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A new course of study for young American Indians, based on the strengths and historical significance of their heritage will be used in schools of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of the Interior reported today.

Developed by Dr. John Bryde, who has worked for 22 years in Indian schools conducted by the Jesuit Order, the new course has been tried in the Holy Rosary Mission School on the Pine Ridge, S.D, Indian reservation, as a means of developing self-esteem and capability This combined elementary and high school has a capacity of 500 students and is the largest Indian private school in this country.

Dr. Bryde is now at Fort Yates, M.D., under a contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs working on instructional materials and teaching guides for the course, which he calls "Acculturation Psychology" or "How To Be A Modern Indian ...” It will be started in the first and ninth grade levels of Indian schools and is expected to be expanded to other grades.

One of the few white men to speak the Sioux language fluently, Dr. Bryde developed the new approach during his doctorate research into the psychological problems of Indian children A study of the records of both Indian children and white children in the Dakotas showed that Indian children overachieved the national norms on tests taken while they were in the fourth to sixth grades, but at .the seventh grade began to fall behind.

How to stop this reversal of performance became the subject of Dr. Bryde's research under a $10,000 grant by the National Institute of Mental Health.

He decided that many Indian youngsters at about the eighth grade level tend to feel alienated, even from themselves, and feel rejected, depressed, and lost The differences from reactions of the white students were significant".

Dr. Bryde then sought a remedial or therapeutic approach and decided that a major factor in the breakdown of scholastic achievement and general performance of Indian youth was lack of effective identification with Indian heritage o He concluded that many Indians have not been taught a clear history of their people, have not developed racial pride, and have not been taught what Indian values are and how they historically arise.

"Since the Indian youth indicates that he is socially alienated, even from his own group, he shows that he has no effective awareness of his historical racial identity," Dr. Bryde says"

"Since awareness of historical origins is necessary for orientation to any kind of future action, the first part of this acculturation course provides for teaching him a solid, clear history of his race, designed to give him pride in his racial origins"

"Since the Indian youth does not get a sense of historical racial pride from the study of the routine American history courses taught in all Indian schools now, he should be taught thoroughly and vividly the history of his Indian race as the first source and basis for personal identity.

"The next part of the course will teach the Indian youth what values are and how they historically arise -- great Indian values and how to use them in the modern world, and non-Indian values, and how to adjust to the clashes and conflicts between them"

"He will be shown clearly that acculturational psychology is not a matter of ceasing to be Indian. This is psychologically absurd. He will likewise be shown that acculturation is not a matter of completely becoming white. This is also psychologically impossible"

"He will be shown how to take the best from the two cultures, blend and integrate these values within himself, with the result that he creates within himself a unique modern Indian personality, which is his enriching contribution to society."

Two pupils in the Holy Rosary Mission School -- Patrick Kills Crow and Mary Crazy Thunder -- described the course as "something really different and exciting" in a news article o They wrote that they never had thought they would look forward to a class period "but we sure do now."
