

While Native American Indians represent only about 1% of the total U.S. population, they speak 200 languages and dialects. The remaining 99% of the U.S. population speaks about 200 languages. Native American Indians are not a homogeneous people but are as diverse as the number of tribes, approximately 500. (Hodgkinson, Hamilton, Obarakpppor 1990). (Map 2, Table 4, Chart 1).

In the American Indian Heritage School there are 109 students with approximately 50 tribes represented. The school is a microcosm of the macro-problems. I have observed at the school, children who come daily because they experience a place that really cares about them as individuals. The school gives each student a sense of belonging, a home for some, a safe non-judgmental environment where their success is not dependent on how many good grades can be put on a piece of paper. Some Native children are managing to succeed, in spite of a difficult environment. "During the 1980s the SAT scores of Native American youth were higher than those for African Americans and Hispanics, but lower than white or Asian scores" (Hodgkinson, Outtz, Obarakpor 1990).

The time for the tribes to unite has never been so great as the present. The opportunity to accomplish this is enhanced by the awareness being achieved through diversity training. The atmosphere created by the town meetings that President Clinton has developed offers hope.