

OBJECTIVES

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Program Objectives

The Indian Reading Series is a supplementary reading and language arts development program for primary-grade Indian and non-Indian children. The objectives of the program are to:

- ***Expand student interest in language arts experiences***
- ***Increase student skills in language arts activities***
- ***Improve student feelings of competence and success in communication skills***
- ***Reinforce for Indian students a positive self-image and pride in being Indian***
- ***Provide all students and teachers with a greater understanding of Indian culture***

Rationale

In spite of some encouraging indicators in recent years, Indians continue to lag behind the general population in formal educational attainment. Four major problem areas have been defined:

- ***The reading and language arts curriculum materials currently in use in schools do not contain content that is culturally relevant or within the experiential background of most Indian children.***
- ***When Indian children's reading and language skills are measured using typical norm-referenced standardized tests, their scores tend to be lower than scores for other comparison groups (especially middle-class Anglo children). Although the children learn decoding skills, they seem to lag behind in developing comprehension and language fluency.***
- ***Indian children seem to become less interested in school and school activities as they progress through the grades. Drop-out rates in high school and junior high are extremely high. Many elementary school Indian students become quiet and withdrawn and do not verbally participate in classroom activities.***
- ***Due to cultural conflicts in the classroom and the resultant lack of academic success, many Indian children lack a positive self-image.***

Upon examination of these problem areas, one can readily determine the special needs of Indian children:

- ***Indian children need to develop an increased interest in school, especially interest and involvement in language arts activities and communication processes. They need the opportunity to use the language they bring to school. Only after they are aware of the potential of their own language and feel free to use it, can they develop new and more effective patterns of communication.***
- ***Indian children, like all children, need relevance and high interest potential in the content to which they react when speaking, reading, writing or listening. They need instructional strategies and activities which more closely match their past experiences and interactions with adults.***
- ***Indian children need support from parents and other community members involved in the school program. They need experiences with school materials which emphasize the dignity and importance of people and places within the Indian community.***
- ***All children need to know and understand important similarities and differences among the varied cultural backgrounds of their classmates.***

The Indian Reading Series is designed to help you open the door to the homes and talk of the children, to the thoughts that they have. When you, the teacher, support the student, the student will support you and you'll more quickly reach peace of mind in communication.

Cries For Ribs and I left the giveaway, rode up a draw in the breaks to the top of a butte, and saw an elevator way down the Little Big Horn.

...giveaway?
...a draw in the breaks?
...an elevator way down the Little Big Horn?

Talk. Hearing it and understanding it is the basis of how we begin to learn and to communicate with one another. Communication happens when we're talking about the same thing. And when two pieces of mind are the same, then there's peace of mind.

Often, talk or language in school is not the same as talk or language at home. The school tends to close the door to talk or language from the home because the student's piece of mind and the teacher's piece of mind are not the same. So, there is no peace of mind; there is no communication.

***Cries for ribs?
Oh, you say that's a name?
Oh, your friend?***

***The giveaway?
Should be gave away because it's in the past.
Oh, a giveaway is held when something good happens to a person, so the family gives away things they really like? Okay.
Good things?***

***A draw in the breaks?
Oh, it's about like a coulee?
Okay.***

***What's a coulee?
Oh, a land formation about like a valley, except it doesn't have a river or stream except after rain or snow runs off?***

***Top of a butte?
Oh, the tip of a large hill?***

**An elevator?
In the hills, out in the country?
Oh, an elevator is where they store grain?
Okay. Thought that's what they rode up the
coulee.**

**Way down the Little Big Horn?
Oh, the Little Big Horn is a river and down
is the direction it's flowing in the valley?
Okay.**

The developers of the stories believe that Indian children should encounter familiar concepts in their initial contact with formal education; that they will benefit from being introduced to language development through materials and activities directly related to their past and present experiences.

The materials are designed to feature illustrations, language and ideas that tend to reflect the immediate environment of Indian children.

**materials that coincide with thought
materials that have meaning
materials that make sense
talking about
what the children
have heard
have seen
have felt
have tasted
have smelled
materials in the children's own world
in their world of words and thoughts
materials they enjoy.**

As the children become more proficient and feel more competent in language and communication skills, it is expected that their attitude toward school and school activities will change; that they will feel more comfortable in the school environment and will increase their participation and achievement.

Yes, learning will happen when you and the children are talking in one language about the same "think"; when together you are answering questions that have no answers and are showing each other how to become *real people*.

What are the stars?

Why is it daylight?

Why does it hail and rain?

Where does the grass come from?

How did the horse get here?

Human Objectives

What are we talking about?

Objectives that just stay on paper?

No, we are talking about feelings...human-ness. If you, the teacher, let out your feelings when the children send out their feelings, our objectives might be achieved.

What objectives are we talking about?

We are talking about *security*:

- Children being secure about their writing style and liking to read what they write
- You being secure in showing the children *how* to think, not *what* to think

We are talking about *understanding*:

- Children expressing their thoughts and listening to you, the teacher
- You listening to the children and sharing your thoughts
- Children sharing their feelings
- You understanding, because you have been there, too

We are talking about *self-confidence*:

- An "*I can do it!*" attitude which comes from success

We are talking about *imagination*:

- Talking daydreams
- Knowing *how* to think

We are talking about *interest*:

- Children talking, reading and writing in their own world of words

We are talking about *comprehension*:

- Children acting, guessing, making, creating

We are talking about *talking*:

- Children seeing their own words and finding words that sound the same
- Children learning new words and meanings

We are talking about showing the children *how* to think. When you extend your fellowship to the children, when you share with them your love, good words and affection, they will be secure and understanding. They will be secure and understanding because you are. You are the one who controls their environment.

What objectives are we talking about?

We just want to show the children how to be *real people*.