schools, G.E.D.
Lou	Female	50	Snowbird Day School, local public elementary and high schools, college (2-yr degree)
Noon	Female	64	Snowbird Day School and local public high school
Zack	Male	23	Local public elementary and high schools, some college
Cindy	Female	36	Local public elementary and high schools
Sue	Female	39	Local public elementary and high schools
Claire	Female	39	Local public elementary and high schools
John	Male	28	Local public elementary and high school through 11th grade; 2nd & 3rd grade at Cherokee Elem.
Mary	Female	48	Snowbird Day School, local public elementary and high schools; G.E.D.
Donna	Female	60	Snowbird Day School, local public high school
Elizabeth	Female	58	Snowbird Day School, local public high school, junior college
Janice	Female	68	Snowbird Day School, Local elementary (through 6th grade); G.E.D. & technical degree
Rowena Cornsilk	Female	75	Snowbird Day School, Cherokee Boarding School (until age 20)
Maddie	Female	54	Local elementary and High Schools, G.E.D., college (5 year degree)
Betty Lou	Female	47	Local public middle and high school (graduated)
Celena	Female	28	Local public elementary and high schools (quit in winter of 12th grade); G.E.D.

Note. Participants are identified by self-selected pseudonyms.

Confidentiality

Interviewees signed their names to a consent form. A copy of this form is located in Appendix C. The participants were given a choice of using their legal name or choosing a pseudonym in this study. The participants were assured of confidentiality on the part of the researcher, but I acknowledged that because of the nature of the small community in which they lived, their identities could be revealed. After the final transcripts were sent to the participants for feedback, only one chose not to have their interview included for the data analysis.

Consideration of Human Participants

Because of several stories told me by various members of the Eastern Band Of Cherokee Indians of unethical research conducted on their tribe, I gave careful and deliberate attention to the use of human participants for this study. Several layers of consent were required for me to complete this study. I always tried to be mindful and respectful of my host family when seeking approval for permission to conduct research. I spent the great part of one year entering into the community and gaining trust. After my host family gave their permission and wrote a letter of support (Appendix E), I then sought support through the tribal council. My host family took me in person to meet Chief Hicks and was instructed by him of the research protocol and the person I was to contact. Under the direction of the Cultural Resources Director, I sought and was granted permission by the tribal council of the EBCI (see Appendix D). Next, after several revisions, assurances, and an appearance before the review board, I received approval from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Georgia for me to conduct interviews and participate in research collection procedures as well as use my field notes and journals from the previous two years. Finally, I also obtained permission from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board to include personal

photographs, historic public photographs from the local and tribal libraries, photographs of public events, photographs from local newspapers (current and historic), and local and historic scenery. A copy of the consent form used for personal photographs is located in Appendix B.

Data Collection

Procedures

Upon meeting the participant, my first task was to present the informed consent form. All participants read and signed the consent form and self-selected a pseudonym if they chose to use one. A copy of the consent form is located in Appendix C. My goal was to have one interview with a follow-up interview if necessary. Initial interviews were approximately one hour in length and all but one was audio recorded. Follow-up interviews were not audio recorded and consisted of informal conversations that took place in person or via phone or email. Six of the interviews were transcribed by me and the rest were transcribed by a professional transcriber and reviewed by me for accuracy and necessary corrections. I kept the interview tapes and transcriptions in a locked file cabinet to which only I had access.

The sessions were unstructured (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) but followed a general interview guide, which is provided in Appendix A. The guide consisted of a list of specific questions designed to direct the interview to certain areas if needed. Usually, the initial interview question generated new discussions and new questions were formed from that process. I found that open-ended questions paved way for more detailed questions and responses. The interview provided each participant an opportunity to discuss and reflect his or her educational experiences as well as providing him or her opportunity to have flexibility and control of the conversation. Each participant was assured that he or she could choose to withdraw or not answer any questions at any point during the interview or project.

Initially, I wanted to use Spradley's (1980) four-part system for field notes for this study. Instead, I found that by putting aside my notebook and pen, the interview flowed more smoothly and the participants engaged more readily in our conversation. Consequently, I was not able to document my observations, intuitions, hunches, or impressions until sometimes much later. I also found that although the interviews were held in public places, certain unwritten cultural protocol needed to be maintained, and I never began an interview without first "gifting" the participant. It is culturally appropriate that when a person asks for a favor, a gift is given to maintain balance. Usually, I brought a small gift such as pecans or coffee and then at the end of the interview gave a monetary gift to show my appreciation. When invited into the homes of my participants, especially in the homes of the elders, it was automatically assumed that I was there to learn and the elder was there to teach. It was generally accepted that the elder would lead the conversation and I usually sat on the floor or on a chair that was lower than his or her chair. As is generally accepted protocol among the Cherokee people, at the initial meeting of the elders, I had to explain "who my people were," "where I came from," and "why I was doing what I was doing." Each time I replied with some variation of the following:

Establishing who your people are is also thought of as an extension of clans. Determining the kin of a southeastern Indian is equivalent to determining history, ancestors, and traditions of a specific clan and that individual. (Deese, 2002, p. 114)

I was never given an indication as to whether I passed or failed the initial test, but I was never asked to leave a home or have an interview stopped. One participant told me that I was granted permission for an interview because of my (host) "family" and if they accepted me, then they knew I had to be OK. She went on to tell me that in the Snowbird community "it is all in who you know." Each person I interviewed told me how fortunate I was to be an adopted member of

the Diamond Brown Sr. family. He is a well loved and very respected member of the community, and I have no doubt that had it not been for my connection with him and his family, I would not have been granted any of the interviews.

I kept a research diary in the form of memos in order to record my impressions and observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). My recordings also included personal and subjective accounts of what occurred during my interview sessions. My reflections included initial thoughts and ideas as well as my triumphs and frustrations during the research process. I tried to record accurate descriptions and interpretations of what I understood to be taking place as an event unfolded. I tried to pay close attention to body language, expressions, and participant's actions. When hearing a comment I could not record immediately in my notes, I tried to remember verbatim and write the comment as soon as possible.

Participant Observation

While living with my host family during my stays on the Snowbird Reservation, I kept a personal journal of observations and feelings. I wrote about many of the questions that had formed after finishing a non-structured interview, visit, or informal conversation. This journal began with my first contact with my host family and continues even now. Field notes were taken in the form of memos and emails.

Photographs

Many of the participants provided photographs for me to view during the interviews. I also took several hundred photographs while participating in this study. The photographs provided many points of discussion and reminiscing during the interviews as well as afterward when the recorder was turned off. While many of the photographs will not be published in this

study, they were useful in assisting in conceptualizing the data analysis. A copy of the photo consent form is located in Appendix B.

Informal, Non-Recorded Interviews

Many times the interviews continued immediately after the tape recorder was turned off or during informal visits. Several times, participants approached me at a gathering or at a local place to say, “I forgot to tell you . . .” or, “I remembered after you left something else I wanted to tell you . . .” and would begin to tell me what they wished. These conversations were numerous and not recorded in a specific manner, but I wrote memos and notes immediately afterwards when I thought it was relevant to the study. At various times, individuals who were not formally interviewed in this study volunteered information, stories, and/or photographs.

Documents

Documents and archival materials consisted of newspaper publications, personal emails and letters, participant letters and memorabilia. I collected some of the materials at the local and tribal libraries while others were retrieved from participants’ attics, garages, and homes. Field notes consisted of my observational reflections, notes, and journal entries and photographs taken by me. These notes helped to remind me of details, discussions, and experiences that had not been recorded elsewhere. They also helped to shape my initial impressions.

Data Analysis

The Constant Comparative Method

According to Charmaz (2005), “the term grounded theory refers both to a method of inquiry and to the product of inquiry. However, researchers commonly use the term to mean a specific mode of analysis” (p. 507). The constant comparative method is the joint coding and analysis of data using analytic induction with the premise that the researcher

identifies themes from the body of data and is illustrated by examples from it. Because I wanted my understanding of how enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceived their educational experiences to be identified from the data, I was not interested in looking for prior evidence to prove a hypothesis. Using the constant comparative approach allowed me to stay close to my data and develop concepts from that data, to interpret and show relationships as I proceeded (Emerson, 1988) and to create theory from the bottom up instead of top down (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The descriptions created provide the data for my interpretation of the phenomenon that was under investigation.

The comparison of codes using inductive methodology allows ethnographic researchers to view how participants negotiate their world (Charmaz 2005). As well, this methodological approach also depends on the extensive use of field notes and intensive interviews in constant comparison to serve the purpose of developing subsequent theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It was my intention in this study to provide sufficient descriptions of the participants' perceptions of how education has had an effect on maintaining and sustaining cultural beliefs and values. This field work methodology allowed a qualitative analysis of thoughts and ideas of the participants as discovered in the interviews and observed by the researcher. It also allowed me to make the data more clear and distinct but not lose the information that was included in the initial material gathered. I was able to study the data and return to the field to gather focused data to answer analytic questions and to fill conceptual gaps (Charmaz).

Because I wanted to gain understanding of enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' beliefs of modern education and its relationship to the congruence of culture and language, the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999) fit my research

design. This method involves taking field notes, interviews, and written observations and coding them in an inductive manner. When the data are coded, the researcher then develops categories, placing the codes in the categories, modifying the categories as warranted by seeing what fits and what does not fit. Coding the data allows the researcher to recognize and contextualize the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The categories are compared and analyzed to find links and relationships among the data sets. The discovery of new categories and relationships is made through the constant comparison of the data as the researcher identifies new categories among the links. Coffey and Atkinson asserted that in coding the data, the researcher reads the data over and over again, which leads to making selections from the data, which in turn involves more analysis.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999), there are four distinct stages for generating data using the constant comparative method. Glaser and Strauss label the first stage “generating.” This is where the researcher codes the data and places the data into categories that have been identified by the codes. To begin generating data, the original transcripts were unaltered from the transcribed format and placed in a locked cabinet along with the original audio recording. A separate set of interview transcripts were formatted with wide margins and numbered sequentially by lines. As I listened to the recordings for the first time after each interview, I also kept in mind the implications of Coffey and Atkinson (1996) that it is important to understand that coding should never be used as a substitute for analysis.

During the initial coding stage, not only did I use intuitive coding highlighting key words, themes, and phrases, I labeled information such as where the data were collected, what was happening when the data were being collected and who was the person or persons from which I was collecting the data. It was also during this step in the initial coding process that I wrote

memos frequently. For example, in a memo dated January 20, 2005, I wrote, “Being separated 50 miles from the main reservation, there seems to be a strong sense of community among the Snowbird People.” In another memo, dated March 12, 2005, I wrote, “I have found three categories of participants I have interviewed consisting of people who only attended the Snowbird Day School, people who have only attended school in Robbinsville and people who have attended both.” Memo writing serves as an important link between coding and initializing the first analysis of the data.

The second stage for Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999) involves the researcher’s integrating the categories or incidents with “provisional rules” (Grove, 1981). The researcher takes his or her first intuitive coded categories and then places them into new categories that are more explicit. According to Grove, “Provisional rules are reshaped as new incidents are placed in categories. This second stage of my analysis of data was a meticulous process that required a tremendous amount of time. As I read and reread the transcriptions, I identified initial themes and coding became significant. The process was gradual because I worked with single transcripts for a period of time and then I worked with simultaneous transcripts for a period of time. I did this not only for coding purposes but to assure authenticity. When I put the categories into different sections and subpiles, I was able to look at the differences and likenesses within those subpiles. One of the most interesting categories from these sub-piles and categories was the sense of “community” that was reinforced by the actions and dialogues of the participants.

Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999) denoted the third stage as “delimiting the theories.” In this stage, the changes that are made in the rules become fewer and fewer and the manipulations of the incidents are fewer as well. It was at this point in my analysis that I began to fill in the patterns. If information was missing or unclear, I made follow-up phone calls to collect further

data. For example, when reading historical accounts of the Snowbird area (Finger 1984), I kept reading about a day school at Snowbird Gap. I assumed that Snowbird Gap was simply another name for the school located in the Snowbird area, or what is called Little Snowbird and this school was one and the same. To clear my confusion, I called Diamond Sr. to ask for clarification. He explained that they were two separate schools and the one at Little Snowbird was the one he and others in the area had attended. Although he was aware that there had been a school located at Snowbird Gap, he had never seen it. After further reading, I found that the Snowbird Gap school had closed in 1925 (Finger 1991).

The fourth stage is termed by Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999), as “writing the theory.” The categories are set and the data are no longer manipulated. They also asserted that when a researcher knows when theory is ‘adequate,’ it is time to stop. According to Dey (1993), Glaser and Strauss refer to this as “theoretical saturation.” Dey explained, “‘Theoretical saturation’ refers to concepts, not data, and identifies a point where no further conceptualization of the data is required” (p. 8).

Member Checking

Using Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) concept of “member checking,” when individual transcriptions were completed, I mailed a copy to the participant with my phone number in a cover letter. Based on comments in person or via phone conversations, minor changes were made to three of the transcripts. No additions or deletions were requested. In conversing with the participants on the accuracy of the transcripts, validity of data collected and initial findings of the study, an adequate member check was confirmed. After the dissertation is completed and approved, a summative, narrative text description of findings and implications will be mailed or hand delivered to each participant.

The data I collected in the forms of interviews, observations, archival materials, field notes, historic and current photographs, library and personal archives, and journaling revealed several connections of how enrolled Snowbird members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive modern education. Being able to live among many of the participants while collecting data was a reminder of the values and struggles it takes to balance living in two worlds. My analysis of the data revealed many identified themes that did not relate directly to this study. I will keep this data locked in my file cabinet for future studies.

Each step of data collection could have resulted in its own study. The photographs alone could have completely changed the focus of this study to examine family and education. As I listened to the interviews, looked at photographs, and participated in informal conversations, I was overwhelmed with a strong sense of community and Cherokee pride. I realized that being “Cherokee” for the Snowbird peoples is not only a point of pride but a point of identity as well and serves as a connection to how they view their world. For example, two of my participants had pictures of the Little Snowbird School. Each spoke fondly of their time at the school and shared several stories. A common story was of the lunches the school provided. A Snowbird community member was the cook for the school and both related how wonderful the meals were. They recounted of the fresh vegetables and chocolate milk served each day and vividly remembered the gingerbread cookies made each Christmas. As well, they agreed that being at the Little Snowbird school was the best time of their lives.

Story as Analysis

Traditional Cherokee methods of teaching and learning involve the use of stories. By using inductive analysis methods through the use of stories, I adhered to and honor the culture

being studied. This methodology allowed creativity of analysis to fit the need of the culture.

Denzin (2005) stated,

Indigenists resist the positivist and post positivist methodologies of Western science because nonindigenous scholars too frequently use these formations to validate colonizing knowledge about indigenous peoples. Indigenists deploy, instead, interpretive strategies and skills that fit the needs, languages, and traditions of their respective indigenous communities. These strategies emphasize personal performance narratives and testimonies. (p. 943)

By viewing the world of my participants through their stories and Applied Ethnography, I was able to see the context of their lives, which they take for granted on a daily basis and think of as unimportant. By using focused inductive analysis techniques, I was able to portray a picture of the whole of their lives as a way not seen before.

Limiting Factors

When participants spoke of the importance of learning from the elders because the Cherokee ways and traditions would be lost otherwise, data pointed toward elders' teaching not only the language but more importantly the Cherokee sacred ways. Fixico (2003) ascertained that much of traditional knowledge comes from mundane, day-to-day routines. Consequently, cultural norms may be called in society an "order in life."

Participants made connections to teaching traditions and sacred ways through elders and family and the teaching of the Cherokee language through formal education, such as the public school system. It was not until words such as *religion* and/or *sacred* were used during the interviews that the participants either hesitated or stopped talking about the subject of culture. Many made statements similar to the following:

- I am not supposed to talk about that.
- That belongs in the home, not at school.
- We were all told it is something sacred and you just don't talk about it at school.

To respect participants' beliefs that the sacred should not be discussed, I did not pursue the topic and therefore do not address it in the analysis.

Validity and Reliability

In analyzing and interpreting collected data, I worked to triangulate the archival materials, memos, field notes, observation notes, photographs, interview transcripts, and other materials to ensure the validity of interpretations and to build a coherent justification of themes. Besides triangulating the data, I used several other methods that Creswell (2003) suggested to check the accuracy of my findings. I used member-checking, which was also suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999), to determine the accuracy. Each participant received a copy of the interview transcript and had opportunities to change or delete any information or correct any misconceptions or perceptions. Creswell (2003) also suggested using "rich, thick description" to convey the findings. I used this method to transport the readers of this study to the setting and give an element of shared experience. I also clarified my bias that I brought to this study and used an open and honest narrative that I hope will resonate well with readers.

Finally, by spending extended time in the field, a researcher will develop "an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and can convey detail about the site and the people that lends credibility to the narrative account" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). I spent several prolonged periods of time in the community and over a period of three years have spent a cumulative amount of around six months in the field. I have developed an in-depth perspective of this community and its people with an understanding of real life. Creswell contended that "real

life” (p. 196) is composed of different perspectives that do not always agree. By discussing contrary information, such as I have in this study, it adds to the credibility of the data collected and the analysis.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided an in-depth description of the methodology used in this study as viewed through the lens of Indigenous Theory using Applied Ethnography. By using the constant comparative method of coding, I identified themes taken from data gathered of 20 enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians currently living on the Snowbird Reservation. The participants reflected upon educational and other experiences of attending the local school systems as well as boarding schools and the community Bureau of Indian Affairs school.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, many Indigenous nations, including the Cherokee, traditionally use stories to illustrate and examine life messages. Each person hearing the same story takes from it an understanding that is unique to them and a lesson that they were to learn at that time. In being consistent with this area of the Indigenous full circle, Chapter 4 is a reflection of that pedagogy. My analysis of the data is limited, allowing each reader to participate in self interpretation. After each identified theme, data is presented to show how participants perceive the relationship of their education to their cultural traditions, how they perceive the role of education in teaching culture to youth, what role education plays in helping maintain traditional cultures, and the roles teachers play in the lives of the Snowbird Cherokees past and present.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss findings of data gathered through interviews and observations as they related to the focus questions guiding this project. The guiding questions were as follows:

1. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina perceive the relationship of their education with their cultural traditions?
2. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive the role of education in teaching culture to youth?
3. What role does education play in helping to maintain traditional cultures, particularly language acquisition?
4. What role do teachers play in the lives of the Snowbird Cherokees' past and present lives?

After interviewing 20 enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation about their educational experiences, I looked for repetitive themes in the data from their transcribed interviews. It became clear after repeated readings of the data collected that there were two distinct groups of participants. One group of participants, consisting of 9 members, had attended the local Snowbird Day School (called the Snowbird Indian School by 8 of the 9 participants), which had closed in 1963, and then the local public school system or the boarding school on the main reservation in Cherokee. The other group of

participants, consisting of 11 members, had only attended local public school systems with the exception of 2 participants who briefly attended another reservation school.

Each of the 9 Day School participants had pleasant memories of their first experiences with school, and many shared positive stories of the two teachers who ran the school. The stories and memories came easily and readily. However, when talking about their first experiences with attending the local school system, several of the participants were hesitant to share memories and had to think for a moment of any key or positive experiences.

A majority of the 11 Public School participants did not readily have stories of pleasant school memories and often had to think for a couple of moments before coming up with a positive memory and experience. Four participants shared their “Dropping Out” stories; three of these participants were just months shy of graduation when they left school. Common themes identified in the public school stories from all 20 participants were a compelling need for being accepted and an effort to maintain their cultural identity.

Overall, the participants had specific ideas of how educators should teach the Cherokee children in present school systems. They also presented a common theme of continued discrimination against Cherokee students but were mixed in their views of whether teaching the Cherokee heritage and culture should fall to the responsibility of the school or home. Whatever their view was on formal education, informal educational experiences with teachers of any variety, including parents, grandparents, elders, or other relatives, was a common theme from all of the participants.

In the following discussion about categorical topics and themes, I used verbatim statements and edited English (Preston, 1999). Bullets are used to show quotations. Brackets [] are used to indicate my words to the participants, and parentheses () are used to clarify

questions. Many times it was not necessary to use the entire quotation, therefore ellipses marks (. . .) have been used to indicate words that were omitted.

Fixico (1996) purported that over 90% of literature about American Indian history has been written by non-Indians. As well, Deloria (1969) stated, “anthropologists attempting to capture real Indians in a network of theories have contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian People today” (p. 81). Although Deloria was not speaking of the Cherokee People or any American Indian nation in particular, I took heed to this statement and made an intensive effort to be sensitive and to write as authentically as possible. In this qualitative study, I was continually aware of the need to “portray real people doing and saying real things, seen through the eyes of another human observer” (Wolcott, 2001, p. 79).

Initially, there were seven themes that I identified when coding the data, and I identified 35 subcategories within these seven themes. From these seven themes, I found commonalities and merged them into three final themes, which I coded as (a) Culture and Identity, (b) Discrimination and Agency, and (c) Negotiations of Duality. Each of the three governing themes had four subcategories with underlying categories ranging in number from one to five (see Tables 2-4). When placing the data into themes, I realized that many of the subcategories overlapped, but I made a concerted effort to separate them as much as possible.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections with each examining one of the three governing themes. The first section describes how the participants, who are all enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, defined what it means to be Cherokee with an emphasis on language and family. Nine of the participants reflected about experiences of the Snowbird Day School and the educational emphasis attending that school had on their lives. The second section discusses issues related to discrimination in daily lives of the Snowbird

Table 2
Culture and Identity

Subcategory	Underlying Categories
Meaning of Being Cherokee	—
Language	Importance Loss of
Memories of Snowbird Day School	Mr. & Mrs. Lee Christmas Time Community School Good Food Shot Day
Family	Learning from the Elders Respect Teaching by Example Culture and Home Storytelling

Table 3
Discrimination and Agency

Subcategory	Underlying Categories
Assimilation	Safety in Numbers Acceptance
Handling Conflicts	Internalizing Fighting Back
Skin Color	—
In Sports	“If you play, you’re OK.” Funding

Table 4
Negotiations of Duality

Subcategories	Underlying Categories
Meaning of Education	Types of Education
Curriculum	Heritage Month Language and Arts Class Throw Out the Books
Breaking Points	Dropping Out Stories Success Stories
Teachers	Characteristics Student Impact

participants and the part it played in education. The third and final section discusses issues in education which contribute to views perceived by the Snowbird Cherokees of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. This chapter is academically nontraditional but consistent with full circle methods of learning. I have minimized my analysis of the data in order to allow the reader of this report to self analyze.

A Cherokee Elder once told me, “The truths of the Cherokee will never be written. Although there are many books and written histories of the people, there will always be a vital element left out of the telling. This is one of the ways our people have survived and kept the culture alive.” As I was collecting data, I often wondered if the information I was receiving at the time was only partial truth because of past history with researchers. When the subject was brought up by one participant, I asked her how the stories that were passed from generation to generation remained the same throughout history if they were not written correctly, and she explained it to me in this way:

- You know, (James) Mooney wrote a lot of stuff out there. It is not complete. Let me tell you something. You give me a recipe, one of your best recipes you have ever had, our secret recipe of cooking, but yet you do not want me to know all of it. What do you do? [“You could change it around.”] Exactly. Okay, now we have the same mother and she teaches the very same thing. Okay, now I hear you telling our best friend that recipe. I’m watching to see how far you go. I’m going to know the difference. That is the way our people are. There is no difference of what is there (in the stories). Now I tell this other friend the recipe and include what you didn’t and take out one thing that you put in. People are going to know the difference when it comes to writing it down. . . . Many

times, you (White person) don't get the complete story. People don't tell everything they know, they keep what they want and then they tell what they want.

After hearing this explanation, I began thinking in a non-circular way of "what if" situations, such as what if a story is never told in its entirety? Or, what if a family member dies and there are left huge gaps in a story? I was visiting with another elder a couple of weeks after I first began questioning this concept and asked him if he would give me some insight. He laughed and then said, "You don't give everything away that you know or else you would not have anything left for later. But, more often than not, the missing piece is filled in by spirit. In this chapter, I will report what I have been told, but that is always, and of necessity, partial and the rest is left to be filled in by spirit.

Culture and Identity

Through shared experiences of simple daily life, the continuance of the Cherokee language, family, and memories of a now defunct community Bureau of Indian Affairs school, a common connection of culture and identity was established. A sense of survival was prevalent in many of the participants' descriptions of life intermingled with cautionary advice for future generations to learn from past history. The awareness of loss of identity was strong among the participants and many times combined with a sense of urgency to prevent it from happening further. Although views were mixed on how best to preserve the Cherokee culture and traditions, participants unanimously agreed that the need is prominent.

Being Cherokee

The defining word for most of the participants when asked "what being Cherokee means to them" is *pride*. It was not unusual for the participants when asked this question to reflect for a

moment and then give a heart-felt answer that suggested they had thought through this question before. General comments were

- I am proud to be Cherokee.
- Pride. I think it is wonderful to be able to say, “I’ve got Cherokee in me.”

These comments were almost always stated with an emphatic nod of the head. This feeling of pride was voiced strongly by one participant in particular. As he was declaring his love of home and country, he would emphasize each word by softly striking his fist on the table. He also stressed that being Cherokee had instilled in him an appreciation of life that involves not taking for granted what is around you. One participant, who had served in the U.S. military, put it this way:

- Being proud of who you are, how you live, and how you die . . . appreciating what you have because it is not always going to be there. If I was overseas and they sent me out on duty and I was to have died over there, I’d wanted to be known as a “Cherokee Warrior” and people would have said, “He went over there, did his job, and gave his life for it, for his people, and for his country. . . . (Being Cherokee) is a pride in who you are, what you stand for, and living with the earth.

This participant readily admitted that when he signed up for the military he thought of the Cherokee past but said that he was doing this in honor for the Cherokee People and the past needs to be placed behind:

- Yeah, we got treated wrong, got treated bad, but this is our life now and the Cherokee still have some pride left and we still have some warriors that they (U.S. Army) can send to fight.

An elder explained this inner desire for young men to still be warriors is due to ancestral honor.

He said,

- “Our grandfathers promised that we would protect the United States from invaders and anyone who wished to cause harm. Our people still honor that promise. We have an ancestral honor and obligation to serve in the United States Armed Forces under our old treaties even though the treaties have not been kept on the part of the United States.

Broken promises and past history with the White population is still a front factor in many of the participants’ thoughts as they reflected on the meaning of being Cherokee. Three of the participants spoke about feeling special or honored to be Cherokee and never forgetting the sacrifices their ancestors made so that they could be where they are today. For example,

- Being an Indian (Cherokee) is being proud of my heritage, being proud of my kids, and being proud of my family. Always knowing that no matter what my family has gone through—my dad, my grandpa fought for the White people in World War I and World War II. They fought in wars, and here they were not even United States citizens. And knowing that makes me proud because after what happened to them they were still willing to fight for a country that did not consider them as citizens until later on. . . . My dad had a sixth grade education and my mom had a ninth grade. Even then they were trying to be forced to forget their ways, but they didn’t. They stood strong and they stood proud to keep what they knew, and they passed that on to me.

Three participants viewed being Cherokee as simply a way of life, that it was just a part of who you are and what you are raised with. Two of these participants related stories that their parents shared with them and that they now pass to their children on how to be proud of being Cherokee:

- My parents told me, “You’re Cherokee.” They even told me that there’s even going to be some people that isn’t going to like it, but we were first in the United States. Hold your head up. That is what my family always instilled in us—you are full Cherokee and be proud of it.
- She (Mom) taught us to be proud of who we are. Don’t ever let anybody put you down. Don’t ever let anybody think you are beneath them. That was the number one thing . . . you are not better than them, and they are no better than you. But do not ever let anybody tell you that your Cherokee ways are no good. Because this is you. You are Cherokee and you cannot change that. She told us and I tell my kids, “If you want to be White, then you are going to have to crawl back up in the womb and come out in a White woman because you can’t change the way you are. You can’t change the way you are and you better not ever try. You put your pants on just like everybody else.” And that’s what my mom taught us.

Although one participant stated that he or she was more “White” than Cherokee and another stated that he or she had never really thought of what it meant to be Cherokee, the remaining 18 participants clearly indicated that being Cherokee is simply a way of life and that they cannot separate their culture from how they view themselves and the world around them.

Language

The Cherokee language plays an important role in the self-identification of the 20 Snowbird Cherokee I interviewed. While many of the participants are non-Cherokee speakers, all of them are in agreement that the language needs to be perpetuated for future generations. One participant spoke of feeling regret for not teaching her children the Cherokee language while another participant said they felt “cheated” because it was not taught to them.

- I think it's very important that they maintain their language. Just to say we have a language and I can speak it or I can write it is very important.
- I feel like, you know, in a way that as I was growing up I got cheated out of the Cherokee language.
- It is important for the Cherokee language to be viable.

One participant explained that she had not learned the language because her parents and grandparents were punished for speaking the language in school and they did not want this to happen to their children or grandchildren.

- My grandmother and grandfather went through boarding school and they were absolutely told not to speak Cherokee and were even punished for it. I believe that's reflected on how she was relating things to their own children and to me as a granddaughter.

Three of the participants shared stories of how they were discouraged from speaking the language while at public school and how they felt that this is a contributing factor to the decline in fluent speakers.

- Well, at Public School, they didn't encourage speaking the Cherokee language. That's how most of us have forgotten it. Everything's just gotten so modern now. I can speak a little bit, but a lot of it I forgot.
- They (teachers) didn't try to help us and didn't encourage us to try to keep that language.

Two participants told incidents of their teachers' reprimanding them for speaking the Cherokee language. One teacher said they were being rude and another said the Cherokee children were talking trash.

- They (teachers) always did try and keep us from speaking our own language even in the hallways and in the rooms. They said we should speak English, that we were rude for

speaking that language and that we should not be speaking that language around the other kids. (They said) we were rude and that our parents should have taught us better than to speak that language.

A participant indicated her pride in speaking the language fluently even though she was not encouraged to do so in school. She recalled her very first day of school that turned from initial excitement to fright by telling this story:

- On the first day I ever started school, the real teacher was out and there was a substitute. This teacher was from another town. She caught me and another girl, an Indian girl, speaking Cherokee to each other. That substitute got all over us because we were speaking Cherokee. She grabbed my ear and (the other girls') ear so hard that it ripped her ear. She took us to the bathroom and washed our mouths out with soap flakes. She bruised our mouths when she rubbed that toothbrush in there with those soapflakes. . . . When someone speaks Cherokee to you it is respectful to speak back to them in Cherokee or if you see another Indian that you know speaks the Cherokee language, it is respectful to speak Cherokee to them because it is your first language. . . . (Besides) neither she nor I really knew how to speak English very well.

Several of the participants contended that the hesitation of teachers allowing Cherokee students to speak the language came from their thinking that the children were talking about them. While indeed two Snowbird participants admitted to doing this very thing, another felt it is to the school's advantage to have native speakers. She recalled several times when she and her classmates would be able to call basketball plays out to each other and talk to each other in the Cherokee language during a basketball game and winning simply because the other team could not understand what they were saying to each other.

Another participant did not see the advantage in speaking Cherokee. She related of an incident where she was threatened with an assault charge by a teacher for attempting to teach her best friend a few words in Cherokee.

- I got caught one day trying to teach a White girl to speak a few words in Cherokee. I think it was the teacher in the next room and she caught us . . . she caught me teaching her, and she said, “Hey, you don’t do that to her—her mom and dad could come along and get your mom and dad for assault—trying to teach her that.” And I did not know what assault was, but I do now. And I don’t know where the assault could have come from. All I was doing was trying to teach her a few simple words like apple, paper, and floor. I said a few simple words, that’s all I was trying to teach her, and she said I could get caught for assault. I have no idea what that was about.

In a similar incident, another participant spoke of a time when a boy tried to force her to speak Cherokee and was afraid to tell her teacher.

- There were some kids in my class that were real mean. I went to school late one day and for some reason all the kids in our class had gone to the library except for this one boy. And he was kinda--he was mean. He didn’t like Indians. He was verbally abusive. He tried to force me to talk Cherokee. You know, tried to force me, you know, by physically trying to attack me. And I never told anybody. See, we could not tell the teacher because we weren’t getting any support from the teachers.

A common view of the participants is that the schools do not see the significance of the Cherokee language and the importance of its preservation. Several of the participants talked about the high school system requiring two language credits to be earned before graduation but

not understanding why the Cherokee language is not among the language courses offered instead of Spanish or French.

- Okay, let's put it this way, they (schools) teach Spanish in school and we don't have that many Spanish people here. They are just now starting to move in. So, we've had Cherokees here all the time but they didn't want the Cherokee language spoken in town.

Although the participants agree that the Snowbird children, and even adults in today's time need the Cherokee language and that it is a major contributing factor to identity and cultural preservation, three participants shared stories about how they or their children had difficult times in school because of language confusion.

One participant described how difficult it was for her in school to translate what was taught for her to be able to understand.

- If you were to say something to me in English, I would have to stop and think. Rework the words around in my head in the Cherokee language where I could understand what you were saying.

In agreement, another participant reinforced the hardship of translating to understand and how it relates to other subjects.

- Being a Cherokee speaker, it took me a long time to catch on. That was the hardest part I've had more than anything in school was to learn English, even the subject itself was hard. If you can't learn the subject English, then it's hard for you to learn other subjects because a lot of it has to make out or read our words like math. You have to read and reread to work out the math problems.

A mother related how her young son was taught Cherokee and English at home until he went to school and then she had to discontinue speaking Cherokee to him at home because it confused him with his schoolwork.

- Being a Cherokee speaker, it took him (son) longer to catch on and he was getting confused with his words. When I would listen to his conversations, he would use both English and Cherokee words. His first grade teacher recognized that his words (English) were backwards, and it was because he knew Cherokee. I could see his frustration because his teacher really wanted him to focus on learning the sounds (English) of words, and he just could not. I requested for him to have speech therapy and he speaks (English) real well now.

When asked if she continues to speak Cherokee to her child now, she said that she continues to keep the basics, such as colors and numbers, in his head in hopes that he will not forget everything. She also told that now he can listen in Cherokee but does not understand much of what she (his mother) or his grandmother says to him.

Memories of Snowbird Day School: A Sense of Community

Another way the Snowbird Cherokee self identify is by who attended the “Indian School.” Many times when community members found that I was an educator, they would give comments such as, “You need to talk to (name). They went to the Indian School.” “Did you know we used to have a community school right down the road here? You need to talk with some of those people, although there are not many left. It was a good school.” As often, when I was interviewing a participant who had not gone to the Snowbird Day School, I was told about the former school and that I needed to be sure and talk to “some of them” who had gone there.

The Snowbird Day School, located where the Snowbird Community Center is now, was closed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs [B.I.A.] in 1963. The only part left of the school is the lunchroom, which is now used as a storage building (see Photos 8 & 9). Ironically, according to one participant, when the school was closed by the B.I.A., a plant which manufactured teepees and Indian belts was put in place, and community members worked making them to sell to tourists on the main Cherokee Reservation. Although she disagreed with the idea of selling miniature teepees to tourist when the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians never lived in teepees, she felt it was a good as any choice at the time for use of the empty school building and it made money for the families in the community. When asked to share memories of the Snowbird Day School, all 9 participants had positive comments. One participant called the school, “precious,” while another said, “it was a very nice school to go to.” Similar comments about the school including the following:

- I think they were real good memories because we really liked it--the Indian School. They (Teachers Mr. & Mrs. Lee) treated us real good. We were all happy.
- We loved it (Snowbird Day School) so much we went through the summer.
- It was a good time of growing up. Snowbird School was a good school. There was nothing like it. . . . It was a good school and kids learned.
- Those were my happy years of school, I learned a lot and I really liked going to school.

One participant began laughing so hard at some of her Snowbird School Day memories, it was hard for her to talk. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she recounted how she got in big trouble for leaving her new hair ribbons tied to a tree in the school. It seemed she was much more interested in playing, swinging, and being with her friends than keeping up with ribbons. She said she was punished when she got home but it was worth it for such a good time. Near the end of the tale,



Photo 8. The only remaining building of the Snowbird Day School is the lunchroom, which is now used for storage.



Photo 9. Although the school no longer exists, the name of the road does.

she stopped laughing and began to stare past me as if she were actually seeing and being in the scene she just described. She ended the story by slapping her knee, beginning to laugh again, and saying, “That sure was a good school.” (see Photos 10 & 11).

One of the overlying feelings the students voiced about the Day School was their sense of community and being allowed to be themselves. As one participant stated:

- Being with my own kind, my own people, . . . it felt really good to be just myself.

Another participant talked about simply “being happy” whenever she was at the school. When asked what she thought was the cause, she attributed it to being around “my people” as well.

Two participants when speaking of the Day School had a sense of freedom and friendship where the children thrived.

- We thrived on that kind of environment. We all had perfect attendance when we went to that (Snowbird Day School) school.
- I just look back and see, well, everybody in school was friends. There wasn’t a stranger and it was just like we had freedom (to be ourselves) there.

Field trips were a fun and exciting part of the Day School. Two of the nine participants remembered going to the zoo and one participant said it was the first time she had ever left her community. One participant recounted that her first time being away from Snowbird was due to a field trip. This also remembers this as being the first time ever seeing someone who was White besides the Lees. On this trip she also remembered seeing a Black person for the first time. She shook her head at the memory and said, “I was scared to death of going out into the real world.”

Mr. and Mrs. Lee encouraged the children to play when they taught at the Snowbird School, realizing that physical activity was not also good for the body but for educational



Photo 10. The old Snowbird Day School in 1963



Photo 11. The old Snowbird Day School and teacher's cottage.

purposes as well. All nine participants shared memories of playing when they were at the Snowbird Indian School. For example,

- Oh, we had some good times there. I mean, we really did. The gymnasium that is there now used to be a big field and that was our playground. We had a slide, some swings, and we could play softball out there.
- We used to have sack races and just all kinds of things.
- It was a good place to go because they had the best playground equipment. They had a thirty foot slide that you came down and then a whole bunch of swings and the merry-go-round.

When the weather turned warm, the children were allowed to swim in the stream located beside the school. Three participants recounted that if the children did not have a bathing suit or needed a new one, Mr. and Mrs. Lee would take them to the main store in town and purchase them one. Swimming and playing were vivid memories of all participants, and many said the playground equipment could not be rivaled by any other school (photo 12).

Not only physical activities took place at recess but life lessons occurred as well. One participant shared a story of about how a friend taught her to dip snuff out on the playground by the creek during recess one day. She learned that it was nasty and after getting sick, she decided that dipping snuff was not for her.

Another good memory for six of the participants was how good the food was at the Snowbird Day School. Community people were hired to cook for the children and each participant recalled their favorite meal, such as the yeast rolls, meatloaf, chicken potpie, the fresh milk and the fresh, hot cocoa. At Christmas, the cooks would prepare giant gingerbread cookies for the children to take home.



Photo 12. The stream located beside the old Snowbird Day School where the children were allowed to swim during recess.

When lunch was over, it was the duty of the children to clean up. One child would bring the dishes to another as they washed the plates. Another child would sweep and another would wipe off the tables. Some time during the morning, older children would go to the lunchroom, located next to the two classrooms, to help unload fresh produce and milk brought to them from the main reservation.

When asked if they could remember a bad day at the Snowbird Day School, one participant remembered the time when they ran out of fresh milk and could not have hot cocoa. Another remembered a time when the coal did not arrive for the furnace and the children had to

go home. None of the other seven participants could think of a bad day they had while attending the Snowbird Day School.

When the B.I.A. closed the school in 1963, two teachers, who were a husband and wife team, were in charge. Two participants recalled teachers who had been teaching at the school before the “Lees” and that the teachers did not care much about the community or the students. When asked what specific things the teachers did before Mr. and Mrs. Lee arrived, one participant, when speaking of the male teacher said:

- Nothing much, just sit there and sleep. We did everything we wanted to because he would be there sitting asleep.

The other participant agreed that the male teacher sat asleep but they also recalled his having his feet propped on the desk while he smoked for a majority of the day as well. The participant recalled the female teacher teaching her how to write in cursive writing before she left but that the teacher spent a majority of the day in the bathroom smoking.

- When Mr. and Mrs. Lee took over the duties and responsibilities of running the Day School, they brought order and focused on the children’s academic and personal well being. The school property contained a duplex home. One side was for the main teacher and his or her family, and the other side was for the bus driver/maintenance employee and his family (see Photo 13). When the B.I.A. contracted Mr. and Mrs. Lee to teach at the Snowbird Day School, they lived in the house next to the school with their four children. Their four children had to ride the bus to the public school and could not go to the school where their parents were teaching or in the yard where they lived because it was an “Indian Only” school. The bus driver was an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and lived with his family on the property as well. He served as

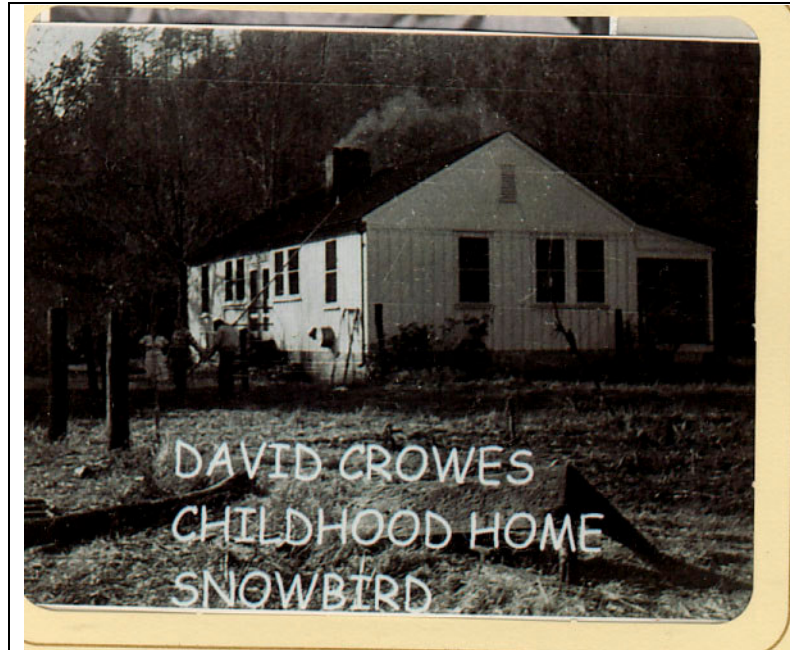


Photo 13. The caretaker's home was located next to the school.

interpreter for the Lees when needed. Even though the Lees who taught and ran the Snowbird Day School were not native, the participants felt loved and accepted by them. Participants also agreed that although Mr. and Mrs. Lee allowed them to socialize and cared about their well being, they were just as serious about academics. Comments included "It seemed like we got to play at a certain time but when we went into the school, we really had to work," and "the academics were right up there," meaning the Lees had high academic standards and expected the Snowbird children to perform as well as the local school children. One participant remembered having to repeat the same lessons they were taught by the Lees when the school closed and the students were bused to public school, suggesting that the Lees had brought them farther academically than the public school system.

Six of the participants felt this improved education was a direct result of feeling loved and accepted to be who they were by Mr. and Mrs. Lee. A typical statement about Mrs. Lee was the following:

- Mrs. Lee taught first through third grade. She was a nice person . . . very loving and caring. I really think she enjoyed what she did. She was a friendly person and I liked her.

A participant who lived near the school remembered the fun times he had with Mr. and Mrs. Lee and thought of them as another set of parents. Five of the participants made comments to the fact that they did not see the Lees as “White”: They just felt like they were part of the community.

- They let us be ourselves. Yeah, they were White teachers but at the time I didn’t even look at them as White. . . . They were special people to us and they felt like they were one of us, to me. I don’t know what others told you but they liked them, too! They even come back, even not too long ago, they came back and lived with us after all those years.
- I can look back now and see they were special. I mean, they were really there for us and they never differentiated us. They felt like one of us.

One participant, who grew up very near the school and was very good friends with Mr. and Mrs. Lee’s son, talked about how he still stays in contact with him even though the son lives in the Midwest. He also commented on how the community of Snowbird gathered money and sent flowers to Mrs. Lee upon hearing of the death of Mr. Lee.

Two participants related one of the reasons Mr. and Mrs. Lee were special was that they did not discourage the children from speaking their native language. Although Mr. and Mrs. Lee did not speak Cherokee, they did not mind the children speaking Cherokee to each other and had a desire to learn the language themselves. When asked what happened if the Lees caught them

speaking Cherokee, one participant responded, “ They didn’t do anything because they were wanting to learn the language, too. They would ask how to say things.”

The Lees also were attributed to helping maintain the health of the children and went to check on the children or sent someone to check on the children when they missed a day at school. If they were sick, Mr. Lee would take them to the doctor or he would send the bus driver to take them to the doctor. A participant fondly remembered,

- They (Mr. and Mrs. Lee) did not let us miss school. . . . If we missed school, they would come and check on us. We also had a truant officer—I guess he was part bus driver and part truant officer at the same time. He would check on us and if you were sick, he would take you to the doctor. They took care of us.

One of the ways the children were taken care of was to have the main reservation nurse come to the Snowbird School for what the participants call “Shot Day.” The nurses would keep the children updated on all their booster shots and deworm them if necessary, and during flu season they would come and give flu shots. Many of the children told of not going to school on Shot Day or if finding out it was Shot Day when arriving at school would try and run away.

- When the nurses used to come down and give us shots, we would see the cars coming this way and everybody wanted to go to the bathroom then. We hid down the hall and in the bathroom to go out into the woods. We took off and we would hide. Some of them would stay because they would get a whoopin’ when they got home if they ran, so they would stay. But the rest of us would head up into the woods.

One participant related a story of how Mr. Lee would go into the woods and find fellow students who ran away crying because they did not want to get a shot. Another participant related a story of when the dentist came:

- Oh gosh, everybody dreaded it. They'd bring a dentist down and the dentist would come down and set up in one of those buildings. What I remember most is that they had some kind of contraption that hold your mouth open and after he got through with your teeth and took that out, you could not close your mouth for nothing . . . The teachers knew they were coming but they would not let us know.

Three participants recalled the school's having showers and the nurses' giving the teachers medicine for lice. If a child was suspected of having lice, Mr. and Mrs. Lee would see that the child washed their hair twice a week and used the lice medicine. Or if they felt the students were dirty from playing outside or from falling in the creek while playing, the Lees would make sure the children took a bath before they went home and would wash their clothes at the school.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee brought Christmas to the community school and many participants remembered this time as being extra special. To raise funds for presents for the children, the Lees would have box-supper auctions. Mr. Lee would also host a movie night during the week, and community members would pay a dime to see a movie. Mr. and Mrs. Lee would allow the children to choose a gift out of the Sears catalogue to open on the night of the big celebration.

- Down here at the Indian School was the best Christmas we ever had. They'd (Mr. and Mrs. Lee) have community meetings. They'd have what they call box suppers. They'd have little fundraising stuff for the kids at school. And then Mr. and Mrs. Lee would let us order out of a Sears and Roebuck's catalog. And most of the time, we would get what we told them we would like to have. But we would also have our oranges, apples, nuts, and everything with the money the community had raised.

The parents would all be involved in the Christmas event and a night near Christmas, the school would gather to celebrate. Mrs. Lee would have the students sing Christmas songs and

participate in a nativity play. Two participants remembered singing the song “O Christmas Tree” every year and another participant remembered always playing the same part in the play from year to year. Two participants recalled this as being the first time ever seeing a Christmas tree and wrapped presents.

Several children would have gone to the woods earlier with the school caretaker to locate the tree. Two participants recalled having to go to the basement to gather Christmas decorations, and two other participants recalled making even more decorations.

- We made our own chains out of construction paper and strung popcorn. Everybody just pitched in and put it on the tree. Our parents would get involved and they (Mr. and Mrs. Lee) would always fix extra bags of candy for the parents. It was all good. There wasn’t so much griping as there is now.

The brown bags of candy were called “treat bags” and three of the participants recalled there being a great amount of candy in the bags. There was a variety of different types of hard candy. One favorite type, ribbon candy, came in a huge tin can, and Mr. Lee would scoop two cups full and pour it in each bag.

Loss of Identity

When it came time for the community school to be shut down and for the children to attend public school, or as five of the participants called it “White school,” Mr. and Mrs. Lee prepared the children for what was to come. A participant recalled,

- I was told it was going to be different, and it was different, too. Mr. and Mrs. Lee told us, and boy, I tell you the last day of school was tearful. Everybody was crying. Everybody was scared to go to a new school and I said, “Well, it has gotta be done.”

When speaking about going from the small community school to the public school system, many of the participants said it was a sad time in their lives. Others said it was something they had to deal with and just moved on. A statement made by one person suggested that school was not the same when she had to leave the Snowbird Day School:

- The bad experience(s) overcame the good because from the time I went to school in a public school, everything just went down hill. You know, it was like you made yourself go to school—you hated school by that time. You hated going to school. . . . We had to go whether we liked it or not. And then you started laying out of school and stuff like that. So, to me, those times from Snowbird to Robbinsville was a big drastic change. We would have stayed up at Snowbird for the rest of our life. It was with our own people I guess you could say, in our own little school.

Another participant recalled a time when she and two of her friends went to the Robbinsville School and threw dirt clods at it screaming, “I hate you, I hate you, I hate you.” One participant felt she could no longer be herself and remembered what it was like at the community school.

- When we went to the other school (public school) we couldn’t speak Indian any more. And it seemed the other kids just didn’t understand some of our ways and things. I felt like we should all be equal . . . but sometimes people didn’t believe or feel that way. Being with my own culture felt good at the (Snowbird Day) School.

Loss of identity was inevitable when transferring into the White school. Several participants spoke of the change it made in them and while several participants either embraced this change or did not think about it, several others did not.

- It brought a change in me. I was changing over to who I am now. I did not want to be a White person. I did not want to be an Indian with White ways. I did not want to change. I was content being Indian all my life. I hated that school. . . . It brought a change in me.

Home and Family

There are continued traditional practices that still reflect the Snowbird Cherokee People of today. Home, family, community, and learning from the elders play influential parts in the lives of Cherokee children past and present. Teaching by example is a predominant teaching tool used without conscious effort by extended as well as nuclear family members. Cooking, hunting, fishing, storytelling, gardening, and gathering of medicinal herbs are only a few of the traditional teaching ways that are shared today.

When asked what or who played an influential role in their learning about their Cherokee heritage and culture, fifteen out of twenty participants related stories of family. Family can consist of direct or extended members. In defining family, one person stated,

- I grew up as part of the Snowbird Community. Where I grew up was a little road of cousins. So, I grew up around my second and third and all those distant relations but they were more like first cousins. We all grew up together and were a lot closer than many peoples distant relatives are. Things kind of flatten out with families the Cherokee way. . . . These guys weren't distant cousins or fourth cousins, or whatever, they were just cousins. It's just the way it is seen (in the Cherokee Way).

Five participants relayed experiences of growing up among family. Each story was told with a smile on the person's face. Each story exemplified the meaning and importance of family in the Cherokee culture. One participant spoke of extended family in this way:

- We'd come home from school. And would have to do our chores. Then after we had our supper we cleaned up everything . . . you had to have everything clean first before you had fun. My dad and mom used to sit on the porch, and we used to have a huge big yard and some of the brothers and sisters would go out there and play games in the yard. We'd play hide and seek and tag. My mom and dad used to just watch us . . . Our cousins were our neighbors. They would come over and they would play with us. Or we'd go to their house and play because they had a big yard. I remember going back and forth to our cousin's house. In the summertime we would walk about four miles to go swimming every summer. We would just walk and swim all day long, we would go with our cousins, you know.

In homes where Cherokee was the only spoken language, many families depended on the older children to prepare the younger children for school. Two younger siblings described how their older brothers taught them:

- Our first language was Cherokee and I remember (name) starting (school) before me and he would come home and talk English to me. That is how I picked up my English. I would also kneel (on my knees) to reach the table. He would tell me that I could not sit that way when I went to school. He took care of me to be able to go to school by teaching me.
- My brother next to me taught me a lot of things. He taught me sports, and he was always tending to me. When he went places, I went with him. I grew up with him and he was always there to play with me.

A participant also told of how her uncles helped raise her and made sure that she did her homework:

- They (uncles) tried to make sure I had my homework done and I went to bed on time.

Five participants related stories of moving away from the Snowbird Community and how good it was to get back to family. One female participant related a story of how her father taught her and her siblings that, above all else, family is the one thing that matters most.

- Daddy never taught us much about our heritage . . . it was more like he'd talk to us about things his daddy had taught him. He told us to always look after each other and to always take care of each other. I can still remember him telling me and my brothers, "You look after your sister, you look after your brothers. Family is all you have. When everybody else leaves you, your family is going to still stand beside you. So, be good to your family. You always look after each other." I guess family is our heritage and culture.

When speaking of family and heritage, three participants contributed that family members played a vital role in the education of heritage and culture. A middle-aged woman who grew up in a large extended family had this to say:

- I'd say most of it (heritage and culture) came from my family.

Another woman in her early 30s who also grew up in a large family agreed by saying:

- It's just family, the family teaches it (culture, heritage). They (children) don't go to school and get it. It's there, and if they want to know more—they go out (outside of family).

Learning from elders is a way that Cherokee children are taught about their heritage and culture today. Elders are honored members of the community, and one participant felt that if the children did respect them, then the children would learn and pass on the heritage.

- If they have enough respect for their elders, they will listen . . . Most kids are willing to sit down and listen and learn. Those are the kids you are willing to tell because they will pass it on. Other kids won't because they don't want to listen.

A female participant told of how her aunt instilled in her the value of learning from elders and to listen to them because they had been through much in life:

- She (aunt) always encouraged us to listen to older people—senior citizens because they have been through (much). She said do not ever take it for granted that they do not know what they are talking about. They have lived it so they know what they are talking about. So you always listen to people. Listen to them when they are telling stories.

The woman realized that her aunt was an elder as well and understood the importance of listening to her. In the same light, a male participant in his late 20s told several stories of how his best learning experiences were with his grandpa.

- He just kicked me out and let me do stuff-just turned me loose. My granddaddy and I would be sitting and talking and basically goofing off with each other. Then he would just turn me loose and just watch and hopefully I wouldn't mess it up. Next thing I knew, if I had to do it again, he would just let me do it. As long as I didn't get hurt, he would let me do whatever I wanted. . . . He kept me busy.

This participant relayed the message that his grandfather, while liked by everyone, wouldn't let him lay around but would have him always doing something. He also talked about how his granddaddy accepted him for who he was and that they were close and had a very good relationship.

Nine participants shared how telling traditional stories played a part in growing up and learning. Two participants shared that when their mom or grandmother taught them about

everyday life, there was always a story behind it. Two other participants shared how they continue to be taught by their relatives.

- I can't remember all of them but she would tell a bunch of them. I don't know how she got them, but she did. She had a lot of stories for us. She wanted us to know. She didn't want it to die out. She wanted us to know how to use roots and tea for things such as a toothache or stomachache. She wanted us to know these things and took us out and showed us, too. She taught us a lot. It is just to us to make our brain remember it.
- There is always a point behind her stories, even if it is just some little everyday thing. She has always got something that she can relate to anything that I am trying to talk about.

Another participant talked of how her grandmother would sit outside on the back porch and dip snuff while she told children the legends and stories. Although she could not remember if her grandmother was telling her stories for lessons or just for fun, she does remember all the stories that were told and remembered sitting and listening. She related that this was how her mother learned as well and that her grandmother was carrying on the tradition with her.

- They did that in the early ages like when my mom was a child. She (her grandmother) said they used to gather around the camp fires way up in the mountains. They had a storyteller who would tell them all the legends. They enjoyed it. That is what we used to do in the summer evenings.

Admitting the stories were fun to hear did not mean much to her when she was young. However, now, she realizes the value of them.

- It meant a whole lot, the stories they passed down. When you hear the same story over and over and over, you begin to remember and the stories go up here (points to her brain)

. . . I guess when they are written down, it makes it more believable. . . . Most people would rather read it and believe what is written down than hear it from an elder that was passed down.

Just as the young man described how his grandfather taught him by allowing him to experiment and others shared how they learned through storytelling, another way elders and other family members teach is through example. Four women shared stories of learning the craft of beading through various family members through example. The family members would demonstrate how the technique is done and then sit back and allow the student to create on their own.

Nineteen of the twenty participants spoke about learning from the past and several were warned by elders that bad times might come again and they needed to be prepared to fend for themselves. Participants told stories of learning survival skills, such as finding traditional plants for food and medicine, making soap, canning food, and keeping a fire burning, from elders.

- She (mom) said there is going to be some bad times coming. She said it may get better but you are always going to have to prepare for bad times. Some day you may find yourself where you are all by yourself and you are going to have to feed your family. You are going to have to learn what to eat and what to fix warm for your family. . . . There might be a war over here in the United States, and she said you are going to have to be prepared. She would always tell us that. And right now I don't see a war coming but it could be.

Two participants recognized that while elders are respected and honored members of the Indian community and are important teachers in Cherokee children, the elders are not viewed as such in modern society. One participant spoke of how the school system does not understand. She talked

of how her child is excused from school to go on field trips if grades are good but if a relative needs help or dies, the absence is not excused.

- If an aunt or uncle or grandparent passes away, they (students) are not easily excused from school for this time period that they need to be out. Now, it doesn't make sense—you know, they get excused for this whole week (for good grades and a field trip) but yet for something that is so important—that is family—they are not excused. I remember when somebody passed away in our community, the whole community tended to stop. They didn't go to work. They stayed close by. They made food. Everybody was taking care of things who were involved. Now it is like nothing is wrong. It is like an everyday thing. It is hard for our people...

While family is an important part of the Cherokee culture and heritage, the participant further elaborated that society is undermining the Cherokee's traditional conception of family:

- Society is teaching that. (The school) is teaching our children not to care. You are teaching our children, "No, your family does not make a difference". That is what they are teaching our children these days.

Summary

The culture and identity of the Snowbird Cherokee is imbedded in the "whole" of who and what these people are about. Many participants related the definition of Cherokee as simply a way of life and of the twenty participants, eighteen used the term pride in their explanation of what being a Cherokee means to them. Participants who had served or have members that have or are currently serving in the United States military speak of it as honoring the Cherokee People instead of for a country who has in past history not been kind.

The continuance of their native language and the frustration of its preservation are always in the forefront of many Snowbird Cherokee's minds. Due to Sequoya's syllabary and the ability to write the Cherokee language, it is the only Native American language that is guaranteed of survival. However, speakers of the language continue to decline and a major portion of blame is placed on the public school system for this decline. Whether through forced school closings and integration, lack of Cherokee language classes in the system, fear of retribution, or assimilation methods, many participants feel cheated of their heritage. A strong sense of regret for future generations is prevalent throughout the interviews.

When the Snowbird Indian Day School closed in 1963, the community grieved as well as the participants. Identity of self and community was lost and redefined in a way that would never again be the same. Children who once viewed their community teachers as "one of them," now identified themselves as "other" and maneuvered their way through a change that was neither welcomed nor understood.

Through continued closeness of community members and nuclear as well as extended family, many traditions, such as storytelling, and values, such as learning from the elders, have been perpetuated among the children and are still viewed as important for the survival of the Cherokee culture. Elders also view being able to learn from the past, and taking care of oneself and family a necessity and feel the younger generation lacks this education.

Discrimination and Agency

Discrimination was a major theme that I identified early in the coding process, even though I did not ask any questions about discriminatory practices (see Appendix A). However, various acts of discrimination described by the participants, such as name calling, preferential treatment of athletes, and having conflicts with others, were often recounted as normal, everyday

life and were told in the same tone and nonchalance as would a story about going to the store. Many times the discrimination was unintentional by schoolmates and stemmed from a natural curiosity of wanting to know. A majority of the stories describing discriminatory or racist acts were of recent history and present day. Many participants shared blatant acts of racism and discrimination but asked if I would not write about them; consequently, this section contains only those incidents participants agreed to include.

Assimilation, Survival, and Fitting In

Survival and “fitting in” are important factors to many of the Snowbird Cherokees. Even though many of the Snowbird Cherokees and their children do not know the Cherokee language or much of their heritage, being able to survive in the White world and find a job is more important. Two participants described it in this way:

- They (the children) are not interested in the heritage and in the culture. . . . You don’t need the Cherokee language because you need the English. You need the other stuff in order to survive in the world. . . . If you want the culture, you will have to come back and get it on your own.
- If you were going to get a job, you have to understand English. So, most of them (younger Cherokee People) didn’t even try to learn how to speak Cherokee because they were working in the White people’s plant. It is all about survival.

Several participants described friends, relatives, or acquaintances who think in the “White way.” Other participants talked about having to shift from the Indian world to the White world on a daily basis. One participant admitted that they were more White than Indian and had been raised to be so. When asked why they thought this was, two participants responded:

- To fit in. But I think if you are Indian, you need to be proud of it all the time, regardless of who you are around (at the time).
- I feel the way school is they do have to prove themselves.

Three participants remembered the first time they self-identified as being Cherokee and felt different from the other children in school. One participant related a story when she was 8 years old of how she had made a drum to take to school and one of her friends did not understand the significance of the drum. Although she tried to explain to her friend that a drum is special in the Cherokee life and is used for spiritual purposes, her friend did not understand and thought it was still just a toy. She spoke of how for the first time in her young life, she felt different and that she had a different background from most of the children at school. Even though this girl was her friend and the discrimination was unintentional, the participant still felt judged and “othered.” Another participant talked of the time he walked back into his old school after moving back home with his family, and a boy made the remark, “There is some Cherokee.” The participant, a young man in his late 20s, felt, “so strange” and jokingly said that moment is when he figured out he would never be winning a game of Cowboys and Indians. At his former school the children always reenacted Custard’s Last Stand and his present school always reenacted The Battle of Wounded Knee, and he would always be on the short end of the stick.

When transferring to the “White school” after being at the Snowbird Indian Day School, five participants spoke of assimilation and its impact. One participant did not feel like the transition had been too bad. She had not paid that much attention to what the White children were thinking or saying but ascertained they were “leery” of the Indian children, and some of them did call her names but she felt she was not treated any differently. Another participant thought the reason the students accepted him was because he was good in sports. While another

participant was good in sports and did not feel she was treated differently, she did talk about being called names and was resigned to the fact that they had no choice but to be bussed to the public school because the Snowbird School had been down.

- Well, the transition wasn't too bad, I don't think. I don't know if they stereotyped us as being savage but some of them would say things like, "Oh you Indians, you Indians." But you know, I played ball and stayed in sports a lot. So I got involved with all that. So I kind of just felt they really didn't treat me any different. Just a few words here and there . . . but we got incorporated okay. They started busing us out there and we didn't have a choice to close this school (Snowbird Day School) down.

While assimilation did not seem to have a strong impact on two participants, it had a tremendous impact on two others. Remembering her first day in school, one participant stated,

- I walked into that classroom and all I could see were White heads, White kids. I wanted to go back home. My mom had to push me into that room. The teacher there had such a mean look about her. She had penciled in eyebrows and red lipstick. I had never seen people wearing that kind of stuff. Mrs. Lee hardly ever wore lipstick. That woman was just frightful.

Although the teacher turned out to be very nice, the first impression was terrifying, bringing a change in her that she neither liked nor understood.

Both Snowbird Day School participants and participants who only attended the local public school spoke about "banding together" at school. The students sat together in class and at lunch. One participant who had graduated from high school in the previous 10 years spoke of how it felt normal when all the Indian kids would visit together and another participant talked about how she and her friends were always together.

- Everybody was themselves. Everybody could joke around and kid around and be themselves. When we got together, we felt comfortable.
- We were always together. We didn't mingle a lot. To a certain extent, I still do that. I go on a lot of trips and always look for somebody else Indian.

Even though some of the participants felt that they did not notice being treated differently, several admitted that they had rather be friends at school with the Indians than with the White students. As one participant described, she was more drawn to her "own people." However, two participants were concerned with Indian students being able to "fit in" if they chose to attend college. It was felt that if today's students focused more on the White way rather than their heritage they would "fit in" better.

Name Calling and Handling Conflicts:

When conflicts from discrimination were discussed by eight participants, two prevalent ways of dealing with them were evident. The participants either chose to fight back or to internalize, ignore, or accept the conflict and go about their business

One participant described a vivid memory from when she was 8 years old of being called names by a certain boy in her class, a memory that still stands out in the mind of this woman in her early 40s. As she recalled the incident, it was evident she still struggled with the rationalization that it did and continues to happen:

- I think to this day though that I've overcome that. If I see that boy (in town) he just turns away. He knows he did something wrong. We endured stuff like that. . . . I made friends and there were nice kids and there were mean kids. That came from their parents because their parents were like that, too. I never went home and told my mama about anything. I just kept it to myself because I was not the only one.

Another female participant also remembered being bullied by a boy in her class and did not tell anyone or say anything to him because she was scared of him. In this same line of thought, a male participant asserted that dealing with prejudices are everyday life occurrences for Snowbird Cherokees and that he ignores it.

- I hear it. I ignore it. I know how my life is and I am proud of it.

Other participants of various age groups described how as their respective classes progressed through elementary school and reached high school, the Indian kids got tired of feeling the prejudice and being called names and started to join together to fight back. How the Cherokee students fought back was not described but the participant said that by fighting back, it began to change the way the Indian students were accepted into the school system.

- I think something good came out of it in my opinion. The Indian kids started banding together against the kids who were openly prejudiced and who called us names. They (Cherokee students) started banding together to a point where they stuck together and started fighting back. And then you know when you fight back, pretty soon you overcome. . . . By the time I got to the ninth grade, they backed off by then. They kind of respected us but we had to fight our way through for that respect. To me, we had every right to be in school just like they did and that is just the attitude I carried.

Another participant recalled banding together as well. One particular incident involved having to “fight back” by hitting a boy who was picking on her and her younger brother and sister. She remembered that he quit harassing them but recalled other White students who would say things like, “Squaw” or “You are nothing but a poor Indian” and the Indian children would get into fights with the White children.

A painful memory for four participants was being called “Nigger” by White classmates. A female participant told how she and her friends were called “poor Indian” or “Nigger” and the girls would “stick together” to take care of themselves. Feeling they had no support from the teachers, this participant remembered that when the Indian children did reach out for help from the teachers, they turned a blind eye and even placed blame for causing conflict on them.

- Some of the kids were prejudiced and called us anything they could think of. Well, whenever someone was picked on, all the girls would be together. We stayed together for most of the time. We did not go with anyone else—just us Indian girls. When we jumped on them (White students who called them names) it started getting a little better. But the teacher never did anything about it either. They just turned their head around and pretended they did not see it. And then they began to tell us that we were the cause of the problem and they would call our moms and dads.

Athletics and Discrimination

Without my having a lead question to broach the subject, eleven of the twenty participants talked about bias in the school system for Indian children who are or are not athletic. Five of the eleven were transferred into the public school system after the Snowbird Day School was closed, while six of the eleven had always attended the local public school. One mother who had transferred into the public school felt the reason she did not have as much trouble being accepted into the system was because she was a good athlete. She also felt that her son, who was also a very good athlete and played several sports, was shown favoritism over the other Indian students who were not good at sports.

Another mother told of how her sons who were good at a popular sport when they attended school told her they did not have to do work. When asked how they passed to graduate, she did not know. One participant put it this way:

- If you can play sports and you have bad grades, don't worry because you are going to play and you will pass. . . . If you play good ball, you have it made at this school.

Whether you are capable or not, you get a passing grade as long as you can play ball. This participant did also think that it was not fair for the individual student because in the end, they would be able to receive a scholarship anyway.

Another reason participants feel there is a bias for Indian students being on sports teams is because when the students play on a team, the team is eligible for tribal money supplements. One participant felt that although this is the case, if the children are not popular, they sit the bench during games and do not receive playing time:

- Unless they're really popular and their parents are popular in White communities, the kids don't get to play as much as you would assume . . . we've seen that over and over.
- They will talk you into sports and tell you as long as you are playing, you don't have to pass. It is because the tribe has put so much funding into that activity and they want the money. They don't care if that Indian child does good in that sport or not, just as long as they get the funding for it.

Two participants felt that they were "in" and were accepted more because of their athletic abilities and called it a "gold key." special treatment.

- The Indians fit in more with the White kids if you play ball.

One young male participant denied having special treatment because he was an athlete. However, ten of the eleven said that Cherokee students did face discrimination because of their ethnic

identity. A young woman who had been athletic in school felt the discrimination because she said teachers automatically expected her to be good in sports because she was Cherokee.

- A lot of them (teachers) expected just because I am a Native American I am going to be good at sports. . . . A lot of them figure that there is that label, if you are a minority, you are going to be good at sports.

She went on to describe how two of her family members had played sports for all four years of high school but did not get to graduate because they could not read or write. Because they were Indian, they (the school system) thought they were good at sports and passed them from grade to grade. In the end however, they did not support these Indian students' in graduating.

A mother told about a recent incident when her child was playing on a sports team and felt that she and her children had been accepted as part of the group and were not looked at differently. When the team made it to playoffs, they played a team from another reservation. She was shocked to hear people she called "friends" shouting derogatory remarks about the Indians on the other team:

- They (her friends) would say things like, "those damn Indians need to go home," or "we need to get those damn Indians out of here." My niece was sitting next to one guy who did this. I think they forgot we are Indian, too. It makes us wonder if that is how they really feel. Why would you say something like that?

She also told stories of how people she did not call friend made comments and have shouted to her, "Those damn Snowbird Indians need to stay out of Snowbird. We don't need them out here." Although she believes many Cherokee people use sports discrimination as a crutch, she does not allow her children to do so. She teaches them that no matter where they go or where

they are, they will face prejudices and racism but expects them to “earn their spot” on the team or in life.

Feeling of Discrimination and Skin Color

Discrimination of the lightness or darkness of their skin was talked about by ten participants. Three female participants told of how getting jobs was much harder because of their skin color and being Indian. One related where she had well established qualifications when applying for a certain job. Having spoken only over the phone with each other, the potential employer seemed pleased and excited about interviewing her. When arriving for her interview, she told of how upon greeting the interviewer and introducing herself, the smile immediately left his face as he stated, “Oh, you are an Indian.” The interview was very short and she did not get the job.

Three participants related how they know what it is to feel discriminated against and teach their children not to see color. One mother felt that prejudice of color is the worst way of discriminating:

- I explained it to her (daughter), everybody has a feeling about somebody regardless of what it is. It might be their skin color, might be their religion, might be the car they drive or the friends they keep. It doesn't make a difference because everybody is prejudiced. . . . not a single person can say they're not prejudiced against something. . . . I think the worst one is color though. Prejudice of color is the worst.

Discrimination of skin color exists among the Cherokee population as well. Five participants felt that they were not as discriminated against as much by the White community as they were from their own people. Although they are considered to be full blood Cherokees, their skin is lighter than some.

- I'm not as dark skinned as they (her friends) were. I had some friends that were dark and I think a lot of times they fought their way.

She went on to admit feelings of being looked down upon by her Indian friends because she was not as dark as they were and sometimes felt like an outsider of both groups. Another participant recalled stories of how she was called a “Unegv” ᏊᏌᏊ by other Indian students in school, while another reported being called an “apple.” The term “Unegv” ᏊᏌᏊ is the Cherokee word meaning “white,” as in the color, but is used as a discriminatory word for White people who are trying to be Indian. When a person is called an “apple,” it is discriminatory word meaning red on the outside and white on the inside.

The same participant who had been called “Unegv” ᏊᏌᏊ described a time when she was discriminated against in a business action because of her skin color. Although many of her Indian friends view her as being White, the general White population views her as Indian.

- My dad had passed away and I had called the local funeral home. I had spoken with them (the owner) over the phone and had no problems. I had asked what I needed to bring to get started. His whole attitude changed when I got there. He had told me not to worry about it when talking with him over the phone but when I got there he said I had to have a down payment right then because he had bad experiences with Indians. He said that the Indians did not pay their bills, and it was hard for him to get money from them.

This participant paid all her bills to this man on time and told him not to look at one Indian like he does all Indians. She told him to not to look at everybody the same. When asked how he responded, she shook her head and said the man still did not want to deal with Indians. She went on to say,

- It disgusts me to know that we have people that would judge you from the color of your skin. We are all equal and every single one of us (Cherokees) will bleed just like the rest of them. . . . for them to be so narrow minded, they shouldn't even have jobs in the public. It is just stupidity and ignorance of the person.

A light-skinned male in his late 20s related how the guidance counselor in high school was not aware that he was Cherokee and an enrolled member until she was helping him fill out college applications and he had to correct her when the race line was marked incorrectly. She had been his guidance counselor for all four years of high school and had not known he was a tribal member.

Four participants shared how when in school, there were times that they just felt different because they were Cherokee. One even went as far to say as how she felt like she was dirty inside:

- I was different. They used to call me White girl because they said my daddy was White. I said yeah, but let me tell you something, when I finish school I am going to make something of myself. After we got out of school, when they would bring me a letter to read or an application to help fill out, I would remind them that they brought it to the White girl to read it for them.
- It is the way they (teachers) point you out. It is just like you are left out. You can feel it.
- Oh, I felt it very much. They made me feel different
- I felt useless. I was made to feel like I was nobody. I was looked at like I was a dirty Indian.

On one of my visits to the reservation, I witnessed this feeling first-hand. One fall morning I rode with two Snowbird residents into a town an hour away simply to be with them and visit as they

completed some errands. After having a successful morning, our last stop was at a national chain department store. It was early afternoon and midweek so the store was not crowded. We entered the tool and parts department of the store where one friend had to purchase a part for a lawnmower. I noticed there were two workers in the area that appeared to be involved in a personal conversation because they were laughing and conversation was animated. There were no other workers or customers in sight. I told my friends that I was going to the next department to make a quick purchase and would meet them back in a couple of minutes, thinking we would all be finished at the same time. Ten minutes later I arrived back to find my friends still standing in the same place I had left them. Apologizing for thinking I had made them have to wait on me, I was shocked to find that they had never been waited on. When I looked around, the two workers who had been talking with each other were now involved in other duties which did not involve customers. We were still the only customers in the area. When I made direct eye contact with one of the workers, he walked over, ignored my friends, and asked if he could help me with anything. Not wanting to embarrass my friends, I looked to them for guidance. The one needing the lawnmower part conducted his business and we left a few minutes later. I cried all the way back home and my friends just shrugged it off saying in a very casual manner, “It happens all the time.”

Being made to feel different or “othered,” even if not done intentionally, continues to happen. Some felt it was not as bad as past history, others said that although they had not experienced discrimination, they know it exists. After one particular interview was finished, I was chatting with the participant and was gathering my belongings to leave. She motioned for me to sit back down and said there was one more story that she needed to tell. I asked her if she

wanted the recorder on or off. She told me that she wanted it on and after setting everything up, she relayed this story:

- It is about a family member of mine. He and his wife, who is White, have four children. They went to a fast food restaurant this last Christmas. The wife went up to order the food. When she came to the table with the food, she found part of the order was missing. She sent the oldest, a girl, back up (to the counter). This daughter looks more Indian than the other two. She has long, beautiful hair, you know, just a little Indian girl. She stood there for 10, 15 minutes. Not one soul would help her. One woman (at the counter) just looked at her and turned around. The daddy went up (to the counter) to see what the problem was. He told the woman at the counter that they needed their food. The woman looked at him and then at the little girl and said, we don't serve that to people like you.

The man saying nothing, quietly gathered his family and walked out. As I sat stunned, the participant looked at me and said, "Never let anyone tell you that discrimination against Indians doesn't exist anymore, is better now or on the decrease. It is alive, well and continues to happen."

Summary

For each of these participants, discrimination continues to be a part of life. They spoke of incidents of racism such as prejudice against the color of their skin, dealing with discriminatory comments, bias and stereotyping in athletics, and attempting to assimilate into the dominant society. The ways participants dealt with conflicts aligned with cultural tradition. In school situations students would join together for support. When alone or with family, internalization or ignoring the situation not wanting attention to be called to them was the method of resolution.

However the situations were handled, evidence is very clear that discrimination continues to be a common life factor for the Snowbird Cherokees.

Negotiations of Duality

The final theme that I discuss is a combination of issues that interviewees identified and how they dealt with them. I begin by describing the meaning of education as told by the participants. I then discuss their views on present day curriculum and its relationship to the Cherokee heritage and culture. The third topic of discussion involves stories of participants' decisions to drop out of school and influencing factors. Finally, I address views and opinions the participants have about teachers and the impact teachers have had in their personal lives.

Meaning

Education, as generally viewed by the 20 participants, is a way to move up in life as well as a way to be on "equal ground" as their White peers. As I reviewed the interviews collected, I observed many times a conflict between culture and formal education. Education was seen as a good thing to become successful, but many feel the educational system is not doing what it needs to do in order to help maintain the Cherokee culture. The complexity of this issue was evinced during the interviews when the participants many times struggled with the opinion that the more education someone receives the more of an "apple" they become.

During the interviews, there were two distinct types of education identified. One type of education was formal schooling where a student obtains a degree or "a piece of paper." To participants, formal education involved being in a program and being taught by a professional. The other type of education related to informal ways of learning or life skills is not bound to a classroom. Contradictory to formal education, life-learning takes place wherever the person is at that particular moment in time. The teacher can be any part of creation and the lessons learned

are individual and pertinent only to that person. Regardless of the type of education, the participants agreed that a person needs both to survive. A person needs formal education to survive in the world and informal education to survive in spirit and maintain the Cherokee culture and identity.

- If you have education, you could do just about anything that you want to do. . . . The more education they get the further they can go and the easier it could be for them. It encompasses everything. . . . It doesn't have to be books and school as much as elders. Talking to your elders and being able to observe goes right along with books and teachers. I think a lot comes from the inside too as far as how you perceive things and take things in. You have to go to school to have the paperwork that says you have it, but I think that it encompasses a lot more than just book learning.

One participant agreed that at the time she was going to school, education did not really mean anything to her. But now when reflecting on what it means to be educated, she feels that education is more than the time spent in formal school but is a life-long process of obtaining bits of this and that along the way. Education to her means learning about life and people skills and even learning what it means to go to school. Another participant said it this way:

- The science and the math part you use every day but the other things you don't. It (education) is really about how life is. You learn from what your experiences are and what happens and then go from there. School is something you have to do, but it does not help you in life except for a couple of pieces of it.

School, to this participant, needs to have a purpose and goal.

As is significant in the Cherokee culture, waste is looked down upon and everything that is done needs a purpose. This includes waste of time, waste of resources, and waste of talent.

Whatever is learned, a purpose of why it is being learned needs to be attached:

- Education doesn't necessarily mean school learning. When you get an education it can be in mechanics, horticulture, or anything. In general, education means the learning process, getting information to use like math to be able to build a house.

Several participants believed that the present schooling system is harming more children than helping them, especially the Cherokee children. One person who was interviewed equated formal education to a prison system:

- Whether you are going to school or you are learning anything, . . . everybody has (an interest). . . . When people have their interests, that is generally what they pursue. My grandparents are very smart people. They grew up learning differently than we do now. It is almost like a prison system. We sentence our kids to upper wards of 20 years of formal education that they (grandparents) did not do but that did not make them any less smart. In this day and age, you do have to have some formal education but it does not gauge what kind of person you are or how smart you are by that piece of paper. The elders who grew up in these mountains know their way around like nobody else. They know the plants, they know the medicines. They are educated; they just don't have a piece of paper to mark off that they are educated.

This participant went on to say that his diploma was hanging over his toilet with a sign over it that reads "Break In Case of An Emergency" because he feels that is its worth. It tells nothing of how smart he really is: It just shows that he obtained a piece of paper.

Curriculum

A topic of discussion mentioned by every participant was about the Indian Heritage Month in the local school system. During the month of November, both White and Indian students are exposed to information about the Cherokee people. On “Indian Day,” guest speakers will visit the school and give demonstrations on crafts such as Cherokee pottery making, beading, and basket making.

During Heritage Month, Snowbird Cherokee high school seniors are required to complete a heritage project. They obtain a mentor who is not a family member and study a subject related to their Cherokee heritage. Twenty hours of time must be spent on this project where students produce an end product such as a beaded item or piece of pottery.

General comments about the value of Heritage Month and senior projects were mixed. While most participants think the month is a good way to introduce the Cherokee culture to both Indian and non-Indian students, many feel that one month where bits and pieces of information is shared is not enough. One participant felt positive attitudes about the Cherokees would increase if more information was given.

- It is just one month, how much are you going to learn out of a month? You need to have at least through the whole nine months (of school). If they could have, they (the children) would have a whole lot of change.
- There isn't too much (of heritage month). But I would like to see a lot of it and I think it would let the white people know what it is. I think they would have a different attitude about us. That we are just like them. That we are human, too.

Another participant felt that the Heritage Month is the only exposure to the culture some children receive, including Cherokee children:

- If we don't have that month for the schools, how are they going to know?

However, all agreed that Heritage Month does not include the Cherokee language, which is a primary need to retain the culture and language. Frustration about the school system not teaching the Cherokee language was a commonly voiced concern among the participants along with the system's responsibility to focus on the cultural needs of the Cherokee children:

- I do not know what they are afraid of at this school. They are either afraid or I don't know. This is about the kids that go to school here. They are good kids. They need to know their heritage and they are beginning to forget. And they are being forced to forget when the school system does not allow a language teacher to come in and teach.

This frustration was verbalized by many of the participants from both the Snowbird Day School students as well as those who only attended the local school system.

There was a time when the school system did employ one Cherokee teacher to instruct Indian students about the language, culture, and crafts. The participants who spoke of this class called it the "Arts and Crafts" class. White students took the "White" arts class while the Cherokee students took the "Indian" arts class. When I asked participants if the students were able to choose which class to take, typical comments were, "I was never offered it" or "I do not think we were allowed to choose." One participant was very adamant when she stated,

- No, the Whites were on one side of the building and the Indians were on the other side of the building.

The arts class was taught by the same local Snowbird resident until the late 1980s, when funding ran out. The purpose of the Arts and Crafts class was to allow the students to be able to learn about their heritage, language, and art. As a byproduct of this class, the students were able to make money for themselves as well as the class from the crafts they completed in class. One

participant told of how the teacher taught her to make a beaded spider necklace. According to the participant, this necklace took a long while, was very complicated, and the end product was something to be proud of. The teacher sold the necklace for thirty dollars and gave half to the student and put half of the money back into the classroom funds for more supplies.

Curriculum for this course was varied by the teacher depending upon the needs of her students at the time and just as the Snowbird Day School participants spoke fondly of the community school, the arts and crafts students spoke fondly of their class. One participant as she recounted her memories of the class told how much the students looked forward to attending that class:

- When she taught class like beadwork and basket making and pottery and all that, all the Indians signed up for that class. We would attend those classes in high school and go to them. It was just like a moment in time for the Indians to have that.

As the participants reflected upon the Arts and Crafts class and what made it special to them, several key factors stood out. A major contributing factor that made this class so popular among the Cherokee students was the community atmosphere they shared. Participants told of how they laughed, joked, and felt free to be themselves. Another indicator of why this class was enjoyable was the teacher was not only a local resident of Snowbird, but a Cherokee as well. The way she taught her students was traditional and culturally based using hands on learning approach. By using hands-on learning and receiving lessons applied to a purpose, the students excelled and enjoyed going to this class. In the traditional Cherokee way of teaching, the teacher would first allow the students to observe and then step back as they attempted to do the task individually. When participants described this teacher's teaching method, many laughed as they related how the teacher had them sit in a specific place beside her when she was demonstrating a technique.

- She would sit there in front of you and show you how to do it. Then she would let you do it individually. She was a good teacher.
- She would sit there . . . and we had to sit there. I could not be over there and say. “Okay, I’m listening to you.” We had to be right there (beside her) and she taught us. She would turn us loose to do it on our own. If we attempted something and did not get it (right) she would patiently do it again.

All participants who had this teacher for Arts and Crafts class said she was a much loved member of the community and was appreciated for passing on the traditional ways. Most of them wished they had paid better attention to what she was saying and doing when they were taking this class. They appreciated what they learned from her and wished they had learned even more.

Also in the traditional method of teaching, there were always stories to go with anything she taught and she made it applicable to the Cherokee history and culture as well as teaching the students a skill.

Hands-on teaching is how most of the participants say they learn best and how they were taught at home. The following is a typical story by participants telling how their parents or family members would guide them to knowledge and how the Cherokee Arts and Crafts teacher taught:

- She would show me while we were talking. She would explain how it goes and why that would be there. She would explain the reason for all of it. She would guide me a long and when I did something wrong, she would say, Oh, this goes this way and we would talk in our own language.

By being a hands-on learner, one participant reflected on how he could not learn in school until he actually performed the task himself:

- There was not a whole lot of classes that were geared to where you could have actual hands-on. Until I got out there and did it, I could hardly learn it.

Another participant emphasized that it is a very “non-Indian thing” to want to know as much as you can about everything for no more reason than you want to know it. By having the Cherokee students taught in a culturally traditional way, six participants feel that present day students would excel, learn their history in the correct manner, and stay in school. Two participants told that the lessons have to mean something for the student before they will even want to begin to learn the subject. They suggested ways such as having students find something they were interested in and then fitting in the algebra, science, or English, along with the culture. One participant was very animated when he said,

- Tell them (the school system and teachers) to throw away those books.

These participants contended that combining the academic along with the practical is the optimal way to teach Cherokee students all subjects, even history.

Four participants on this same line of thought felt that when teaching the Cherokee history and culture to both native and non-native, teachers want a “pre-packaged” curriculum but the history books that are being used to teach are historically inaccurate.

- Most of the time they (the students) have been taught the other way. They have been taught from the history books. It is fine for the other people but not for the Indian children.
- James Mooney and other ethnohistorians exported the stories and then they were brought back and given to the Cherokees in its prepackaged form. The complexities of everything that was going on during the time of removal were thrown out. People (teachers) want it

in its prepackaged form where they can fit it into their back pockets and move on. . . . It is shoved down their throats.

In general, when speaking of the curriculum, participants noted that the public school curriculum went from a Cherokee teacher teaching the Cherokee students their culture and heritage all year to a heritage month which is ironically most frequently taught by White educators. Many said the Heritage Month is simply a few minutes here and there in history class with one day of visitors performing dances and art demonstrations. They also observed that the curriculum used by the system is neither accurate according to Cherokee oral history nor taught in a way that is not culturally traditional.

Attendance and Breaking Points

The ability to cope with educational difficulties and failures in which society and school systems set out for students varies from person to person. Individuals handle conflict differently and given the same set of circumstances, one person might succeed whereas another person might fail. Many Cherokee people are able to overcome and succeed in spite of the roadblocks set before them and many others are not.

Being physically present at school is a major part of success. Students at the Snowbird Day school spoke of how they loved going to school and that Mr. and Mrs. Lee did not allow them to be absent. If they were absent, they would either go in person or send someone to their home to check on them. Attendance rate was high and students who had perfect attendance were given a silver dollar from Mr. Lee at the end of the year. Attendance rates at the Snowbird Day School before Mr. and Mrs. Lee came to teach were still high, according to one participant, but not as high as when Mr. and Mrs. Lee were there. Students enjoyed playing together and visiting and felt like they were able to be themselves. As one participant put it,

- “I felt like me. I never felt different.”

The children responded to the environment and many of them had perfect attendance:

- Almost all of us had perfect attendance when we went to that school.

Two participants said that in spite of the fact that students with perfect attendance received a silver dollar from Mr. Lee, they would have gone anyway. When the school was closed and the children were sent to public school, many of them did not like going to the school and wanted to miss days:

- I did not like going to school down there (public school). We had to go because they made us go.

When asked if it was the parents who made them go, several participants said yes, because they could not afford the money if they did not go. When asked to explain, three participants shared their perceptions of how the school system would fine the parents if their children did not attend school. Like the Snowbird Day School, the system sent a person to check on the Indian children if they did not attend school. Unlike the Day School, the truant office would threaten and frighten the parents into sending their children to school:

- Education was an inconvenience back then. All of a sudden these officers would come running up there threatening my dad, putting him in jail. They (parents) considered education an inconvenience by being threatened by an officer. We had an officer who would come up to the house when one of the children was sick and instead of knocking. . . . (he would) just burst in . . . or he would peep through all the windows around the house. He had been shot at several times because of that. . . . He would threaten you. . . . (He would say) You don't go to school; we are going to put your daddy in jail.

This participant further suggested that the school system's allowing this to happen and her subsequent fear were probably the reasons she quit school altogether. However, she completed the story by saying she is a survivor and she went on to obtain her G.E.D. and went to college. Along those same lines, another participant shared the story of how her parents would have to pay the truant officer if she and her siblings did not go to school:

- They (parents) said they had to pay so much if we didn't go to school. They (parents) did not actually make us, but they told us to go on in to school so they would not have to come up with the money. When you did not go, you had to (pay). I guess they just wanted money.

While this no longer happens, participants infer that Cherokee children are strongly encouraged to attend school because the tribe sends stipend money for each enrolled EBCI student. One participant explained it in this way:

- The children are numbered and the school gets money from the tribe for them.

The upper high school years seem to be the breaking point for students dropping out of school. Seven participants told stories of how they or one of their family members simply became frustrated and quit school. With the exception of one, the dropping out stories happened mainly in the senior year.

Many of these students who finally quit attending met their breaking point gradually. One parent recalled that her daughter kept making excuses about not wanting to go to a certain class because she felt the teacher picked on her. The mom had conferences with the teacher several times but the daughter insisted it did not help. It seemed this teacher would tell the mom one thing and the student another. When the daughter was on the verge of quitting school, the mom once again spoke with the teacher. Her story ended with her last conversation with the teacher:

- I said, “You need to quit picking on her because she is ready to quit.” And when she did quit, he said, “Well, I guess I got rid of another student.” That is all he would say. It had been just another day to him.

Feeling a lack of support was the reason two other participants gave to explain their dropping out.

- I quit in the 12th grade just four months shy of graduation. I had a real hard life. I don’t know, I just gave up, I was tired. I more or less put myself through school. I did everything myself. I worked after school, practiced ball, did homework, and sometimes did not get home until 11 o’clock at night. Then I would just get up and go to school and do the same thing over again. I got up one morning, waited to go to school, and I never went.

When asked if she had support at school, she said, “no.”

- I felt like I did not have anybody. There was nobody there (at school) to give me a push whenever I needed it.

Having “had enough” one participant said she quit and the school did not know she had been gone for over three weeks:

- I just had so much of school. . . . (I quit) right after softball season, three months before graduation. . . . It was like three weeks after I quit school before they even knew I was not going to school.

Participants who met their breaking point and dropped out suddenly usually had an argument or conflict with an administrator or teacher. A mother told of how her child walked out of school with her permission because of racial discrimination with one certain teacher. The boy earned his G.E.D. instead of going back to school. Another student quit suddenly because an administrator

wrongly accused her of laying out of school. When he eventually discovered the truth, he called to tell her that she may come back to school. She refused and proceeded to obtain her G.E.D.

By standing up for her beliefs, one participant felt she was forced to quit and told this story:

- I quit six months before my graduation. The art teacher and I got into an argument. I had to have all seven credits of the classes I was taking in order to graduate that year. The teacher and I got into an argument over religious beliefs. She said . . . she was an atheist . . . there was no such thing as a Bible and we should not believe it. When I took a Bible into her classroom, she failed me for the rest of the course. I had a 95 average in that class. It was among my books and I was not presenting it to her, I just had it with me. . . . It was my legal right to carry it with me. . . . When she saw it, she told me to go to the principal's office and I would be failing her class because I brought 'that book' into her room. When I went to the school board, they would do nothing about it. I would not get to graduate because I would not be able to have all of my credits. I would have had to go the next half of a year just to make up that credit. . . . They fired her the next year.

This participant walked away from school for defending one of her heartfelt rights. She ended her story by saying that it was a sad day but she went on to obtain her G.E.D. and is very proud of her education.

Amid the dropping out stories where participants found their breaking point and left public school for good, one participant shared a success story. She credits the administrator for her being able to complete her high school education and graduate.

- I got pregnant. The science building was at the bottom of the hill and the main high school building was at the top. I quit school because I was scared of getting hurt going

up and down the hill. . . . I had been gone for three, four months at least. Then my principal told me that he would schedule all of my classes at the top of the hill so I wouldn't have to go down there any more. . . . he said he was not going to jeopardize me getting hurt. . . . I went back to school and finished.

Feeling the support of her administrator, she was able to succeed in an education, a goal that was important to her.

Educators: Characteristics and Student Impact

As indicated in the breaking point stories and throughout this chapter, teachers have had a tremendous impact on the success or failure of the Snowbird Cherokee students. Participants identified several defining characteristics of effective teachers of Cherokee students.

Perseverance when teaching Cherokee students is one characteristic which three participants emphasized. Not giving up on Cherokee students and pushing them to the side was a concern voiced for future teachers in dealing with these children. One participant said he wished teachers would look at what road he took and learn from that. He said, "When you are sixteen, you are not going to listen to anybody." Another participant told of the impact her teacher had on her when she gave up on her and singled her out in class:

- In the tenth grade I had an algebra teacher. I was trying hard to learn and could not understand the concept of $y + x = 5$ or whatever. I just couldn't figure it out. The math teacher said I give up, you are just impossible. You just don't want to learn and you do not want to graduate. She gave up and that was my fourth time asking her how to work that problem. I had no respect for her, no respect at all.

Consequently, when the teacher gave up on this participant, the participant gave up on the teacher and learning stopped. This same participant spoke of another teacher who did not give up on her and she credits this teacher with her success in that grade.

- She explained it all. . . . She was caring, loving, helpful, and she didn't give up (on me).

She never gave up. She kept it up.

Another Participant related a story of an elementary teacher who encouraged her by giving her a party and gift of a purse after mastering a math concept she had been struggling with. The student had labored intensively during class with this concept and had asked many questions. After sitting at the kitchen table with her mom tutoring her one night, the student finally understood the concept. The student excitedly shared her knowledge with her teacher the next morning. Not believing the student, the teacher had her perform and solve a few problems in front of the class and several other teachers. When realizing the students did understand the concept, the teacher announced to her colleagues how she was very proud of her "problem student" and deserved a party to celebrate. However in high school, this participant had negative encounters with several teachers and eventually dropped out of school.

Getting to know, understand, and listen to the Indian child is of utmost importance in the success of teaching Cherokee students.

- (Teachers need to) get to know them before they put them down. Like most of the teachers now, they really get to know the Indian kids, they just put them down. . . . Don't demean them; don't try to put down their self-esteem. Don't compare an Indian child with a white child.

A teacher's treating her as an individual and not showing favoritism to anyone in particular in the class made an impact on a participant:

- He would stand there and listen to us if we had a problem. He tried to make it one on one. He just did not brush you off so he could go to his favorite one (student). I don't think he even had a favorite student. He made us all feel we were his favorite. He praised us and would not get mad at the whole class. He would talk to the individual.

Understanding that being a teacher is tough, one participant contended that it is worth the effort to know the Cherokee culture to help students get involved in learning goals.

- Teachers have to actually try and put themselves in the Cherokee culture and learn the ways and language. (They need to) learn everything about it inside and out before they teach an enrolled member. That is the only way anybody can really teach a Cherokee. They need to be on the same level so they can understand and relate.

By respecting the heritage and culture of the Cherokee students and simply allowing them to be who they are, one participant felt was the key to success:

- The Cherokee children have something within their self that they were raised with and sometimes it is sacred. Just let them have their respect and respect who they are. Teachers do not need to try and change them. . . . They need to bring out their qualities.

Three participants spoke of the importance of a teacher's seeing past skin color and treating children as equals as having a vital impact on the success or failure of Cherokee students. One participant spoke of Mr. and Mrs. Lee of the Snowbird Day School and how they did not see color as well as others in public school

- They (Mr. and Mrs. Lee) treated me like anybody else. They did not treat me differently because of my skin color (being Cherokee). I remember a few that were like that later on in years.

For this and several other participants, teachers in their school career were always compared to Mr. and Mrs. Lee.

Through showing respect and understanding of the culture, persevering, not giving up, not singling out students, and giving praise, teachers make a positive difference in the lives of Cherokee students. One other characteristic that has a tremendous impact on Cherokee students was identified by a participant who spoke very little during the interview. He would answer in one or two word statements and I had to listen carefully to hear what he was saying. However brief his explanations; he has a gift of getting to the heart of whatever was being discussed (more from me) at the time. After settling in and becoming more comfortable with his style of answering, I found the interview took far less time than any of the others although I felt the information given was just as golden as any of the others that had taken more time. After cutting off the tape recorder, I thought maybe he would open up and chat more. He did not. When I thanked him for giving his time, I asked one last question, “If you were given a chance to speak to a room full of teachers who taught or were going to teach Cherokee children, knowing whatever you said to them would be key information as to the educational success or failure of these students, what would you say to them? He paused and looked out the window. For the first time in the interview, he looked me in the eye and said:

- Treat them like they were your own and have patience.

Nodding his head, he smiled and walked out the door.

Summary

While the participants view formal education as valuable, it appeared that life learning and standing up for beliefs outweighed its importance. At times formal education was inferred as a hoop to be jumped through or a hurdle to be jumped over in the cases of students obtaining a

GED in order to proceed with their lives. School was also at times implied as being a waste of time and if a purpose was not clear for studying a particular subject was deemed as unnecessary. As a result of these thoughts, feelings of frustration were evident and in direct conflict with the Cherokee culture of harmony and balance. For these reasons, many participants felt that formal education was a waste of time and became frustrated. When students dropped out of school and received a G.E.D. many of the participants equated this with a high school degree instead of a dead-end as viewed by the dominant society. It was never spoken of in negative terms but simply as a solution to a problem interfering with life.

Participants felt subjects taught in school systems besides the Cherokee language was not as important as how the children are treated and taught. It became evident that during the Arts and Crafts class, unity among the Cherokee students and a sense of community was once again established much like the former days of the Snowbird Day School. There was purpose and intent in the lessons taught through traditional methods and immersion in the culture was an unspoken given. Students looked forward to attending class and participants are frustrated that there is no class of this nature in the present system. Heritage Month is seen as a connection to the past for many and although it is important, it is not enough for future students. Language is the binding strength for the Snowbird Cherokees and it is not taught during Heritage Month or any other time during the school year.

Participants' feelings of being "numbered" so that the school system receives money for their attendance disturbed me as did the stories of frustration that led to dropping out of school. During the interview process when participants spoke of the tribe's giving money to the school system to educate the Cherokee children, I often wondered why the school system did not have a specific Cherokee history or language class.

Teacher characteristics played an important role in the success or failure of the participants. Although many participants said they did not have many clear memories of specific teachers in their public school experience, stories related indicated otherwise. When a teacher either supported or discriminated against a student, the memory was often retold several times during the interview. Participants wishing teachers would have patience, would understand how Cherokee children learn best, would celebrate their heritage, and would treat students like their own children. These desires align directly with Cherokee culture, and they are in direct conflict to the present day school teaching method as seen by the participants.

This chapter has been a discussion of findings gathered in interviews and observations from 20 Snowbird Cherokees about their perception of education and its relationship to their cultural traditions. Themes identified and discussed were Culture and Identity, Agency and Discrimination, and Negotiations of Dualities. In the final chapter, I will look again at the major themes and discuss my interpretations and implications of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I discuss the themes presented in the previous chapter, provide my interpretation of the data as they relate to the focus questions, and close with implications for policy change and suggestions for further research. The conclusions and interpretation of the data are mine and are not necessarily the conclusions that others might reach. The information that follows are the interpretations I have reached after spending a great amount of time living with these data. I sincerely hope that these conclusions will contribute to the discourse in upcoming educational research as well as future educational policies made concerning the Snowbird Cherokees of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

My goal for this study was to learn how enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation perceive education in current times and how their perceptions relate to the continuance and acquisition of culture and language. I employed a grounded holistic approach using Applied Anthropological Ethnography with Indigenous Theory as my guide throughout this research. The participants in this study were 20 enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation. Four questions guided my research:

1. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina perceive the relationship of their education with their cultural traditions?
2. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive the role of education in teaching culture to youth?

3. What role does education play in helping to maintain traditional cultures, particularly language acquisition?
4. What role do teachers play in the lives of the Snowbird Cherokees past and present lives?

Perceptions of education appeared in the continued cultural practices and beliefs of language as identity, family, and teacher impact. It was of key importance that the participants in this study were all living on the Snowbird Cherokee Reservation and were varied in age, education, and working careers. It was also significant that 9 out of 20 participants had attended the local, B.I.A.-administered Snowbird Day School, which was closed in 1963.

Despite the differences of age, educational backgrounds, and cultural practices of the participants, the one commonality throughout this study was the Cherokee language. The language was the one defining factor that all 20 participants highlighted as an identifier to being Cherokee. Preservation of this language through future generations was a common contention during the interviews.

In the complex make-up and ever changing definitions of individual identity, many factors have an effect on its construction, with culture and language being prominent among these. Harklau (2006) purported that cultural identity is reciprocal in that not only does it shape, it also is shaped by influences of institutions and society and that “adolescents’ identities are also shifting and mobile, an on-going and never completed process of remaking of the self” (p. 9). With this view, the Elders of the Snowbird Community find that many of their youth have not considered the language to be an important identifier of their culture (what Noel, 2000, termed an *unexamined identity*, p. 147), and they hope that the cycle will shift.

An important finding in this study was the issue of race and discrimination in educational settings. While many of the participants did not consciously acknowledge racism and

discrimination as a factor in their interviews and some even stated they had not experienced any overt forms of discrimination, their narratives clearly indicated covert forms, especially in the area of language preservation. This led me to realize that, in this instance, some marginalized populations may not view language discrimination as necessarily a form of oppression and this belief is supported by the majority population. U.S. public discourse stipulates that sexism and racism should not be tolerated, but it remains divided if not derisive regarding the tolerance of languages other than English. McCarty (2003) suggested that language loss and revitalization are human rights issues and that efforts to revitalize indigenous languages cannot be separated from social justice struggles and issues of agency.

In the following sections, I look at each of my research questions individually, drawing conclusions from my research and connect this research to the work of others. I will conclude each section with implications and recommendations for practice. However, I have found it necessary to follow in the footsteps of Peshkin (1997) and Steiner (1968) when discussing the data results and stating implications. During my stays on the reservation while conducting this research, I was allowed to attend several ceremonial events, both public and private, and many people invited me into their homes for informal visits. During several of these events, I was told I could not write about anything discussed. When I focus on culture and education, I veer away from areas I cannot fully explore in order to honor my promise to my participants.

Education and Cultural Traditions

1. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive the relationship of their education with their cultural traditions?

Analysis of the data indicated four factors that answered this question: (a) Cherokee identity is intricately linked with the language; (b) family and community are strong in the

Cherokee culture; (c) learning from elders is important to the continuation of traditional ways; and (d) learning traditional ways belongs within the Circle.

When I asked participants to explain what being Cherokee meant to them, I was seeking an understanding of how they self-identified. During my first few interviews, I expected to receive answers pertaining to blood percentage, skin color, or residency. Instead, I was answered with a form of the word *pride*. Even after redirecting the question and asking it in a variety of ways, the answers were all along the same lines. Participants were proud of their heritage, proud of their language, proud of their family, and proud of being among an elite group of people. When participants used the word *Cherokee*, it was the defining term and they were explaining their feeling of being Cherokee. Even the participants who claimed not to follow the traditional Cherokee belief system nonetheless reflected a definition similar to those who did. The Cherokee balance and harmony of all that surrounds them is a way of life, not an identity that is inherited (Grande, 2004). One participant stated, “I am a Cherokee. . . . I grew up as a Cherokee. . . . It is my way of life.”

Analysis of interview data suggested that the terms “culture” and “Cherokee language” were connected. This belief demonstrates consistency with literature and research regarding the issue of indigenous language shift. Kirkness (1998) suggested that language is what gives most indigenous nations their identities and is one of the symbols of belonging. Through the language, the culture is shared and transmitted (Kirkness). By losing the language, the population is losing a way of life, a way of thought, and a way of valuing. According to Fishman (1996), “If you take language away from the culture, you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers” (p. 81).

When participants were asked if they thought the Cherokee culture should be taught in the public school system, most indicated that it should and that doing so was important. When asked to give an opinion on how to do this, many suggested that a separate language and culture class should be taught and many referred to the Arts and Crafts class previously taught at the public high school.

When participants told stories of being reprimanded at school for speaking the Cherokee language, they explained their understanding that they were to assimilate into the dominant culture. During interviews when the word “culture” was used, the conversation that followed usually related to the Cherokee language. When asked what an ideal school would be for a Cherokee person to maintain their culture, participants responded with answers such as the following:

- I think it is important that the language be viable.
- The Indian language is fading away. . . . If the Mexicans can, why not the Cherokees, too?
- They (White teachers) would have wanted us to keep talking Cherokee if there wasn't a conflict.

In these statements, culture and language are closely tied. Participants spoke of local school systems' embracing the Spanish culture but continuing to reject the Cherokee culture and way of life except for an obligatory acknowledgment. Nieto (2002) asserted that only in the past several years have researchers and educators begun to connect the issues of language, literacy, and culture and that previously they had been considered to exist separately from one another. Furthermore,

it is now evident that language, literacy, and culture are linked in numerous ways and that all teachers—whether they teach preschool art or high school math—need to become knowledgeable in how that affects students' schooling. (Nieto, p. 1)

As an implication for the Snowbird Cherokee students, this can be viewed as a positive shift for proponents of language preservation. By linking these issues, students whose Cherokee identity has historically been ranked low in the status of society can now be given a wealthier representation of learning that has its roots in the anthropological understanding of culture.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review established the historical importance of family in the Cherokee culture (Finger, 1984; Perdue, 1998). Through matrilineal lines, clan members were responsible for the education of their particular family unit. Family units consisted of members belonging to the same clan resulting in numerous extended members. Although the clan system is no longer officially recognized in the Cherokee culture (Perdue, 2005), data suggested that family is still important for full circle education and learning from the elder members of the community is vital for cultural preservation, including the Cherokee language and the sacred practices and beliefs.

History reflects the efforts of the White society to educate the Native population. The results were the boarding schools and reservation day schools. Many Indian children were punished for speaking their native language, and the practicing traditional ways was forbidden (Child, 1998). Fixico (2003) contended that the fear of institutions has been overcome by the Native American population in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. While this may be true for the most part, interviewees on the Snowbird Reservation disagreed with allowing sacred tradition to be taught by non-family members.

The literature and data presented indicate several factors that can inform public school systems, educators, and Cherokee student policy makers. As non-Indian school systems continue to educate the Snowbird Cherokee students, they must recognize the significance of the Cherokee language for meeting the cultural needs of these students. They must also acknowledge that being a Cherokee is not only an identifier, but more specifically, it is a way of life. While emphasis on the teaching of sacred ways and tradition continues to be viewed as the responsibility of family members, the school system is viewed as playing just as important a role in the teaching of the Cherokee language. Participants indicated that the school system should teach the Cherokee language as part of the curriculum in the same manner that the languages Spanish and French are taught. My interpretation of this information is that participants believe the school system should teach the Cherokee language to the youth but the sacred teachings still belong within the Circle, not the public school.

Thus, my first recommendation is that systems should employ a local Snowbird Cherokee resident to teach language and culture classes in the public high school. History has shown that Snowbird Cherokee students respond well to these classes. However, an individual's ability to speak the language does not necessarily mean they have the capability to teach the language (Cleary & Peacock 1998; Peshkin, 1997). A teaching strategies mentor would be advisable in such an instance. The classes should be open to all students who have an interest in the Cherokee language. While historical and cultural aspects of the Cherokee ways of life could be incorporated, traditional sacred practices should not be included as part of the curriculum.

As shown in this study, by being punished for speaking their native language, many participants or their parents wanted to shield their children from the same experiences by accepting the dominant society's language. Crawford (1995) suggested that in order to accept

this alienation of language, a devaluation of language in the minds of the speakers had to occur. This legacy of opposition to bilingual education and belief that children do not do well in school if they are bilingual or even trilingual has been shown false by research. Willig (1985) found that students who participated in bilingual programs consistently earned higher English language test scores in reading, language arts, and mathematics as well as total achievement. Extensive and rigorous studies in many fields of study such as education, linguistics, and anthropology by Collier (1992), Cummins (1989), Ramirez (1991), and many others confirm that bilingualism has a positive effect on the academic achievement and cognitive abilities of school-aged children. Thomas and Collier (1997) conducted a longitudinal study on language minority students and academic success at 5 different school systems for a period of 14 years. A significant discovery of the study found that 700,000 students with a representation of 15 languages who had been schooled in their heritage or native language for four to seven years was “the most powerful predictor of academic success” (p. 39). Another significant factor of the Thomas and Collier study was that the findings were relevant to children who had no English background when they entered school, children who had been raised bilingually, and, much like the Snowbird Cherokee, “children dominant in English who were losing their heritage language” (p. 15).

Cherokee Student Perceptions of Education

2. How do enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians perceive the role of education in teaching culture to youth?

The findings indicated one major factor, *duality*, which answered this question with two significant parts: (a) Students continue to face discriminatory situations in school, and (b) survival and fitting in are held as priority. As I read and coded the interview data, one reoccurring thought ran through my mind: The participants think they have to give up something

in order to get something. As the Cherokee way of life is one of balance, this makes sense (Allen, 1986; Perdue & Green, 1995). As well, historical evidence from the dominant society has proved this to be a correct assumption.

Two distinct types of education were inferred during the interviews. When I asked the participants to define the word “education,” only formal education was indicated. Such responses were “School” or “Bettering yourself in school” or “Learning in school.” It was not until further discussion that informal educational methods of learning were mentioned. Even then, many participants did not think of informal learning as a type of education. Instead, they viewed it as a part of living. A connection to education and financially supporting self and family was prevalent: the better educated, the better job, and the more money they would make resulting in being better able to support family. Implied was that the more educated a person becomes, the more “White” a person becomes and the further away from the Cherokee culture they become. To get ahead in one way of life, they have to move farther away from another.

This duality is easily understood given the physical location of the Snowbird Reservation and how the residents negotiate between two very distinct worlds. When the federal government granted the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians land held in trust for the Snowbird Reservation, it was not given as a whole piece of property as was the main Qualla Boundary in Cherokee, North Carolina. The Snowbird Reservation trust land is comprised of approximately 2,200 acres but is cut into many small, scattered tracts interspersed among non-trust land. A map of the Snowbird Reservation looks much like an abstract checkerboard. According to Neely (1991), the Snowbird Cherokee have a history of living among the dominant society. Because the Reservation is not commercialized, there are no grocery stores or businesses located on the

reservation. For the people to buy groceries, gas, and the like, they have had to negotiate two worlds for many years. As participants explained,

- I can be on my front porch and look down the road at my neighbor to the left and turn my head to look at my neighbor on the right and I am the only one standing on trust land.
- When you go to the grocery store in town, you leave and re-enter the reservation at least 7 times one way, if not more.
- They (main Cherokee Reservation) have their own grocery stores; they had their own gas stations. They had everything they needed up there to be self sufficient. . . . we couldn't get cable down here. So, my age, we're not the MTV generation here. It's people who are twenty-one, twenty-two. That's the MTV generation here in Snowbird because we didn't have cable. We had a TV antenna; if we got one channel we were lucky. But I'm not gonna say that my generation is guarding it (culture) as closely. But with my grandfather and people of that generation, I guess, the greatest generation we called them, had to guard it closer because the deculturation was there. You had to come into town to get groceries. You had to come into town to work because there's no jobs to be had in Snowbird. It's simply a community of houses, you know, with the community building there. But I mean, up until the last few years, there was not a lot of jobs to be had in the Snowbird community.

Developing the ability to acclimate when moving from one world to the other and back again when attending a non-reservation school, the Snowbird Cherokee students become what Ogbu (1978, 1987) termed *involuntary minorities*. Voluntary minorities are typically immigrants who have chosen to enter a different society usually for self improvement. Involuntary minorities are brought into the dominant society via slavery, conquest, or colonization. Consequently, the two

groups have different perceptions on what it means to be a minority. Voluntary minorities are able to use their home country and culture for a frame of reference whereas involuntary minorities are not. Ogbu (1990) contended that underperformance of involuntary minorities cannot be completely explained by “conflicts in cognitive, communication, social interaction, teaching, and learning styles” (p. 144). Instead, account must be taken for how these minority groups were incorporated into the dominant society and the history of how the minorities responded to that treatment.

Mistrust in the school system and discrimination is not viewed as temporary. Ogbu (1990) stated,

Involuntary Minorities recognize that they belong to a subordinate, indeed a disparaged minority; they compare their situation with that of their white American peers. The prejudice against them seems permanent, indeed institutionalized. (p. 150)

While not all participants felt that Snowbird Cherokee students were discriminated against, the majority did. Participants who have children or family in the public school system shared stories, though many participants told of racist and discriminatory acts they experienced but asked that I not retell the details in this report.

Teachers of Snowbird Cherokee students have an enormous burden and professional responsibility to teach them the academic skills necessary to negotiate in one world while recognizing and respecting the importance of another. Although a majority of participants viewed education as a way to better themselves, many struggled with issues of assimilation and prejudices, whether internal or external,.

A definite connection between informal and formal education was not viewed as congruent but is important in keeping with the Cherokee culture of balance and harmony. For

students to move past the historical connotations of educational trauma, much depends on the willingness of the school system to deal with the repercussions. Although the past should not be forgotten and the present not be complacent, it may be time to rethink how the Cherokee students are taught. As a fact of the Snowbird Reservation location, students will continue to move from one cultural world to another if educated in the public school system.

Thus, my second recommendation is to provide a Cherokee teacher facilitator to give specific instructional strategies to use with the Cherokee students based on a more traditional approach. A facilitator who is from the Cherokee culture can enhance the effectiveness of success by encouraging non-Indian teachers to implement the strategies given, evaluate the effectiveness of current teaching methods, and relate positive outcomes to other teachers. Having a support person who is strictly available for teaching strategies and methods instead of facilitating curriculum or tutoring would enhance effective means of teaching in both formal and informal situations.

Language and Education

3. What role does education play in helping to maintain traditional cultures, particularly language acquisition?

In this study, the participants all identified the Cherokee language as a major part of their identity and used the term *language* as a defining word for their culture. Bender (2002) asserted that this ideology is accepted among the Eastern Cherokee as a “given” and beliefs about language and literacy come from a dichotomy “at which a dominant culture meets a resistant one” (pp. 6-7). The conflict between accepting/assimilating while at the same time resisting the dominant society’s values means the “Cherokee beliefs about literacy (and language) and its connections to power and culture may be largely implicit” (p. 7).

That the Cherokee language, specifically the Snowbird dialect, is used as an identifier by the residents is understandable. According to Wachacha and Wachacha (1981),

The Cherokee language is spoken fluently by most . . . residents over the age of 18. Most children do not learn much English until they enter grade school. All of the Snowbird Indians, except for a few older people, are bilingual, speaking both the Cherokee and English languages. The Cherokee language is very important to the Snowbird Indians, helping them to maintain their own tradition. (p. 59)

Twenty-five years later, this is not the case. Bender (2002) reported that between 5% and 10% of residents living on the main Cherokee trust land could speak the language fluently. At present, among the 500 Snowbird residents, the percentage of fluent language speakers is not known but is estimated by an elder to be as low, if not lower, than among residents of the main reservation.

Participants spoke frequently of language loss and regretted either not learning the language from their parents or not teaching it to their children. Bender (2002) termed this as the *lost generation*. Participants who attended the Snowbird Day School with Mr. and Mrs. Lee as teachers were encouraged to continue speaking Cherokee as well as English. It was implied by several participants that they were “one of us,” indicating that the Lees understood the implicit importance of the language as part of the culture.

Of the nine Snowbird Day School informants, eight were still able to speak Cherokee fluently. Of the eleven participants who attended the local public school system, only one was able to speak the language fluently while three were able to understand and speak in rudimentary bits and pieces. Several participants are presently taking language lessons to rectify what they feel is a gap in their heritage.

With the understanding that the Cherokee language speakers are a minority with even “fewer readers and writers of the Cherokee syllabary” (Bender 2002, p. 21), many participants believed the school system was not presently meeting the language preservation needs of Snowbird students. On the outside, this appears to be the case because a majority of the Snowbird Day School participants who were taught by non-Cherokee teachers remain fluent speakers of the language while the majority of students who were taught by non-Cherokee teachers in the public school system do not.

Loss of identity through decline of language is a valid concern for the Snowbird Cherokees, but should the school system or the Snowbird community serve as the primary source for revitalization of the language? Fishman (1991) asserted that efforts to reverse language shift (RLS) created a Catch-22 situation: “Successful RLS is invariably part of a larger ethnocultural goal” (p. 6). Preservation of the Snowbird Cherokee language through the local school system cannot be targeted as a single goal but immersed into a part of community change as well. Michael Krauss (1992) testified, “You cannot from the outside inculcate into people the will to revive or maintain their languages. This has to come from them, from themselves” (p. 21). For successful language preservation, the Snowbird Community has to be the primary activists in this effort. According to Crawford (1996), “Schools are usually regarded as an outside institution in Indian communities, unless they are under effective local control” (p. 9). Hence the Catch-22.

Snowbird residents who are of school age attend the local public school system. At this time, there is no alternative school or institution the students can attend on the Snowbird Reservation and the main Cherokee reservation school is located 50 miles away. Although the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians supplement the local school system with tribal monies to support the educational needs of the Cherokee students, participants feel the language

development and cultural activities are not adequate. The community looks to the school system as having a major supporting role in the perpetuation of language continuance. According to Cantoni (1997), native language and culture classes, such as the of the past Arts and Crafts class of the public school system, are often isolated from the rest of the curriculum, which summates to a type of segregation. She suggested that educational systems promote diversity of linguistics rather than conformity.

The basic written Cherokee language will survive because of the syllabary Sequoyah developed in 1821 as generally agreed by historians (Perdue, 1994; Walker & Sarbaugh, 1993). As well, the documentation through the work of Bender (2002) shows the syllabary is widely distributed in area schools, historical markers, and tourist areas, but it is not used extensively in teaching language acquisition. With the understanding that language is deeply intertwined with culture, the spoken dialect is not being perpetuated, resulting in a loss of Cherokee language speakers as well as intrinsic cultural identity.

Putting the responsibility solely on the school system to teach and perpetuate language acquisition is a heavy burden that is not likely to be successful as evinced in the literature. There is no question that the Cherokee language must be kept in order to have a deeper understanding of the culture. This task, however, is easier suggested than accomplished, with neither simple answers nor one correct method surfacing to facilitate obtaining this goal. As an outsider looking in, I hesitate to offer a recommendation for concern that my suggestion will be perceived as a “quick fix” or naïve answer for resolution of this longstanding, problematic issue. Having stated this intention, I submit the following opinion and recommendation.

While the school must be held accountable by the parents as well as community to promote language preservation instead of continuing to be a major contributor to its demise,

community involvement is imperative. Although the school is viewed as an outside institution, the community and school must work together for any resolution to be successful. The Cherokee language needs to be supported equally in the homes, the community, and the school. As evinced by the participants, a full circle method of education is optimal for teaching the Cherokee culture and language. Students have to have a purpose for knowing the language and its importance in their lives. It has to pertain to the significance of what they are studying at the time. Although the local school is attempting to incorporate basic language, even though sporadically, into the classrooms, students need real-life situations to connect to instead of having the language taught in an isolated context. While a cultural and language immersion curriculum would be beneficial to both the community and students, a strategic, developmental plan needs to be implemented by the people who have the most vested interests in language preservation. Leadership of this endeavor must come from within the community.

Teachers and Education

4. What role do teachers play in the lives of the Snowbird Cherokees past and present?

Analysis of the data indicated that positive or negative *Teacher Connectedness* plays important roles in the lives of students three areas: (a) attendance, (b) community involvement, and (c) perceived prejudices.

When I asked participants to give examples of an ideal teacher to teach Cherokee students, similar responses included “one who cares,” “one who treats them like they were their own,” and “one who is fair to all students and does not see color.” When talking of teacher dispositions, participant responses were rapid and concise, and, interestingly, all responses to this question were in reference to character while no responses referred to either teacher skills or knowledge.

When looking at the data comparing the students who attended the Snowbird Day School with the students who had not, I noted some distinct differences in the perception of teacher dispositions and how they directly related to student success stories. Day School participants spoke positively of their community school and about Mr. and Mrs. Lee, who were the last teachers before the school closed. The Lees lived next to the school in the community and shared their lives on a daily basis with the Snowbird children and parents.

Three of the participants directly talked about playing in the school yard with the Lee children and three more described the Lees as “one of us.” They were not viewed by a majority of the participants as being White. Ironically, one participant told of how the first time she saw a White person was when she had to leave the Snowbird Day School to go to public school. When I reminded her that the Lees and their children were White, she responded, “Oh, I forgot. I never saw them as being White.”

Mr. and Mrs. Lee made sure the children’s health was taken care of and checked on sick or absent students via home visits or community messenger. They involved the community and families in activities such as box dinner socials and movie night. As a direct result, from the caring dispositions of the Lees, several of the participants voiced how “those were the best years of my life.” Contrary to a majority of positive stories, one participant said that Mr. Lee and her brother had a disagreement resulting in her brother dropping out of school. One day she wrote a note containing “bad words” about him that he found and read aloud to the class. He made her stay in for recess and she related how she stayed mad at him for a while but eventually got over it. Even then, she contended that the Snowbird Day School was much more enjoyable than her time in public school.

While participants spoke of wanting to attend school while it was located in the community, six of the nine Snowbird Day School participants spoke of not wanting to attend school when they were relocated to the public system and two eventually dropped out. Seven of the eleven participants who only attended the public school system related stories pertaining to laying out of school frequently with some eventually dropping out. This coincides directly with current literature on the drop out rate for Native American students: They have the highest drop out rate among minority students in the United States (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Participants did not ever mention being treated unfairly at the Snowbird Day School even before the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Lee. It was agreed among the participants that the academics and school supplies improved a great deal after Mr. and Mrs. Lee began to teach. Nonetheless, it was also agreed by the three participants who had teachers other than the Lees at the Day School, in spite of the low academics, they enjoyed the community school much better than attending the local public school.

Participants who had attended the public school system as well as the Snowbird Day School described their teachers as “White” when speaking specifically about an experience whereas the participants had not done so when describing Mr. and Mrs. Lee. Participants who had only experienced public school system teachers also described the teachers as “White.” Although there were positive reflections of teachers from the participants who experienced the public school system, many more times than not, the participants had to think for a moment before relating a story. A majority of the stories about teachers who had positive influences was one particular coach. Participants said she treated all children fairly and in the same manner. If a team member could not afford shoes for the sport, the coach would purchase them and work out a payment plan with the player.

When students felt connected to the teachers and school, absenteeism was not an issue and positive attitudes were prevalent. When students did not feel connected to the teachers or school, they were frequently absent. This in itself can lead to negative effects such as frustration and lack of ability to handle difficult situations, all of which led in 9 out of 20 participants to dropping out.

This dilemma can be placed in the category of what Cajete (1999) termed *cultural mismatch* between school and home. According to Sowers (2004), this cultural mismatch is frequently due to extremely different worldviews about even simple basic concepts, such as time, environment, social relationships, and human nature. In reflection of cultural mismatch, several studies have reflected that students of the dominant culture have an educational advantage over students who have different backgrounds (Cummings, 1986; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In this line of thought, Ovando and Collier (1985) found that the self-perception of a minority group as to how they are viewed by the dominant culture has a direct influence on the self-concept minority students have about themselves in a school environment. Statistics reflecting the high rate of drop-outs among Native Americans and confirmed by the almost 50% participant drop-out rate in my study provide a direct agreement of this theory.

Facing challenges of test scores, multiple learning styles, paper work, and edicts of the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers face enormous challenges requiring skills and knowledge. Cajete (1999), a Native American scholar and researcher, asserted,

Teaching is essentially the processing and communication of information to students in a form they can readily understand, combined with facilitation of their learning and relative cognitive development. (pp. 142-143)

While this is true, from analysis of the data gathered, teacher connectedness with students or teacher disposition towards Cherokee students should be a contributing factor as well. Not only is the imparting of knowledge and the skill in which it is done important, but the factor of teaching affect should be just as important. Relying on the research conclusions of Ovando and Collier (1985), I can surmise that there is a direct connection to student self-concept with links to success or failure academically in the Snowbird Cherokee population with teacher affect and teacher/school connectedness. Cajete contended that the “dissonance” many Native American students feel in relationship to school experiences is because school focus is usually based on linear understandings instead of having a predisposition for harmony and balance (p. 149).

The Cherokee adults I interviewed were unanimous in showing that the relationship between student and teacher is essential and is probably more important than what is taught and how it is taught. This finding is supported by the work of Cleary and Peacock (1998); therefore, the optimal educational experience for the Snowbird Cherokee students would be the return of a community school immersed in a holistic teaching style that is reflective of traditional Cherokee methods of teaching and learning. Using an interdisciplinary approach with storytelling, hands-on experiences and process methods, combined with a small community learning environment, would create a situation more in balance with the intrinsic beliefs of the Cherokee students. By restructuring current curriculum using a circular, culturally based education (C.B.E.) approach to meet the needs of these students instead of the Western linear approach, student success both academically as well as internally would be heightened.

Culturally Based Education

From the three main theoretical approaches to C.B.E. programs or interventions, Cultural Compatibility, Cognitive Theory, and Cultural-Historical-Activity Theory, Cultural

Compatibility is the one that is most widely used for C.B.E. (Tharp & Estrada 2000). The underlying method of Cultural Compatibility theory is that education is more effective when there are similarities between social cultural dispositions of students and social cultural expectations of the school. In other words, the school, students, and community all need to be equal in the C.B.E. endeavor.

Research conducted by Demmert and Towner (2003) defined culturally based education programs as having six common and critical elements:

1. Recognition and use of Native American (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian) languages. Languages may include use bilingually, or as a first or second language.
2. Pedagogy that stresses traditional cultural characteristics, and adult-child interactions as the starting place for one's education (mores that are currently practiced in the community, and which may differ community to community).
3. Pedagogy in which teaching strategies are congruent with the traditional culture as well as contemporary ways of knowing and learning (opportunities to observe, opportunities to practice, opportunities to demonstrate skills).
4. Curriculum that is based on traditional culture, that recognizes the importance of Native spirituality, and places the education of young children in a contemporary context (e.g., use and understanding of the visual arts, legends, oral histories, and fundamental beliefs of the community).
5. Strong Native community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and in the planning and operation of school activities.

6. Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community. (pp. 9-10)

Although culturally compatible programs are the most widely used, studies indicate that indigenous language immersion programs have more positive effects toward language loss reversal as well as academic achievement for Native students (Francis & Reyhner, 2002). When advocating language immersion programs, Hinton (2001) stated, “There is no doubt that this is the best way to jump-start the production of a new generation of fluent speakers (p. 8). The common factor of immersion programs is teaching children a second language by combining content and culture without using the child’s first language (Reyhner, 2003).

Models of Culturally Based Education Programs

The availability of published research on the success of culturally based education programs with either full or partial language immersion for Native American children is severely limited (Demmert & Towner, 2003). In spite of this shortcoming, I provide a select number of current educational models on what might be possible for the Snowbird Community and/or local school district to implement for language and culture reversal. The selected programs are listed in alphabetical order followed by a brief description.

1. *Akwesasne Freedom School*. Located on the St. Lawrence River in upstate New York, Akwesasne, “the land where the partridge drums,” is a language immersion program run by the Mohawk Nation. Founded in 1979 by a group of parents concerned about Mohawk language and culture loss, the immersion program began in 1985. Curriculum is based on the Mohawk “Thanksgiving Address,” which teaches gratitude to the earth and everything on it.
2. *Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School*. Founded in 1975 in Cass Lake, Minnesota, in the Chippewa National Forest, the Bug-O-nay-Ge-Shig School is a K-12 open enrollment

- school. Now a magnet school, it was started in response to parental concerns that public schools were not meeting the academic and cultural needs of their children.
3. *The Kamehameha Schools.* Founded in 1887, the Kamehameha Schools, which have a main campus in Honolulu and two campuses on Maui and Hawaii, serve students in grades P-12. A lab school was developed in the early 1980s for the purpose of developing native oral language and literacy through methods of cooperative-interactive participant structures. This much studied bilingual/bicultural program, also known as KEEP (Kamehameha Early Education Program), is recognized world-wide for its success on the preservation of Native Hawaiian language and culture. According to Wilson and Kamana (2001), “The Hawaiian immersion preschools are designed to strengthen the Hawaiian culture, worldview, spirituality, morality, social relations, and other central features of a person’s life and the life of a people” (p. 161). KEEP, which has grown from 40 students in 1983 to 1,700 in 2003, has become the model from which many other schools structure their programs.
 4. *Oneida Nation School.* Located near Green Bay, Wisconsin, the Oneida Nation School building was built in the shape of a turtle. The turtle, symbolic of “Turtle Island/Mother Earth” for many Native American nations is also the foundation for the curriculum for the Oneida Tribal School.
 5. *Piegan Institute.* Founded in 1987 and located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana, the Piegan Institute is a community-based language revival program. Research is conducted on a regular basis at the school sites with current results revealing that the program has had a tremendous positive influence on Blackfeet children.

6. *Quileute Tribal School*. Located in La Push, Washington, this tribal K-8 school was founded in 1987. La Push is a small village on the border of the Olympic Peninsula, with a population of approximately 350 residents. The Quileute language and culture is integrated with the academic program.
7. *Rough Rock Community School* (formerly known as Rough Rock Demonstration School). Founded in 1965, Rough Rock Community School is the first locally controlled Indian school in the United States. Known as a *coordinate bilingual program*, in which teachers alternate between Navajo and English, the school is worldily recognized for producing Navajo language and culture curriculum materials. This successful program has been studied widely and language reversal is evident as well as higher academic achievements. Holm and Holm (1995) reported that the school has progressed from being the lowest scoring school in the lowest scoring B.I.A. agency on standardized tests to being in the comparable range with area schools. Although overall standardized test scores continue to score below national range, this is not the case in all subtests (Holm & Holm). In a study conducted by McCarty (1993) in the Rough Rock, Arizona, community, there were similar patterns reported for increased scores on standardized tests. McCarty attributed the success of this program to evidence of teacher, student, and parental involvement. Instead of prepackaged, scripted lessons, teachers based lessons on culturally relevant themes using cooperative learning centers (McCarty).
8. *Sand Springs Public Schools*. This public school in Sand Springs, Oklahoma founded an Indian Education Program in 1977 for the purpose of enriching the cultural heritage of their Native students while expanding their academic opportunities at the

same time. The Indian Education Department has two programs which are both supported by Department of Interior funding contracted through the Muscogee Creek Nation.

9. *Tiospa Zina Tribal School*. Tribally controlled, this elementary and secondary school was founded in 1981 to support the cultural and academic needs of Dakota children. The school is located on Lake Traverse reservation land in northwestern South Dakota and southeastern North Dakota. The C.B.E. curriculum is based on the National Center for the Advancement of Teaching School Improvement Model.

In school districts where Native children are beginning their academic journey speaking English, they are likely to be labeled as having limited English proficiency and to be placed in remedial programs (McCarty, 2003). Consequently, many Indigenous communities are motivated to emphasize heritage language and culture immersion programs. The studies I have discussed show that immersion schooling can serve dual purposes to reverse language and culture loss as well as boost student achievement. Unfortunately, in the guise of equality with the No Child Left Behind Act, we will continue to see an increase of intolerance for cultural and language diversity. School systems will be pressured to continue use of one-size-fits-all reading and phonics programs (Gutierrez, 2001). Through community-based efforts with C.B.E. programs, this linguistic and cultural repression can be eased (Arviso & Holm, 2001).

Questions for Further Study

The insight I gained from this study resulted in the following questions for further study:

1. Would opening a total immersion school in the Snowbird community of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians effect a reversal of language loss and cultural identity?

2. How does the No Child Left Behind Act affect student learning among the Snowbird residents?
3. How do current middle and high school students perceive the relationship between language and culture preservation with education?
4. To what degree would the implementation of the recommendations in this study decrease the drop-out rate of Cherokee students?

Conclusions

Nettle and Romaine (2000) stated, “Every language is a living museum, a monument to every culture it has been a vehicle to. It is a loss to every one of us if a fraction of that diversity disappears when there is something that can be done to prevent it” (p. 14). Such is the case of the Cherokee language.

I provided several model programs that are attempting to reverse language and cultural shifts in Indigenous Nations. However, while language immersion provides all or most of children’s instruction in the heritage language to produce fluent speakers, I would like to advise one area of caution. According to Linn et al. (2002), oftentimes in attempting to reverse language shift, the language becomes objectified. “Objectified it no longer is a living, dynamic means of expressing emotions, maintaining intimate relationships, and projecting a unique world” (p. 115). In other words, the language instead becomes just another language of study. Because Cherokee identity is intricately tied with language and culture, revitalization efforts through full circle immersion teaching should not be simply for preservation but for life enrichment by all those who participate. It should be integrated in context and socially constructed within the community. It should be active and multifaceted.

Arvizu (1994) defined culture as a verb instead of a noun and contended that it is active, dynamic, and always changing. Nieto (2002) stated, "Culture does not exist in a vacuum but rather is situated in particular historical, political, and economic conditions" (p. 11). The Cherokee language and culture is a prime example of this belief and the preservation programs integrated into the present school system or opening a heritage school should be reflective of this historical strength and ability of adaptation.

In this report, I have attempted to provide an insight to perceptions enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Snowbird Reservation have on their own education. Elements were taken from cultural discourse, lived experiences, practices, and observations to construct themes that comprised these perceptions. The concern for cultural and language survival and the part education plays in this endeavor, however great or small, is too serious to ignore.

The Snowbird People have historically resisted removal from their homeland and successfully made accommodations within the dominant society to maintain and uphold traditional values and ideals. They have refused to incorporate Pan-Indian ways for the sake of tourist economy and have met hardships and challenges with strong character and a tremendous sense of dignity.

Proving myself to be an ethical researcher for a group of people who have historically been taken advantage of has not been easy nor have I taken this challenge lightly. I feel that I have met this challenge and negotiated within the Circle in a manner that honors my ancestors, the people who participated in this study, the people who will read this study, and the academic field to which I belong. By conducting this Applied Ethnographic study through the lens of

Indigenous Theory, I hope to have helped bring forth the voices of a people where many times they have been previously silenced.

In the wake of state and federal reform for student academic improvement, the Cherokees once again face a challenge. I have no doubt that this challenge will also be met with a determination where once again the Cherokee People will prevail. Perhaps this time, the dominant culture will give instead of take. Perhaps this time, an educational reform intended to learn instead of teach will provide the foundation. Perhaps this time, balance among life's creation will come afresh. Perhaps it is time to come Full Circle.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

- Explain in detail the purpose of the research study and explain questions that the participant might have.
- Read and explain the consent form.
- Have participant sign consent form and choose pseudonym.
- Give a copy of the consent form to the participant.
- Ask participant's permission to audiotape and if agreed, request him/her to initial the agreement line on the consent form.
- If denied permission to audiotape the interview, request him/her to initial the refusal line on the consent form
- Answer any questions that the participant might have.

These interview questions are prompts to engage the participant in open-ended thinking and conversation. I will use active-listening skills to encourage further conversation, such as “I heard you say...” then repeat the major ideas communicated by the participant and add probes when needed.

Background information: Birth date, educational background, interests or hobbies, work history.

Interview Guide

***I do not want this to feel like an interview but more like a conversation. I do not have to ask all (or any) of these questions—this is just a guide. The ultimate goal is to let the questions evolve with the conversation.

***I will introduce myself and explain to the participant that I am interested in education because I teach people how to become teachers.

*** I will begin the conversation with the following:

Tell me about what education means to you, and your thoughts about your own education.

Then if necessary, I will use some of the following guide questions.

1. What does the word “education” mean to you?
 - Tell me about what school was like for you. (In elementary school? In middle school? In high school? Boarding school? Etc.)

2. Tell me about your educational experiences.
 - Do you remember a really great school experience? (Who was there, what sorts or things were you doing in your life at this time? Can you tell me about another one?)
 - What about a time when school was not great? (Who was there, what sort of things were you doing at this time in your life?)
3. As an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, how do you think the Cherokee culture should be taught to young people?
 - What was it like being a Cherokee and going to school?
 - What would the ideal school for a Cherokee young person today be like?
 - What would be the ideal teacher for a Cherokee child be like?
4. What role does education play in helping to maintain traditional cultures, particularly language acquisition?
 - Where do you see the place of “culture” in the future?
 - Should culture be a part of schooling?
 - How would you like education to change for your children, or grandchildren?

APPENDIX B

Photo Consent Form

I _____, agree to permit the use, display and publication of my photograph in the research project titled “Full Circle: Native Cherokee Values in Modern Education.” This research project is conducted by Tamra (Tami) Ogletree who is a PhD student in the Language Education department at the University of Georgia (770-834-6472). It is being conducted under the direction of JoBeth Allen who teaches in the Language Education Department at the University of Georgia (706-542-4528). I understand that my permission to use my photograph is voluntary. I can ask for my photograph not to be used without giving any reason and without penalty. I can ask for the photograph to be returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

I understand that my pseudonym (self selected pen name) will be used along with the photograph.

She will keep the photographs of me in a fireproof lock box at her home. The lock box will be accessible only to her, and to which only she has a key.

Tami Ogletree (770-834-6472) or JoBeth Allen (706-542-4528) will answer any further questions about the research now or during the course of the project.

I understand that by my signature on this form, I am agreeing to allow my photograph to be used in this study and will receive a copy of this photograph release form.

Tamra (Tami) W. Ogletree	Signature	Date
--------------------------	-----------	------

Telephone: 770-834-6472 Email: togletre@westga.edu

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
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Please sign both copies, keep one and return the other to Tami Ogletree

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to: The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

I _____, agree to take part in the research project titled “Full Circle: Native Cherokee Values in Modern Education.” This research project is conducted by Tamra (Tami) Ogletree who is a PhD student in the Language Education department at the University of Georgia (770-834-6472). It is being conducted under the direction of JoBeth Allen who teaches in the Language Education Department at the University of Georgia (706-542-4528). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop taking part without giving any reason and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

I understand that the reason for this study is to allow Tami Ogletree to learn about the perceptions enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians have about education as related to cultural learning.

If I agree to participate in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1. Participate in an interview that will last for no longer than one hour.**
- 2. Choose to allow this interview to be audio taped. _____ (Initial of participant)**
 - Choose not to allow this interview to be audio taped. _____ (Initial of participant).**
- 3. Choose a name other than my own (self selected pen name) to be identified with during the course of this project.**
- 4. Be willing to provide a follow-up interview if necessary.**

Participating in this study will help me to reflect about my educational experiences and provide opportunities for reflection of future educational decisions. It will also benefit other educators in the future.

No risk, stress or discomfort is expected during this conversation or interview but in the event that I do encounter any adverse reactions, Tami Ogletree will provide the name of a counselor for me to contact if I choose to do so on my own.

No information about me or provided by me during the research will be shared without my written permission unless required by law. I will have a pseudonym (self selected pen name) of my choice and no information that I give will be identifiable to anyone other than Tami Ogletree

or myself. I know that Tami Ogletree will share the information with other educators and use it in her PhD dissertation, possible journal articles and conference presentations. She will keep all audio records (if allowed to audio record) and transcripts of these interviews, which are identified by a name of my choice, in a fireproof lock box at her home. The lock box will be accessible only to her, and to which only she has a key. I understand that the audio tapes (if allowed to audio record) will be destroyed 5 years after the conclusion of this study. I will be given a copy of the interview transcript and will be able to correct, delete, or add to the content any time I wish.

Tami Ogletree (770-834-6472) or JoBeth Allen (706-542-4528) will answer any further questions about the research now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing, by my signature on this form, to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Tamra (Tami) W. Ogletree	Signature	Date
---------------------------------	------------------	-------------

Telephone: 770-834-6472 Email: togletre@westga.edu

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

Please sign both copies, keep one and return the other to Tami Ogletree

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, PhD Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX D



The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

The Honorable Michell Hicks, Principal Chief

The Honorable Larry Blythe, Vice-Chief

Albert Crowe
Chairman
Birdtown Township

Mike Parker
Vice-Chairman
Wolfetown Township

Tribal Council Members
Mary Welch Thompson
Big Cove Township

Perry M. Shell
Big Cove Township

Jim Owle
Birdtown Township

Marie L. Junaluska
Painttown Township

Tommye Saunooke
Painttown Township

Angie Rose Kephart
Snowbird &
Cherokee Co. Township

Abraham Wachacha
Snowbird &
Cherokee Co. Township

Dwayne Tuff Jackson
Wolfetown Township

Alan B. Ensley
Yellowhill Township

Bob Blankenship
Yellowhill Township

July 1, 2004

Tami Ogletree
University of Georgia
125 Aderhold Hall
Athens, GA 30602

Dear Mrs. Ogletree:

Please allow this letter to serve as notification that your research proposal, Full Circle: Native Cherokee Values in Modern Education has met the research requirements of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. In Annual Council Session (July 1, 2004), at which a quorum was present, Tribal Council unanimously approved your project.

As you proceed with your project Cultural Resources extends an offer of assistance. Please contact us if you require assistance in locating interview subjects or if you require a translator (Cherokee).

We do require that you submit a final copy of your research project for archive purposes. One copy will also be forwarded to the Qualla Public Library located in the Cherokee Reservation.

You may reach me or any of the Cultural Resource staff at (828)497-1597. Thank you and we look forward to working with you on this project.

Sincerely,

Renissa Walker
EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS
Cultural Resources Manager

APPENDIX E

12-10-03

To Whom it may concern,
- Jami Ogletree

I am Diamond Brown Sr. EBCI #363
a native of the Snowbird Community of
the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Reservation in NC. I have lived here
all my life.

I think Jami is a good person
of good intentions and is learning a lot
about us.

She stays with us and wants
to help us and others the best she
can. This is what we all work for
to help understand all. She comes
to us on the same level and brings
kindness we can understand.

The cultures coming to understand
and know will work, with her
effort.

I think she deserves credit for what
she is doing.

I support her wholly in this
process.

Diamond Brown Sr.

APPENDIX F



The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

The Honorable Mitchell Hicks, Principal Chief

The Honorable Larry Blythe, Vice-Chief

Tami Ogletree
1091 Old Newnan RD
Carrollton, GA 30116

Albert Crowe
Chairman
Birdtown Township

Mike Parker
Vice-Chairman
Wolfetown Township

Tribal Council Members

Mary Welch Thompson
Big Cove Township

Perry M. Shell
Big Cove Township

Jim Owle
Birdtown Township

Marie L. Junaluska
Painttown Township

Tommye Saunooke
Painttown Township

Angie Rose Kephart
Snowbird &
Cherokee Co. Township

Abraham Wachacha
Snowbird &
Cherokee Co. Township

Dwayne Tuff Jackson
Wolfetown Township

Alan B. Ensley
Yellowhill Township

Bob Blankenship
Yellowhill Township

Dear Tami:

Please allow this letter to serve as formal notice that you are hereby granted permission to include the following in your dissertation:

- A. Historic public photographs from the local and tribal libraries
- B. photographs of public events
- C. photographs from local newspapers (current and historic)
- D. local and historic scenery

Should you require further assistance please do not hesitate to give me a call at 828-497-1597.

Sincerely,

Renissa Walker,
Manager Cherokee Culture and Language Program