Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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About 1,000 teachers, from Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and from public and private schools attended by Indian students, are scheduled for intensive training in new teaching methods this summer, the Department of the Interior announced today. The program is being conducted for the Bureau of Indian Affairs by the University of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, Ariz., under a c $399,800 contract, financed with a part of a $9 million grant from the Department, of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Other programs being funded under the grant provide for cost-effectiveness studies of Bureau teaching and administration; training of BIA guidance counselors; teaching of English as a second language to Indian children; development of social and cultural understanding of and for Indian groups; and development of procedures and guidelines for Indian people to establish their own Boards of Education to take over operation of Indian schools under contract.

Working at institutes coordinated by Northern Arizona University, school administrators will study ways to improve the effectiveness of professional staff who have charge of teaching Indian youngsters.

About 1,000 participants from all over the country will be involved in a continuing program on four university campuses: Northern Arizona, South Dakota, Utah, and Central Washington. The interrelated programs are designed to provide both old and new members of the BIA education staff with the latest information on instructional techniques and analysis of Indian youth.

Typical areas that will be explored include the differences in language development in first and second languages. Example: Most Indians learn their native tongue first, then have a difficult time transferring Indian imagery concepts to the more exacting demands of English tense and gender. There will be strong recommendations for early childhood education.

Other areas include the relationship of health, family and cultural differences to the development of intelligence, and the importance of family, community leaders and home environment in the education of the Indian child.

Recognizing that the Indian child is strongly family-oriented, with Indian families working in close cooperation on the reservation, Bureau educators have been learning to bring the family into actual participation in schoolroom activities, from PTA work to direct involvement as dormitory advisors in Bureau boarding schools.

In addition to expanded instruction for educational personnel, the Bureau is seeking approval of the Civil Service Commission for establishment of rates of teacher pay that will provide additional compensation for graduate study credits and extra-duty assignments.