THE EFFECTS OF A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM ON FIRST NATIONS
PRIDE IN HERITAGE, SELF-ESTEEM AND REJECTION OF THE BELIEFS
OF AN INDIFFERENT MINORITY

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a sample of First Nations high school students holds the beliefs of an involuntary minority and to determine whether a curriculum which demonstrates that First Nations people can succeed will lead to an increase in the rejection of the beliefs of an involuntary minority, and an increase in self-esteem and pride in heritage. This study is a quasi-experimental design carried out in a natural setting. One experimental group and one control group from a Lower Mainland high school participated in the study. The experimental group consisted of 10 subjects and the control group consisted of 9 subjects. The groups, which were not randomly selected, were pre- and post-tested using the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory by Battle (1981) and the Pride in Heritage Measure by Kehoe and Echols (1986). All subjects also participated in an interview, which consisted of 13 questions aimed at yielding responses indicating whether or not the subjects hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority. These interviews took place prior to, and following, the treatment. Subjects in the experimental group participated in a treatment, which consisted of a multicultural curriculum demonstrating that First Nations people can succeed. Due to the numerous threats to the design validity of the study, it is not possible to assess the efficacy of the treatment. However, pre-test measures did provide information about the measures and the sample.
The self-esteem of the subjects was found to be in the intermediate range. The mean for 19 subjects was 17.7 out of a possible score of 25. Their mean on the Pride in Heritage Measure was 41.6 (n=19) out of a possible score of 48; thus, their score was high. The results of the interviews suggest that 13 subjects do hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority. Although many difficulties were encountered during the conduct of this study, it did accomplish some things. Furthermore, it may have contributed to the development of an interview schedule to determine whether or not individuals from a group known as an involuntary minority do in fact hold the beliefs attributed to an involuntary minority.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Two major concerns of many Canadian educators are the low levels of achievement and the high drop out rate among First Nations people in Canada (More, 1984). There are a number of reasons for the low levels of achievement and high drop out rates. This is due, primarily, to the historical and contemporary educational policies of the Federal government. These have included ruthless assimilation, poor teachers, poor schools, irrelevant curriculum and lack of respect for First Nations cultures (Buckley, 1992). Another possible reason for the low levels of achievement and high drop out rates is that the value system of many First Nations cultures is inconsistent with that of the majority school culture. Ross (1992) has described a number of ethics of First Nations cultures which come in conflict with the values of the majority culture. For example, many First Nations cultures are not prescriptive about daily routines.

A third reason for the lack of success may be that First Nations people hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority. Involuntary minorities—"people who were brought into their present society through slavery, conquest or colonization"—believe that the economic, political and social barriers against them are permanent and institutionalized (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991, p. 9). Moreover, they hold a negative dual frame
of reference as a result of comparing themselves with the dominant group in the society in which they live. In other words, when comparing their social, political and economic situation with that of the majority group they perceive that they are worse off, and attribute their situation to their undeserved oppression. (Ogbu, 1991)

First Nations people, who have suffered conquest, might share the beliefs of an involuntary minority and thus recognize that "it requires more than education, individual effort and hard work to overcome the barriers against them" (Ogbu, 1991, p. 14). Although they might believe that education is a prerequisite for success in the job market, they might not necessarily believe they will have the same opportunity as the dominant group and immigrant minorities to receive a good education. Immigrant minorities, on the other hand, are people who have come to their present society voluntarily because they believed the move would bring greater economic well-being (Ogbu, 1991). They hold a positive dual frame of reference since a comparison of their situation in their present society with the one in their homeland leads them to conclude that they are better off in their present society. Moreover, unlike the involuntary minorities, they interpret the social, political and economic barriers against them as temporary and something that can be overcome.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a sample of First Nations high school students holds beliefs of
an involuntary minority and to determine whether a curriculum which demonstrates that First Nations people can succeed will lead to an increase in pride in heritage and self-esteem, and an increase in the rejection of the beliefs of an involuntary minority. It needs to be emphasized that the most important reason for the lack of school success of First Nations children is the educational policies of the Federal government. Conflicting values and holding the beliefs of an involuntary minority are less important as barriers but an understanding of these values and beliefs may assist educators in redesigning their programs to increase the school success of First Nations children.

There is ample evidence that First Nations students do less well on measures of achievement than other students. More (1984) examined fifteen studies concerned with the quality of education for First Nations students. In every measure of student achievement, in every study reviewed, First Nations students were behind their non-First Nations counterparts. Thomas, Fiddler, Hungley and Stem (1979) found that the achievement levels of First Nations students are typically two or three years behind their grade placement. Hunter & Stevens (1980) compared First Nations students with non-First Nations students in a Vancouver study and found that 20% of First Nations students repeated a grade, while only 5% of non-First Nations students did so. Kehoe and Echols (1986) conducted a needs assessment in an elementary school in Vancouver. An examination of reading comprehension
scores showed that 75% of First Nations children were below the 20th percentile for their grade and the non-First Nations children were above the 65th percentile for their grade.

There is also ample evidence of a high drop out rate. More (1984) found a drop out rate in British Columbia of approximately 80% compared to a non-First Nations rate of approximately 36%. A study by the Department of Education in Saskatchewan (1985) showed the annual drop out rate for First Nations students to be 43% compared to 15% for non-First Nations students. Nineteen eighty-nine figures show that 75% of First Nations students in Alberta drop out before they reach Grade 10. The reason for this, it has been argued by some, is that "students know they don't need a high school diploma to collect welfare" (Buckley, 1992, p. 140). Moreover, among the Piegan, only about 7% graduate from high school (Buckley, 1992).

The low levels of achievement in school and the high drop out rates among the First Nations people suggest that something is wrong with the government's services. Buckley (1992) argues that, of the many broken promises made by the Federal government, breaking the promise of education is the most serious. The Federal government's promises to provide schooling and jobs for First Nations people have failed, and have contributed to feelings of inferiority and incompetence among the First Nations people. First Nations children have suffered and do suffer in school because of many poorly qualified teachers in reserve schools, unfair treatment by
teachers and other students, and a different set of values from the dominant culture. This has contributed to low levels of academic success which bars them from "all but the lowest-paying jobs, which not only [keeps] them poor but [perpetuates] stereotypes of incompetence and [lowers] their self-esteem" (Buckley, 1992, p. 50).

One example of an unsuccessful plan occurred in the 1950s and 1960s when the Federal government attempted to educate First Nations children in towns, by bussing them to school. This plan failed for many reasons including children not being taught their culture, being forbidden to speak their language, taken away from their parents, and taught under an unfamiliar set of values. For example, in Canadian schools competitiveness is promoted and rewarded; however, competitiveness may not be part of the First Nations way of life, sharing is (Ross, 1992; Buckley, 1992). Therefore, First Nations children who are not accustomed to competitiveness encounter difficulties in the school system.

The consequences of the failures to educate First Nations students are wide ranging. The government's unrealistic goals, negative attitudes towards, and low view of, First Nations people have probably led to the latter's feeling of low self-worth and shame of heritage. A conquered group, First Nations people share many of the beliefs held by involuntary minorities. In other words, as a result of being denied equality of opportunity, they have developed low educational and occupational expectations.
A multicultural curriculum that presents First Nations people and bands that have successfully overcome social, political and economic barriers against them is one source which may inspire First Nations students to reject the beliefs of an involuntary minority. It could also raise their self-esteem and pride in heritage to see that people like themselves have become successful.
This study will focus on the impact of a multicultural curriculum on First Nations students' self-esteem, pride in heritage and rejection of the belief system of an involuntary minority. The curriculum presents successful First Nations people and bands taking charge of their own affairs. A search of the literature was conducted to find studies on the relationship between presentation of the positive aspects of First Nations culture to First Nations students and their self-esteem and pride in heritage. No studies on either of these two relationships were found. However, a study was found on a curriculum designed to teach African American children the positive aspects of their cultural heritage and to increase their self-esteem and desire to learn (Parko, 1991). Although Parko's study focuses on African American children, and not First Nations children, some of the findings are applicable to the present study since African American children in North America, like First Nations children, are involuntary minorities. Thus, they tend to share similar attitudes and responses to schooling and face similar barriers in society due to their comparable status in society. The attitude First Nations children hold towards school is generally negative as a result of the discrimination they have suffered in society. Historically,
First Nations people have been treated by society as if they were incapable of succeeding in school and in professional careers. Decades of unjust treatment have led to the First Nations' internalization of this inaccurate judgment of their capabilities. In other words, the perceptions held by First Nations people that they cannot succeed, stem from the fact that they are victims of discrimination.

In addition to Parko's study, three articles on involuntary minorities will be reviewed. All three articles are from the book *Minority Status and Schooling: A Comparative Study of Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities*, by Gibson and Ogbu (1991).

A Definition and Comparison of Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities

The introductory article in the book by Gibson and Ogbu (1991) discusses the theoretical framework. Ogbu begins with the assertion that the focus on the school experiences of minority children is expanding to include academically successful, in addition to unsuccessful children. Ogbu affirms that until recently the primary focus has concentrated on unsuccessful involuntary minority--

"people who were brought into their present society through slavery, conquest or colonization. They usually resent the loss of their former freedom, and they perceive the social, political and economic barriers against them as part of their undeserved oppression" (Ogbu, 1991, p. 9)
--(or, nonimmigrant) children. Explanations for their lack of achievement in school have included cultural and language differences and social class variables. Ogbu argues that these explanations are insufficient because immigrant minority children--

whose families have "moved to their present societies because they believed that the move would lead to more economic well-being, better overall opportunities or greater political freedom" (Ogbu, 1991, p. 8)

--who share similar difficulties (cultural, linguistic and social class), tend to be more successful in school. Rather than trying to understand why minority children perform the way they do in school, from the perspective of the dominant group's perceptions of their own social reality, "it is necessary to incorporate the perceptions and understanding that the minorities have of their social realities and of their schooling" (Ogbu, 1991, pp. 6-7). Ogbu suggests that examination of a group's cultural model is necessary since it induces different behaviours which are connected to some degree with academic achievement of its members.

Although both immigrant and involuntary minorities have suffered and do suffer discrimination and encounter many barriers, immigrant minorities' high expectations of life in their present society influence their perceptions and responses to such treatment. More specifically, they tend to interpret the social, political and economic barriers against them as temporary problems that they will transcend with
time. In addition, since society perceives and treats them as dedicated and hard workers, they adopt the belief that they are capable of succeeding and thus act accordingly. Moreover, when comparing their present situation with the one back home, immigrant minorities perceive that they are better off in the present society, though they may hold only marginal jobs, than they would be in their homeland. This positive dual frame of reference contributes to their belief that they can improve their status in this society. They have also developed strategies to cope with life in their present society. For instance, most have the option of returning to their homeland or emigrating to another society if life in their present society is not what they hoped it would be.

Another factor which aids immigrant minorities to cope with cultural and language differences is their primary cultural differences. This term, coined by Ogbu (1982), refers to the differences in culture and language immigrant minorities had before arrival to their present society. In other words, their "social identity existed before emigration and was not developed in opposition to the social identity of the dominant group members of the host society" (Ogbu, 1991, p. 13). Finally, immigrant minorities hold many perceptions that aid them in coping with the barriers against them and they also believe that the discrimination and prejudice they suffer is worth their aim of academic and employment success in their present society.
Involuntary minorities interpret the barriers against them in a different way from immigrant minorities. First of all, unlike the immigrants, they do not have a reference group or homeland with which to compare their present situation. Instead, they compare their situation with that of the dominant group and conclude that they are worse off. Consequently, as Ogbu (1991) suggests, they adopt a negative dual frame of reference as a result of their membership in an oppressed group. Thus, they tend to interpret the social, political and economic barriers against them as permanent and institutionalized. Their negative dual frame of reference, adopted from the way society treats them, influences their perceptions of what it takes to succeed in society. Ogbu (1991) has posited that unlike the immigrant minorities, who believe hard work and a good education will help them overcome the barriers against them, involuntary minorities tend to believe that more than an education and hard work and effort are required to succeed since the barriers they face are overwhelming.

Involuntary minorities believe that collective efforts are required. These include collective strategies, such as protests, in an attempt to change the criteria for school requirements so they will be more beneficial to them. Once again, unlike the immigrants, their coping strategies are not effective, for they do not have the option of returning to their homeland.
Ogbu (1991) further postulates another difference between immigrant and involuntary minorities that of cultural difference. Whereas immigrants are characterized by primary cultural differences, involuntary minorities are characterized by secondary cultural differences. In other words, their distinct culture and language from the dominant group has emerged as a result of their opposition to the social identity of the dominant group, which treats them unjustly. Consequently, they do not perceive the language and culture differences in school and society as temporary barriers which can be overcome, but rather as "symbols of identity to be maintained" (Ogbu, 1991, p. 15). The aforementioned cultural models of the immigrant and involuntary minorities influence their attitudes towards school and the development of strategies to achieve their goals (Ogbu, 1991).

The immigrant minority parents, who hold a positive dual frame of reference, believe that they can succeed. They emphasize that their children must succeed in school since they see education as a means for success in their present society. Pressure is placed on and support is given to the children to succeed, regardless of the barriers they must face and overcome. In addition to linguistic and cultural barriers, children face discrimination, and a difficulty adjusting to new learning styles and nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, speaking up in class). Nevertheless, parental and community support together with their coping
strategies, and an optimistic outlook, motivate them to excel in school and they generally tend to do so.

Involuntary minorities, on the other hand, tend to have a negative dual frame of reference and coping strategies that do not always allow them to succeed. Moreover, parents and the community do not pressure or give support to the children for high academic achievement, as in the immigrant group. The children of the immigrants have been stigmatized and told they are inadequate and unable to succeed in school. Thus, they have internalized this accusation and perceive that it requires more than an education to succeed in society (Ogbu, 1991). As a result, they tend to develop pessimistic attitudes about their ability to succeed. Moreover, unlike the immigrant minorities' ability to distinguish what strategies are needed to overcome the barriers against them, involuntary minorities interpret learning in the dominant group's schools as detrimental to their own culture, language, and social identity. When placed in a position of having to choose between success in school and maintenance of their culture, language and social identity, where little support is given by parents and the community for high academic achievement, the children tend to choose the latter.
Hispanic students in the United States generally do less well in school than any other group in the Southwest (except for First Nations). It is important to note, however, that not all children of Mexican-descent are unsuccessful in school. Matute-Bianchi's (1986) fieldwork in a California community focused on the variations in academic success among Mexican-descent children. The author found that a relationship exists between students of certain ethnic identities and academic achievement. In other words, the more recent Mexican immigrants, who identify as Mexicans, tend to perform well above the Chicano students.

Matute-Bianchi asserts that students identify with one of the five following subgroups --Mexicano, Mexican-Oriented, Mexican American, Chicano, Cholo-- which influences their academic performance. Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) propose that that which distinguishes the two minority groups--immigrant Mexican-descent and involuntary, or nonimmigrant, Mexican-descent-- is "the perception of their economic position in the United States as a subordinate stigmatized minority and their responses to the legitimating racist ideologies directed against them" (p. 218). Whereas both groups have suffered discrimination and oppression, their interpretations of, and responses to, this discrimination are different. Immigrant Mexicanos' responses, for instance, are
likely to include perceptions of academic success as a prerequisite for competition in the American job market and as a strategy to overcome the temporary barriers in society. Involuntary Chicanos, on the other hand, are not likely to perceive academic success as a strategy for gaining adult success since, historically, academic achievement has not been sufficient.

The Mexican-descent population, as Matute-Bianchi explains, is a heterogeneous one with several distinct subgroups within the population that has undergone diverse experiences of life in the United States. As a result of some members' achievements regarding greater success and mobility over others, class differences have emerged. These are distinctions in cultural models, ethnic identification and differences between immigrant and involuntary Mexican-descent minorities.

Matute-Bianchi's ethnographic study (1983 to 1985) at "Field" High School in an agricultural community in California, focused on the differences between successful immigrant and unsuccessful involuntary Mexican-descent minority students. From her study, she derived the five ethnic identity groups with which students associate themselves, and several patterns of school performance. One of the Mexican ethnic identity subgroups is the Recent Mexican Immigrant or Mexicano group. Students who identify with this group claim that Mexico is their home and that their immigration to the United States was primarily for
economic opportunities. Although they are not the most successful Mexican-descent students, they are more serious about their work, more well-behaved, diligent, and polite than other students in the school.

The second subgroup is the Mexican-Oriented. Most of the students who identify with this group are bilingual and use English and Spanish interchangeably. Many of these students are in the college preparatory track in high school. They are also the most active in Mexican-descent school clubs and are high achievers. They maintain a strong identity as Mexicanos although they have lived in the United States for most of their lives. Both of these two subgroups can thus be characterized as immigrant minority groups.

The third subgroup is the Mexican American, a group in which the students are much more American oriented than either of the two previous groups. Some of the most active and successful Mexican-descent students in the school can be identified as members of this group. This group is the least likely of the Mexican-descent students to identify with any ethnic group. They are neither entirely immigrant nor involuntary minorities.

The fourth subgroup is the Chicano. Students identifying with this group (approximately 40% of the school's Mexican-descent population) tend to be English-speaking and are at least second generation Mexicans in the United States. They are much less likely to be actively involved in school activities or enrolled in college
preparatory courses. Many teachers describe these students as devoted to the Chicano group yet defiant and apathetic to the school culture. Even though students in this group may declare their desire to do well in school, their attitudes and behaviour indicate otherwise.

The final subgroup found by Matute-Bianchi is that of Mexican-descent students who identify with the Cholo. It is the smallest in number of the five subgroups. Students in this group are often involved in gangs and exhibit a symbol of identity which is neither "Mexican" nor "American". Moreover, they are low achievers and the least successful in academic pursuits of all Mexican-descent students in school. The last two subgroups described can be characterized as involuntary minority groups.

Many of the Mexican-descent students in Matute-Bianchi's ethnography at "Field" High School are academically successful. However, the majority of these successful students identify themselves with the first three subgroups; none of the Chicano or Cholo students were enrolled in college preparatory courses. Thus, academic success is more likely to prevail among the immigrant minority Mexican-descent students (Mexicano, Mexican American and Mexican-Oriented), whereas poor academic performance is more likely to be found among the involuntary minority Mexican-descent students (Chicano and Cholo).

This difference in achievement can be explained by the students' "perception of themselves and others and of the
value of their investment in education" (Matute-Bianchi, 1986, p. 234). While the more successful students are achievement- and goal-oriented and believe that high achievement in high school is necessary for success as an adult, the more unsuccessful students do not believe that academic achievement will assist them in gaining better employment and success in the future. These students see the marginal occupations held by their parents which influences them to adopt the belief that they, too, will experience similar job ceilings. Moreover, since most of the parents of students in the Chicano and Cholo groups were typically unsuccessful in school themselves, due to societal barriers and discrimination they, unlike other parents, tend not to emphasize academic achievement for their children.

As part of the study, Chicano students were asked many questions including how people become unsuccessful adults. Their responses indicate "the extent to which they may have internalized conventional notions which link success and failure to individual efforts" (Matute-Bianchi, 1986, p. 235). For instance, some students said Mexicans do not have the opportunity to go on to post-secondary studies or they face prejudice because they are not liked. Such responses indicate that involuntary minorities such as Chicanos and Cholos tend not to be optimistic about their futures. In fact, they had more difficulty explaining strategies for future success than for failure. They perceived certain barriers in society against them, such as prejudice, as
permanent and institutionalized. Involuntary minorities' responses to societal barriers may include the formation of a collective social identity in opposition to that of the dominant group. The strategies of those who associate with oppositional collective social identities tend to emphasize attempts at changing the rules. Such behaviour, however, works to maintain their status as a stigmatized minority group. Therefore, their perception of themselves as a stigmatized group with few opportunities as adults influences them to believe that school will not make a difference. Immigrant minorities, on the other hand, perceive that individual effort and hard work in school will enable them to succeed. They tend to believe, unlike the involuntary minorities, that academic success is a necessary credential for overcoming the barriers in society.

Matute-Bianchi concludes that there is a relationship between student perceptions of future opportunities, past experiences of their families, and strategies in response to these perceptions and school success and failure. Finally, Matute-Bianchi proposes that because involuntary minority students tend not to be exposed to successful adults (both in academics and in employment), it is the school's responsibility to provide these students with examples of successful role models.
Low School Performance as an Adaptation

Ogbu's ethnographic study in Stockton, California, from 1968 to 1970, focused on the school experience and performance of black Americans, an involuntary minority group, who tend to do less well academically than immigrant minorities. Ogbu describes how black Americans have developed an identity and cultural model to cope with their oppression. Upon conducting interviews with parents of school-aged children, Ogbu found that, although black American children tend not to be very successful in school, the parents desire their children to obtain a good education because they believe it is necessary for their future employment. Yet, school dropout among blacks exists, and at a higher rate, than among whites. This reality exists for various reasons some of which are discussed below.

In interviews held with school officials in Stockton, the explanations given for the poor academic performance among black students included social class differences, rural background and levels of English proficiency. They claimed that black students do not perform as well in school as white students because of their lower class backgrounds and the location of their schools in lower-class neighborhoods. Second, principals attributed the lower school performance to the rural background of the families and thus to their low-level academic aspirations. Finally, they attributed the lower school performance to their low level of English
proficiency. Having identified these factors as causes for low academic success among blacks, school officials in the 1960s initiated education programs to increase academic success among this involuntary minority group. However, these programs failed because the strategies used by the schools were inappropriate. Since the above three explanations for lower academic success were insufficient and inaccurate, so were the strategies used in these programs.

Ogbu suggests an alternative explanation for the paradox of high aspiration and low school performance of black students. He claims one should trace the historical roots of blacks in the United States in order to be able to explain their performance in school. In other words, one needs to examine the origin of the problem --the involuntary incorporation of blacks in American society and their subsequent treatment as subordinates which puts them in a castelike position.

Detailed explanations of the cultural and structural consequences of black status are offered. First of all, Ogbu discusses the generally inflexible status mobility of blacks. Blacks have historically received inferior education which prepared them for the least desirable jobs. Furthermore, even when blacks overcame the barriers in the school system against them, and completed high school, they did not have the same opportunity as whites to compete for better jobs due to job ceilings. Hence, their responses to the value of education were, and are, influenced by this.
A second consequence is the cultural and intellectual derogation of blacks by whites. Because many blacks live in poor neighbourhoods where many are on welfare, they are accused of not paying taxes; however, they pay taxes like everyone else. Moreover, blacks on welfare are accused of not rearing their children to be self-supportive.

A third cultural consequence is the continuous conflict between blacks and whites, and blacks and schools over employment, education, housing, crime and justice. The resolutions of some of these conflicts, which tend to yield less favorable results for the blacks, have induced feelings of distrust of white people and schools, and the many other institutions whites control.

The final cultural and structural consequence is the response of blacks regarding their unfair treatment. Although blacks often express their desire to get ahead in society by obtaining a good education and working hard, they perceive that this is not enough. In other words, unlike immigrant minorities, they do not think that they can overcome social, political and economic barriers with a good education. Instead, they have developed alternative strategies because they believe that the discrimination against them is institutionalized and permanent. Some of their survival strategies for coping with these difficulties include collective struggles (as explained in the first section of the review of literature), hustling, protesting, and boycotting. Moreover, black people have developed an
identity and cultural frame of reference in opposition to the dominant culture.

Ogbu suggests that in addition to the education barriers, black students contribute to their low school performance by their perceptions, interpretations of, and responses to schooling. More specifically, even though black parents, as do white parents, desire a good education for their children to be able to obtain good jobs, their efforts to reach these aspirations do not match their wishes. Societal barriers and treatment by the dominant group brand them as incompetent, inferior and inadequate, thus making it impossible for them to obtain good jobs. From his interviews with black students, Ogbu concluded that black children perceive that they do not have the same chances as white children to compete for good jobs. Therefore, they do not see the same value in education as do their white counterparts. Moreover, although black parents in Stockton tell their children to avail themselves of a good education, "even very young black children begin to realize that for black people...the connection between school success and one's ability to get ahead is weak" (Ogbu, 1991, p. 280).

The survival strategies taken by black students, as described earlier (e.g., hustling), also contribute to their low academic success. Furthermore, black students eventually equate schooling to white society since whites tend to excel in school and obtain better jobs. The result of this equation is an opposition to both. They become disinterested
in schooling because they perceive it as "white man's knowledge" and they interpret obeying the teacher as obeying white people's orders, just as their forefathers were forced to do in the days of slavery. Inevitably, they have come to distrust white society and schools.

**The Self-Esteem Through Culture Leads to Academic Excellence (SETCLAE) Program**

The Self-Esteem Through Culture Leads to Academic Excellence (SETCLAE) curriculum was designed to teach children the "positive aspects of their cultural heritage; and simultaneously, increase their self-esteem and hence their desire to learn" (Parko, 1991, p. 1). The study by Parko (1991) took place in the 1989-1990 school year in four Metropolitan Atlanta schools, --two elementary and two middle schools. All the students of these four schools participated in the program which consisted of a self-esteem measure, the SETCLAE student profile (SETCLAESP), curriculum guide and lesson plans for students, part-time consultant services, enrichment materials, and workshops for parents and teachers (Parko, 1991, p. 6). Two of the schools were randomly selected as control groups while the other two schools were used as experimental groups. Students from all four schools were pre- and post-tested using the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale for Children. Scores were then compared using an experimental/control design.
As prescribed in the curriculum, classes were divided into "harambee" groups (which is Swahili for 'let us work together') and African group names chosen. The curriculum materials, designed for students to learn cooperatively, stressed problem solving, cooperation, African and African-American history and culture (Parko, 1991, p. 7). The educational outcomes were evaluated by tests and questionnaires.

Results of the statistical analysis varied from grade level to grade level. For instance, results indicated that students' participation in Grades 3-7, in the SETCLAE program, had a significant positive effect on the students' self-esteem. Yet, students in kindergarten to Grade 2 showed no significant effect. For kindergarten children, the data collected may have been inaccurate since it appeared that some students did not understand the directions and marked more than one response. Moreover, whereas SETCLAE did produce significant effects on the self-esteem of older children (Grades 3-7), it did not appear to have an effect on any of the students' academic achievement, except for Grade 2 where the control group outperformed the experimental group. Therefore, this shows that a correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement is complex and not always found.

The SETCLAE program was positive overall and the majority of teachers (81%) agreed that "learning about African Heritage is a good way to enhance African-American students' self-esteem" (Parko, 1991, p. 14). Student
responses to questionnaires also show that SETCLAE made them feel better about themselves, and proud to be black. Moreover, when the program terminated at the end of the school year, the children expressed their desire to learn more about their heritage. Though self-esteem increased with this program, achievement did not necessarily increase. Research (Purkey, 1970 in Piers, 1984) suggests that despite a significant relationship between the two, there is no indication whether high achievement causes high self-esteem or whether high self-esteem causes high achievement. Even though this study generally found higher achievement with higher self-esteem (except in Grade 2), more research in this area is required. Parko recommends that if the program were to continue for one more year the effects of higher self-esteem on achievement might be more apparent.

Application of Ogbu's Theoretical Framework, Matute-Bianchi's Study on Hispanics, Ogbu's Study on Blacks and Parko's SETCLAE Program on African American Children to First Nations

The theoretical framework by Ogbu is insightful on the differences between an involuntary and an immigrant minority. Although variances in academic performance exist among involuntary (and immigrant) minorities, the case studies by Matute-Bianchi and Ogbu provide data which suggests that the belief systems adopted by minorities contribute to their academic performance. First Nations people in Canada can be
characterized as involuntary minorities since, according to Ogbu's description of involuntary minorities, they were brought into their present societies through conquest, and they resent the loss of their former freedom. Moreover, they tend to exhibit similar perceptions of, and responses to, the social, economic and political barriers against them as Blacks and Hispanics (Chicanos and Cholos) do (Ogbu, 1991).

Like blacks in Stockton and Chicanos and Cholos, they do not have a homeland with which to compare their present situation; thus they compare it with that of the dominant society. Consequently, they develop a negative dual frame of reference since they see that they are worse off than the dominant group, and they perceive the barriers against them as permanent and institutionalized. Like other involuntary minorities (e.g., blacks, Chicanos, Cholos) they tend not to believe that a good education is enough to overcome the barriers in society, but that collective struggles are necessary. Finally, First Nations people have no homeland to return to if their situation does not improve.

One factor contributing to involuntary minorities' low academic success and perceptions of inability to succeed is the way society treats, and has treated, them --as subordinates. First Nations people have experienced discrimination and have had unequal opportunities for decades. The treatment of First Nations people as inferior has been exhibited by other Canadians, government policies, the education system and other institutions. Although the
experiences of First Nations people, and all minorities --both immigrant and involuntary-- are different, they tend to be similar in the aspects mentioned above. Both Ogbu's and Matute-Bianchi's articles do not emphasize enough that variances exist. One must be cautious not to stereotype all immigrant and involuntary minority adults and children as possessing the attributes or holding the belief systems discussed above. However, research (Gibson, 1976; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Ogbu, 1974; Kramer, 1991; Barrington, 1976; Shimahara, 1991) shows that patterns do exist between the history of a minority group, its contemporary status and its pattern of school performance.

Therefore, the aim is to discover why the pattern exists and how to break it so that involuntary minority children will begin to reach higher levels of success in school and later in the work force.

Ogbu's discussions do not provide any solutions on how to improve involuntary minorities low success rate in school. Matute-Bianchi (1986) however, offers a suggestion. She purports that it is the school's responsibility to provide involuntary minority students with examples of successful role models since they tend not to be exposed to them. Though this is a start, she fails to mention that society, too, has a responsibility to provide successful role models. She goes on to suggest that there is a strong relationship between Mexican students who have a strong positive Mexicano identity and their academic achievement. In other words, she
concludes that if children are proud of their heritage they are more likely to be successful in school. Thus, the main theoretical difference between Matute-Bianchi and Ogbu is: Ogbu argues that both society and involuntary minorities themselves are to be held responsible for their low success rate, whereas Matute-Bianchi argues that the identity claimed by students is largely responsible for their success in school. In other words, Matute-Bianchi says that although the discriminatory treatment facing involuntary minority students may impede their school experience, the strength of their identity in their culture plays a major role in their success. In general, she argues that students who identify strongly with their culture have a higher rate of success than those who do not.

Ogbu, however, does not argue exactly along these lines. Rather, he argues that the societal barriers students face, and consequently the perceptions they adopt regarding their ability to succeed, contribute to their academic success. Ogbu's argument opposes Matute-Bianchi's when he claims that involuntary minority students, strongly identifying with their culture, generally tend not to want to succeed in school for fear of being accused of not being faithful to their culture but, rather, faithful to the "white man's culture" (Ogbu, 1991).

The curriculum of the present study will thus present positive aspects and successful role models of the First Nations culture in an attempt to increase (a) the First
Nations students' self-esteem, (b) pride in their heritage and (c) the feeling that they can succeed in both their academic pursuits and personal aspirations. The findings from Parko's research are relevant for the present study. Analogous to the curriculum used in the SETCLAE program, which presents positive aspects of African and African-American history and culture, the present multicultural curriculum presents successful First Nations people, and positive aspects of the First Nations culture. Two of the hypotheses for the present study are that multicultural curriculum will increase students' self-esteem, and pride in heritage. Parko's study provides support for this relationship. More specifically, as already discussed, children in Grades 3 to 7, increased their self-esteem with participating in the SETCLAE program. Self-esteem in children from kindergarten to Grade 2, did not increase; however, this may be due to a lack of understanding on their behalf on how to fill out the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale. This could have been a contributing factor on these results where these young children were concerned.

In addition, questionnaire results from the evaluation of the SETCLAE program indicate that the knowledge African-American students gained about "Africa and African-American history and culture made them feel better about themselves... [and] proud to be black" (Parko, 1991, p. 23). Finally, while Parko's study did not provide support for a relationship between self-esteem and achievement, it is not a
hypothesis of this study to find an increase in achievement as self-esteem increases.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quasi-experimental design carried out in a natural setting.

Hypotheses

(1) There will be a significant difference between pre- and post- test scores on the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (Battle, 1981) among students who will receive the multicultural curriculum treatment. No significant difference will be expected between the pre- and post- test scores on the self-esteem inventory among students who will not receive the treatment.

(2) There will be a significant difference between pre- and post- test scores on the Pride in Heritage Measure (Echols and Kehoe, 1986) among students who will receive the multicultural curriculum treatment. No significant difference will be expected between pre- and post- test scores on the pride in heritage measure among students who will not receive the treatment.

The question "do the subjects in this study hold the beliefs attributed to an involuntary minority", will be investigated through an interview.

Sample

This study will include one experimental group and one control group from two classrooms in a secondary school in
the Lower Mainland. Each group will comprise approximately 20 First Nations students in Grades 8 to 10. A search will be conducted in the Lower Mainland for a school with a large First Nations student population.

**Procedure**

**Instruments.**

Students in both the experimental and control groups will be required to complete two measures and to participate in an interview. One of the questionnaires is the *Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory* by Battle (1981) and the other one is the *Pride in Heritage Measure* by Kehoe and Echols (1986) (see Appendix A for the instruments). The open-ended interview consists of 13 exploratory focused questions and it will be conducted in private with each subject.

**The Pride in Heritage Measure.**

The Pride in Heritage Measure (Kehoe and Echols, 1986) consists of eight statements which indicate various feelings First Nations people may hold toward their First Nations culture. The measure includes statements like "I am proud to be First Nations" and "a First Nations way of life is the kind of life I would like to live". Participants indicate their responses on a six-point continuum (agree very much, agree somewhat, agree slightly, and disagree slightly, disagree somewhat, disagree very much).

**The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory.**

The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (Culture-Free SEI) developed by Battle (1981) measures an individual's
perception of self. Battle asserted that assessment of self-worth is necessary since an individual's perception of self affects his/her behaviour. Battle conducted more than thirty studies over a six-year period for the development of the Culture-Free SEI. He affirmed that psychologists, educators and researchers found the Culture-Free SEI to be a valid and reliable measure of self-worth.

The scale contains 30 items, and measures an individual's perception of self in four areas: general self, social, school, and parents. The test-retest reliability conducted with a sample of 274 boys and girls enrolled in Grades 7, 8 and 9, yielded correlations from 0.79 to 0.92. Moreover, Battle stated that content validity was built into the Culture-Free SEI by "(1) developing a construct definition of self-esteem, and (2) by writing items intended to cover all areas of the construct" (Battle, 1981, p. 14). In this study, the Pride in Heritage Measure and the Culture-Free SEI will be utilized as dependent variables.

**Interview Questions.**

The thirteen interview questions to be used before and after the treatment were formulated after a thorough examination of the literature discussing the beliefs held by an involuntary minority. Some of the questions were adopted from previous studies of involuntary minorities (e.g., Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Ogbu, 1991) while others formulated were based on the review of the literature.
For example, one of the questions is "Do you think a First Nations person with a diploma has the same chance as a non-First Nations person in getting a good job?". If the subjects answer "no", that is an indication that they believe the barriers against them in society are permanent and institutionalized. If the subjects answer "yes", that is an indication that they do not hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority on this particular issue. Another question is "How do people become successful adults?". This question was adopted from Matute-Bianchi's (1986) study with Mexican-descent students. She found that the Chicanos and Cholos had difficulty explaining strategies for success because they were pessimistic about their futures. Thus, if the subjects in the present study say "I don't know", that will be an indication that they hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority. Perhaps they have not thought about how they could become successful adults, since they do not see that as a possibility. On the other hand, if the subjects offer responses such as "to complete high school, be responsible", that will indicate that they do not hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority and that they have thought about what it takes to succeed, since they see success as a possibility in the future.

The 13 interview questions are designed to yield responses which indicate whether or not the subjects hold the beliefs ascribed to an involuntary minority. The interview questions will also allow the recognition of what strategies,
if any, the subjects employ in an attempt to overcome the societal barriers against them.

**Treatment.**

After administration of the two pre-test scales and completion of the interviews, students in the experimental group will participate in a multicultural curriculum which lasts for three class periods over three school days. The first part of the treatment is a lecture which presents successful First Nations people and bands. The aim is to establish or reaffirm the belief that First Nations people can be successful. It offers examples of successful enterprises, bands and people, in all provinces across Canada. For instance, it presents information on the First Nations people in Manitoba who more than ever before, are obtaining post-secondary degrees. More specifically, it states that in 1988 there were 500 First Nations teachers and numerous First Nations people training as nurses, conservation officers and engineers. This lesson is meant to be presented as a lecture followed by a discussion about the First Nations people taking charge of their own affairs and succeeding.

The second part of the treatment includes two videos (Ready For Take Off and Rebuilding the Aboriginal Economy), which illustrate a few of the thousands of successful businesses run by First Nations people or bands. A work sheet relating to the information in the videos is presented. It is to be completed by the subjects while they are viewing
the videos. When the videos are completed, the work sheet and the information presented in the two videos are to be discussed and reviewed.

The final part of the treatment involves a more active learning role on the part of the students. Here, the students peer-teach examples of successful First Nations people and businesses. The teaching material which provides this knowledge consists of attractive flashcards with a brief descriptive paragraph and a picture (from magazine or newspaper clippings) of the First Nations business, person or band being presented. For example, one of the flashcards presents a young First Nations high school graduate who has been selected to participate in an intercultural exchange to Portugal. Yet another presents a First Nations person who has conducted more than 30 Broadway shows.

Students in the control group will continue their regular course of study as prescribed in the Social Studies Curriculum. Upon completion of the multicultural curriculum with the experimental group, all students will again be required to complete the pride in heritage and self-esteem scales. It will take approximately 10 minutes to administer each scale. In addition, all students will again be required to participate in an interview which will last approximately 15 minutes.
Design and Analysis

The dependent variables will be pre- and post-test scores on the self-esteem and pride in heritage scales. The independent variable will be a treatment variable (instruction of the multicultural curriculum). All subjects' scores on the self-esteem and pride in heritage scales, pre- and post-testing, will be compared using t-tests. In analyses, the differences between the means will be considered statistically significant if the probability of the t value is less than .05.
CHAPTER IV

CONDUCT AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Selection of Subjects

Selection of the sample for this study began with an investigation to find a school in the Lower Mainland with a high First Nations student population. Many unanticipated difficulties were encountered in finding a sample of 40 First Nations students in junior high school (20 for the experimental group and 20 for the control group). No school was found where there were two mainstream classrooms with approximately 20 First Nations students per classroom. Since no school was found using this criteria, consideration was given to finding a school with an alternative program for First Nations students in order to obtain the sample size required for the study. Finally, a school was found in Vancouver, where a First Nations alternative program with a large enough sample size existed.

Upon discussion of the proposal for the study with the alternative program teacher, I was optimistic about the future of this study since he showed great interest in and enthusiasm with the proposal. He wrote a letter of support to the Vancouver School Board in favour of this study and committed himself to teaching the multicultural curriculum to the experimental group.
The teacher said that the program consisted of 38 First Nations students who could participate, upon consent, in the study. Due to absenteeism of the students, only 23 took part in the pre-test period. Moreover, due to attrition, only 19 students participated in the study. The reasons for such a low number of subjects were unanticipated and uncontrollable.

Procedure

Pre-tests.

Students in both the experimental and control groups completed two questionnaires and participated in an interview. The two questionnaires (The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory and the Pride in Heritage Measure) were administered to all the subjects at the same time. It took approximately 10 minutes to complete each one. In addition, each of the subjects participated in an interview which took place either at the back of the classroom or in an office. There was no definite order to the interviews; as soon as one subject finished the interview another was called in. Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes. All of the interviews were completed within four school days.

Treatment Implementation.

The treatment consisted of the Multicultural Curriculum which presents successful First Nations people and bands. After a meeting with the classroom teacher to discuss the study and the procedures, it was agreed that it would be best if the teacher taught the curriculum, since he was most familiar with the students. In addition, it was agreed that
the curriculum be taught the week following the pre-tests over three consecutive school days, lasting three class periods (approximately three hours). However, due to certain unanticipated circumstances it was not taught until five weeks later on a Friday afternoon. The reason for this delay is not clear. It was left up to the classroom teacher to teach the curriculum the week following the pre-tests. One of the reasons for the delay was the unexpected illness of the teacher. Moreover, since the school year was drawing to a close and time was limited, the study had to compete with other school curriculum commitments. As a result, the curriculum was not taught as originally planned. Instead of being taught over three periods and three school days, it was taught on a Friday afternoon in less than two hours.

The experimental group had been randomly selected prior to the teaching of the curriculum by drawing names from an envelope. However, since only 10 students were present the day of the treatment, the classroom teacher chose to use those 10 students for the experimental group. The students who were absent from school that Friday afternoon made up the control group. The multicultural curriculum was neither taught in its entirety, nor was the importance of the information in the lessons emphasized. In a meeting with the classroom teacher following the completion of the study, it was discovered that only half of the prescribed time was spent on the curriculum. In addition, no discussion took place following the viewing of the videos and not enough time
was allotted for peer-teaching or for discussing the lecture material. The teacher taught the curriculum because "[he] wanted to get this thing done and by the way [he] had committed [himself] to it so [he] better just do it". The fidelity of the administration of the curriculum was severely compromised.

**Post-tests.**

The post-tests were conducted the Monday of the week following the treatment. All of the students who initially participated in the pre-test were again required to complete the same two questionnaires and to participate in an interview. Due to attrition, the sample size dropped to 19 from an original 23. It took four days to complete the post-test measures and interviews because of attendance.

**Limitations**

The limitations in the present study are numerous. First of all, since nonprobability sampling was used to obtain the subjects for this study, the sample is not representative of a larger population, and thus the generalizability of the results from this study is limited. Also, the sample used in this study might not have been representative of First Nations students in Grades 8 to 10, because they were in a special program which differs from mainstream programs. The First Nations culture is taught and students are encouraged to feel proud of their culture. After careful deliberation of the special circumstance of the students in this alternative program it was decided to go
ahead and use these students as the sample since it was the only sample of First Nations students found that was large enough to take part in the study.

In addition, although the subjects were randomly assigned to the control group and the experimental group, the groups were altered the day the treatment took place. On the day of the treatment, 9 of the 19 subjects were absent from school; therefore, the teacher chose to reassign the subjects to experimental and control groups. He assigned the students who were present to the experimental group and the ones who were absent to the control group. Because of time constraints (the school year was drawing to a close), he could not reschedule the treatment for another day.

Another limitation to the study is subject attrition. During the initial meeting with the classroom teacher to discuss the proposal of the study, it was discovered that the class consisted of 38 students. However, only 23 subjects were present during the week of the pre-tests. Moreover, four more students were lost during the study and by the end (after the post-tests) only 19 subjects had fully participated in the investigation.

Another limitation to the study is the threat regarding lack of motivation. More specifically, since the curriculum was taught on a Friday afternoon near the end of the school year, the state of mind of the subjects in the experimental group might have affected their motivation to learn. Also, because the treatment and post-tests took place so late in
the school year, some of the subjects were more preoccupied with completing their assignments from their regular coursework rather than participating in the multicultural curriculum and post-tests. As one subject indicated "the only day I come to school this week, to catch up on my homework and we have to do this?"; "this" referring to completing the two measures and participating in the interview.

A further limitation to the study is experimenter effects. Since the researcher conducting the interviews and administering the questionnaires was not of First Nations descent, the subjects might not have felt as comfortable expressing their sincere beliefs, especially in the interview. The subjects' true feelings might have been disguised. A few of the subjects indicated, during the interviews, that First Nations people understand each other better because they go through the same problems, whereas white people do not understand. In addition to the researcher's nationality differing from the subjects', the education level of the researcher might have had an influence on the subjects' responses during the interviews, particularly to the questions concerning school and career goals.

Another limitation of the study was the short period of time allotted for the treatment. A final limitation to the study is subject effects. Demand characteristics played a part on more than one occasion during the interviews in the
pre-test period. For instance, after a few subjects gave their responses they asked "is that what you're looking for?". At that moment they were informed that there is no wrong answer and that the researcher wants to know what the beliefs and opinions of each subject are.
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study encountered so many threats to the design validity that it is not possible to assess the efficacy of the treatment. However, the study may have provided some useful information and suggestions for further research. One obvious possibility for future research would be to conduct the study as originally intended. The pre-test measures of self-esteem and pride in heritage did provide information about the measures and the sample. The pre-interviews may provide the beginnings of an interview schedule which could provide information on the degree to which individuals hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority.

**Culture-Free SEI.**

Battle (1981) has categorized the scores obtainable on the Culture-Free SEI. The following is his classification of scores, where the total possible self-esteem score is 25.

23+............ very high
20-22.............. high
14-19.... intermediate
11-13............. low
10-......... very low

Norms are available for the Culture-Free SEI for Junior High School students (Grades 7-9). The mean on the Culture-Free SEI for 274 subjects in Junior High School was 19.5.
The pre-test means for all subjects in this study (n=19) was 17.7. When compared with Battle's sample of Junior High School students the self-esteem of the First Nations students was in the intermediate range.

**Pride in Heritage Measure.**

The maximum possible score on the Pride in Heritage Measure is 48. The pre-test means score for all subjects (n=19) was 41.6. Kehoe and Echols (1986) developed the measure as part of their evaluation of the Urban Native Indian Education Centre in Vancouver. Kehoe and Echols reported the percentages of students responding positively or negatively for each item. For purposes of comparison the percentages will be reported for this study as well. In order to be proud of their heritage it is important that the students know something about their heritage. Seventy-three percent of the adult students indicated they knew quite a lot about their heritage. Seventy-eight percent of the high school students indicated they knew quite a lot about their heritage. Ninety-seven percent of the adult students indicated they would like to know more about their culture compared to 90% of the high school students. At the same time 99% of the adult students stated they were not ashamed of their culture while 90% of the high school students stated the same thing. Approximately 95% of the adult students compared to 90% of the high school students said they were proud to be a member of the First Nations culture. Eighty-four percent of the adult students and the same percentage of
high school students disagreed with the suggestion that the First Nations culture has little to offer society. The same percentage of adult students and high school students agreed that a First Nations way of life is the kind of life they would like to live. Finally, only 18% of the adult students and 26% of the high school students indicated that they had been in situations where they did not want to say they were a member of the First Nations culture. The pride in heritage scores of both groups are high. This suggests the possibility that alternative programs which have as one of their goals the development of pride in heritage are successful. However, there is no normative data for making comparisons.

**Interviews.**

The results of the interviews suggest that 13 of the subjects gave between 7 and 11 responses indicating they held the beliefs of an involuntary minority. Six subjects gave between one and six responses indicating the beliefs of an involuntary minority. It was arbitrarily decided that the participants in the first group were high in their beliefs and the second group low. The following discussion, focusing on the information gained from the interviews, suggests that at least 13 subjects do hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority. A summary of the results of the interview questions is offered on the following pages.
Summary of the Results of the Interview Questions

1. What do you hope to do when you finish high school?
   16 gave responses such as "go to college, university, become a doctor, become a lawyer"
   3 said "I don't know"

2. What kinds of jobs (do you know of that) exist for adults?
   The answers to this question were coded as ambivalent and here are the responses:"supermarket workers; janitors; construction; alternative program workers; social workers; court workers; cashiers; waitresses; shelter workers; counselors; bingo operators; going-back-to-school; McDonalds; auto mechanics".

3. What is your career goal? Do you think you will reach it?
   8 said "I don't know" to both parts of the question
   2 said "I will try but I am having difficulty with my school work
   9 said "I don't know, I hope so" these subjects also gave some strategies regarding what step they will take to reach their career goals.

4. Do you think a high school diploma will enable you to obtain a better job than no high school diploma?
   19 said "yes"

5. Do you think a First Nations person with a diploma has the same chance as a non--First Nations person in getting a good job?
   17 said "no, but his/her chance should be the same "
   2 said "yes"

6. Is school an important part of your life?
   15 said "yes"
   3 said "it will become important when I am older"
   1 said "no"

7. What do First Nations kids think of other First Nations kids who do well in school?
   17 said "I am personally proud of them, but others tease them"
   1 said "First Nations kids do not do well in school"
8. a. Do your parents make you do homework?
   5 said "yes"
   14 said "no"

   b. Do your parents encourage you to complete high school?
   19 said "yes"
   b1. Did your parents complete high school?
   10 said "neither of my parents has completed high school"
   6 said "one of my parents has completed high school"
   3 said "both of my parents have completed high school"

   c. Do they tell you that with a good education you have the same chance as a non-First Nations person to obtain a good job?
   19 said "they have not really discussed this with us"

9. Do other First Nations kids think school is important for success in the future?
The answers to this question were coded as ambivalent and here are the responses: "no, they have other things to do; drugs alcohol and family problems get in the way of school".

10. How do people become successful adults?
The answers to this question were coded as ambivalent and here are the responses: "be responsible; work hard; I don't know".

11. Are all kids treated equally in school? a. by teachers?
   b. by other students?
   15 said "in the alternative program all students are treated equally by teachers and students, however, in the rest of the school First Nations kids are ignored by teachers and harassed by other students"
   3 said "all kids are treated equally"

12. Do you think teachers like First Nations kids as much as non- First Nations kids?
   17 said "First Nations and alternative program teachers like all kids the same; some other teachers do not like First Nations kids as much"
   2 said "yes"

13. Do you think First Nations kids like their teachers as much as non-First Nations kids?
   17 said "First Nations kids like the teachers in the alternative program but not the other teachers; non-First Nations kids like their teachers more"
   2 said "all kids like their teachers the same"
Initially some of the responses do not seem to be characteristic of the beliefs of involuntary minorities. For example, 16 of the responses to the question "What do you hope to do when you finish high school?" seemed atypical of an involuntary minority. The answers the subjects gave for this question included "go to college, or university, become a lawyer, doctor, veterinarian, police officer". These responses indicate that the subjects have high aspirations; however, after comparing their school marks and attendance records with the responses they gave, it was found that their high aspirations are accompanied with low school performance and poor attendance. This paradox of high aspirations and low academic achievement is typical of involuntary minorities (Ogbu, 1991).

Of the 19 subjects, 13 had high aspirations but low school performance. Ogbu (1991) suggests, the way "the system" currently treats and has treated First Nations people in the past, as well as their perceptions and responses to their schooling, can account for this pattern. Some of the responses to the interview questions given by the thirteen subjects exhibiting the beliefs of an involuntary minority will be used to illustrate this point. When asked what they hoped to do when they finished high school, some subjects articulated that they wanted to become lawyers, veterinarians, nurses, P.E. teachers, doctors and police officers. However, when asked "Do you think you will reach your goal and what steps will you have to take to reach it?"
the responses were not very promising. Eight of the subjects said they did not know if they would reach their goal nor did they know how to go about doing it. Two of them said they would try but they were having difficulty with their school work. Not knowing how to go about reaching their goals indicates that they have either not thought about it, because these goals seem out of reach, or they do not know where to obtain information about how to reach their goals. First Nations children might not have thought about how to go about reaching their goals because society and schools might not have told them how to reach their goals. They might not have told them because they have low expectations of First Nations children. Society and its representatives may not expect that First Nations people are capable of completing university or becoming professionals (e.g., veterinarians, teachers). The First Nations students may have adopted the belief that they are incompetent and thus perceive success in school and a professional career is out of their reach. Moreover, since teachers may believe and behave in ways which indicate that First Nations students are inadequate, they might not make information available to them about how to reach their goals. And, since most of the parents of the subjects who gave these responses did not complete high school, they are unable to advise their children on how to go about reaching their goals.

Furthermore, the subjects' high aspirations do not correspond with their academic achievement or school
attendance records. For instance, one of the subjects, who indicated he wanted to go to university and become a lawyer or a veterinarian, had failed four out of eight courses in Grade 8 and was already failing three of his courses in Grade 9. In addition, his attendance records for the last term of the present school year (April-June 1994) indicate that he has missed 150 classes this term alone. This case is typical among the subjects in the study, 12 of whom have failing grades and poor attendance records while stating they want to become lawyers, veterinarians, teachers, police officers, doctors or nurses.

When asked what kinds of jobs exist for adults, responses to this question included "supermarket workers, janitors, construction, alternate program workers, social workers, court workers, cashiers, waitresses, shelter workers, counselors, bingo operators, McDonald's, going-back-to-school, auto mechanics". The responses given by the subjects are indicative of the jobs they are familiar with from the adults with whom they are in contact. It may also be that their family members are engaged in the low-status occupations mentioned by the subjects. Moreover, the responses given by subjects that include "shelter workers, counselors, social workers" suggest that they are in contact with people in these occupations. Their perceptions about adult occupations (other than the professional occupations they mentioned) show that they are familiar with jobs that do not necessarily require high school completion. Thus, when
asked in the previous question how to go about pursuing their career goals, most were unable to answer since they probably do not personally know anyone holding the high status occupations they aspire to hold and thus cannot ask anyone for advice.

When asked how people become successful adults (adopted from Matute-Bianchi, 1986) responses ranged from "be responsible and work hard" to "I don't know". For instance, one of the subjects said she does not know since no one in her family has graduated from high school or has become successful. The only one she knew, in fact, who had graduated from high school was her classroom teacher. Therefore, without knowing how to become successful, it is very difficult for these subjects to become successful themselves. Even the subjects who gave answer like "work hard" do not necessarily use the "work hard" strategy, as seen from the grades and attendance records on their report cards. Perhaps they do not work hard in school because they do not perceive success as a possibility in their future since society tells them that they are inadequate. As Matute-Bianchi (1986) states, involuntary minority students do not discuss the future or think about the future at length because they focus on the present or the immediate future. There is no doubt that "the daily struggles and constrained realities these students and their families face" do not allow them to think and plan for the future (Matute-Bianchi, 1986, p. 236).
When asked if their parents make them do homework and encourage them to complete high school, five subjects said that their parents make them do homework. For the rest, it is their responsibility. All said, however, that their parents do encourage them to complete high school, so that they might find a good job or because they, the parents, did not complete high school. Moreover, in nine cases no one in their family has completed high school yet. However, as Ogbu (1991) explains, since the parents have not completed high school they do not push their children as much as the immigrant minority parents do. Thus, the parents, too, have faced many societal barriers, which did not allow them to complete high school. Three of the students in the present study expressed feelings that they should not have to complete high school because their parents did not.

A difference was found between those who had fewer responses indicating the beliefs of an involuntary minority and those who had more such responses. Of the 13 subjects responding like involuntary minorities (7-11 responses), neither parent of 10 of them completed high school. Of the other three subjects only one of their parents had completed high school. Of the six subjects who gave fewer (one to six) responses indicating the beliefs of an involuntary minority, both parents of three subjects finished high school and one parent of each of the other three subjects completed high school. Therefore, a trend is seen between the subjects who hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority and whether their
parents have graduated from high school. Low education levels reproduce themselves among First Nations people since societal barriers impede their academic success and contribute to their belief that the societal barriers are too overwhelming and permanent and that whatever they do will not make a difference. A post hoc comparison was made between these subjects who had more responses (7-11) indicating the beliefs of an involuntary minority and those subjects who had fewer responses (one to six). A t-test was completed to determine if there was any difference between the two groups on self-esteem or pride in heritage. No significant differences were found.

When asked whether a First Nations person with a high school diploma has the same chance as a non-First Nations person in obtaining a good job, 17 of the responses were "no, but it should be the same" (only two subjects said "yes"). One subject said "you can't see too many First Nations people with good jobs, most are on welfare". Another said "It's hard for "us" to get jobs because of the way we are. Some people are racist". Overall, the words racism and racist came up in most interviews. It was expressed 12 times that since most employers are racist, First Nations people have an unequal chance of obtaining a good job. With the perception that so many societal barriers exist for First Nations people it is unlikely that these subjects believe that they can succeed. Therefore, it is evident that the First Nations subjects, in this study, have adopted the belief that they
are not as competent as non-First Nations people, are treated unfairly and do not have the same opportunities as non-First Nations people.

Furthermore, contradictory messages are sent to First Nations children. On the one hand their parents and teachers encourage them to complete high school. On the other hand, as a result of the several societal barriers, they perceive that even with a good education they do not have the same chance as non-First Nations people in obtaining good jobs (Ogbu, 1991). The result is that they start to question the real value of school.

When asked what First Nations kids think of other First Nations kids who do well in school, 17 respondents said that they, personally, are proud of them, but that others tease them and make fun of them. One subject said "it's weird having an older person with good marks, most are too busy getting drunk". This shows that it is not typical of First Nations kids to achieve high in school. At a first glance it may be easy to blame the victims for their underachievement; yet the root of the problem is embedded historically in the unjust treatment of First Nations people and of the stigma they have acquired from society, which leads to their underachievement.

Moreover, 17 respondents answered that others tease First Nations children who do well in school, but that they, personally, are proud of them. It appears that in private First Nations kids do look up to the high achievers and
admire them, but in front of their peers they tease them. Ogbu (1991) found, that the Black students in Stockton, California, who did well in school were accused of rejecting their own culture and "doing the white man thing". Thus, they equated school knowledge with white man's knowledge. The same reality exists for some of the First Nations subjects in this study. It is not acceptable by some of them to do well in school, because school knowledge is assumed to be opposing knowledge. Some subjects stated that many First Nations kids choose to skip school and spend time with their friends because they feel that when they do come to school most of their teachers, in mainstream classes, do not understand them. Therefore, some believe that obeying their teachers is equated with obeying white people's orders, and that is a waste of time since white people do not understand what they are going through.

When asked if school is an important part of their lives 15 respondents said "yes", while three said it will be important when they get older. Though most said yes, examination of their academic records suggest that they are not doing well in school. Once again, they are not concerned about the future. They perceive school as not very valuable since they have adopted the belief that their chances for success in the future are low. As Matute-Bianchi (1986) expressed, their uncertainty about the future makes them more likely to concentrate on the immediate future and the present. Therefore, they tend not to see the benefits of
school in the short term and since they do not concentrate on the long term, they see school as irrelevant.

When asked if other First Nations children think school is important for success in the future most of the subjects indicated that some do but most do not. Most of them said that other First Nations children do not think school is important because they have other things to do. Many said that their peers are "too busy getting high" or "sitting at home relaxing". One girl said that her friend did not think school was important because all she wants is a plain simple job. Several other subjects said that their friends say they can make more money in "weird" ways. One subject said his friend makes more money in one night than a teacher makes in an entire week. Nine subjects mentioned drugs, alcohol and family problems getting in the way of school. These findings are consistent with those Ogbu describes. Ogbu (1991) claims that "the children tend to divert most of their efforts away from schoolwork into nonacademic activities ... hustling presents an attractive alternative strategy to schooling" (281). Once again, the reason for this is that First Nations people have historically been told that they are not able to do well in school or hold professional occupations and have thus internalized this accusation.

The question, "are all kids treated equally in school?" brought up some unpleasant memories for some subjects and anger in others. Fifteen said that in the alternative program they get treated equally; however in the rest of the
school (some have been in the mainstream program or have a one or two classes with other teachers) some feel ignored. One girl said she receives special treatment in her mainstream English class; the teacher explains things to her several times as if she does not understand. Eight students said that they had been called disgusting names (e.g., stupid chugs, wagon burners, welfare bums) and get pennies thrown at them. One subject said that while living and attending school in Saskatchewan, the class was given a homework assignment that included the words "savage Indian" on it. When it was brought to her parents' attention they approached the school principal with their concern, and according to this subject nothing was done about it. In fact, the girl was being teased so much, following this incident, that she was forced to transfer to another school.

The next question yielded some similar responses. When asked if teachers like First Nations children as much as non-First Nations children, one subject said that at a school she used to attend she felt like the "black sheep". Seventeen of the subjects said that First Nations teachers and teachers in the alternative program like all students the same, whereas some others do not. As one subject articulated "here (meaning in the alternative program) teachers like all kids the same but upstairs (in the mainstream school) Native kids get treated like nothing". Thus, once again it is evident that First Nations students are victims of discrimination and are frequently humiliated in school.
The last question, whether First Nations children like their teachers as much as non-First Nations children, yielded answers which could indicate First Nations children like their teachers based on how their teachers treat them. For instance, one subject answered "no, we like the teachers here (in the alternative program) because they understand, we don't like the teachers upstairs because they are racist". Sixteen respondents gave similar answers expressing their amity for the teachers in the alternative program and their dislike for the teachers in the rest of the school. Most of them think that the non-First Nations children like their teachers more. In the alternative program they are not stigmatized but in the mainstream school they are often made to feel inadequate and are patronized (as seen in the responses of some students).

Many reasons can be offered to explain the responses given in the present study by the First Nations subjects. However, upon careful examination one can see that their perceptions of school and opportunity for success are similar to those of other involuntary minority youth (Ogbu, 1991; Parko, 1991; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Gibson, 1976). As Ogbu (1991) suggests, the cultural and structural consequences of the status of First Nations people, in addition to the students' perceptions, interpretations of, and responses to schooling (as a result of the discrimination they have suffered), contribute to their low academic success. Although it is not entirely the "system" at present that is at fault,
it is also the historical degradation and discrimination of First Nations people by society which contributes to the lack of achievement in school among First Nations students.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

One of the purposes of doing a thesis is to gain research experience. The completion of this study taught me the process of doing a study and all of the difficulties one can encounter while conducting a study. The study tentatively suggests that the subjects in this study hold many of the beliefs of an involuntary minority. Previous research (Gibson, 1976; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Ogbu, 1974; Kramer, 1991; Barrington, 1976; Shimahara, 1991) indicates that involuntary minorities hold at least some of the following beliefs. First of all, they may hold a negative dual frame of reference since they see that they are worse off than the dominant group. Second, they may interpret the social, political and economical barriers against them as permanent and institutionalized. Third, they may have internalized the accusation that they are inadequate and thus perceive that a good education is not sufficient to succeed in society. As a result, they may have developed a pessimistic outlook about their ability to succeed. Finally, as a result of discrimination, they perceive that they do not have the same opportunity as others to advance in society. The responses of the subjects in this study were consistent with the beliefs of involuntary minorities.
A second accomplishment of the study may have been the development of an interview schedule to determine whether or not individuals hold the beliefs of an involuntary minority. Given the difficulties there is no way of knowing whether the treatment would be effective in enhancing self-esteem and pride in their heritage or in causing the students to reject the beliefs of an involuntary minority. This cannot be concluded due to the nature of the sample and the inadequate teaching of the multicultural curriculum. The sample scored very high on the Pride in Heritage measure on the pre-test. They may have had high pride in heritage before entering the alternative program or the alternative program may have developed their pride in heritage. One of the goals of the alternative program was development of pride in heritage.

The re-execution of this study, with more control over the limiting factors, is vital. There is evidence from the interviews and the students' academic and attendance records that their educational achievement is being impeded. Perhaps, as Ogbu (1991) and others (Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Gibson, 1976; Shimahara, 1991; Parko, 1984), claim, the discriminatory treatment and oppression felt by First Nations people both historically, and in the present, have contributed to their perceptions that the barriers they face in society are permanent and institutionalized. These perceptions tend to impede their belief that they can be high achievers in school and succeed in society. These factors, and perhaps others, impede the academic achievement of First
Nations students; hence, the importance of the information discussed in the present study. If the proposed multicultural treatment, when carried out appropriately, has an effect on the students' rejection of the beliefs of an involuntary minority, increase in pride in heritage and self-esteem, a step towards First Nations students' high aspirations and success will have been made.
REFERENCES


Department of Education. (1985). The Inner City Drop Out Study. Regina, Saskatchewan: Department of Education.


APPENDIX A

Pride in Heritage Measure
Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory
Interview Questions
**Title:** The Effects of a Multicultural Curriculum on First Nations' Pride in Heritage, Self-Esteem and Rejection of the Beliefs of an Involuntary Minority.

**Investigators:** Joyce Sipsas (research for Master's Thesis)
John Kehoe (supervising professor) 822-5287

You are being asked to participate in a study which will measure the effects of a multicultural curriculum on First Nations peoples' pride in heritage, self-esteem and feeling that they can succeed. The study asks participants to respond to two measures:

1. A measure of your self-esteem.
2. A measure of your pride in your heritage.

You have the opportunity to withdraw from taking the measures at any time without influencing your class standing, but participation in the curriculum is mandatory because it is part of the course of study. All responses to the measures will be kept confidential—your answers will be coded by number and your name will not be recorded. It will take approximately ten minutes to complete the measures, and if you do complete them we will assume you are consenting to participate in the study. The result of the study will assist social studies curriculum writers in developing curriculum.

**Pride in Heritage**

**Directions**

Please check the column that describes how you feel about the following statements. Please check only one column for each of the 8 statements. This is not a test, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

1. I know quite a lot about my First Nations culture.
2. I am proud to be a member of my culture.
3. I am not interested in learning about my culture.
4. Other Canadians could learn a lot from the First Nations way of life.
5. I am ashamed of my culture.
6. A First Nations way of life is the kind of life I would like to live.
7. The First Nations culture has very little to offer society.
8. I have been in situations where I did not want to say I was a member of the First Nations culture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th></th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Slightly</td>
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**CULTURE-FREE SEI, FORM B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I wish I were younger</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Boys and girls like to play with me</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I usually quit when my school work is too hard</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My parents never get angry at me.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I only have a few friends</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have lots of fun with my parents</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I like being a boy / I like being a girl.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am a failure at school.</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. My parents make me feel that I am not good enough</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I usually fail when I try to do important things</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I am happy most of the time</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have never taken anything that did not belong to me.</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>13. I often feel ashamed of myself.</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>14. Most boys and girls play games better than I do</td>
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<td>15. I often feel that I am no good at all.</td>
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<td>16. Most boys and girls are smarter than I am.</td>
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<td>17. My parents dislike me because I am not good enough</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. I like everyone I know.</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. I am as happy as most boys and girls</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Most boys and girls are better than I am</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I like to play with children younger than I am.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I often feel like quitting school.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I can do things as well as other boys and girls</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I would change many things about myself if I could.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. There are many times when I would like to run away from home</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I never worry about anything.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I always tell the truth</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. My teacher feels that I am not good enough.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. My parents think I am a failure.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I worry a lot.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you hope to do when you finish high school?

2. What kinds of jobs (do you know of that) exist for adults?

3. What is your career goal? Do you think you will reach it?

4. Do you think a high school diploma will enable you to obtain a better job than no high school diploma?

5. Do you think a First Nations person with a diploma has the same chance as a non-First Nations person in getting a good job?

6. Is school an important part of your life?

7. What do First Nations kids think of other First Nations kids who do well in school?

8. a. Do your parents make you do homework?
   
     b. Do your parents encourage you to complete high school?
     
     b1. Did your parents complete high school?
     
     c. Do they tell you that with a good education you have the same chance as a non--First Nations person to obtain a good job?

9. Do other First Nations kids think school is important for success in the future?

10. How do people become successful adults?

11. Are all kids treated equally in school? a. by teachers? b. by other students?

12. Do you think teachers like First Nations kids as much as non-First Nations kids?

13. Do you think First Nations kids like their teachers as much as non-First Nations kids?