Partnership Accomplishments

The steering committee developed a plan to address the following project aims:

- Remove barriers to obtaining a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and receiving specialized training in early childhood education and culturally relevant curricular content
- Inhale culturally appropriate curricular content within Head Start classrooms and degree programs
- Insure that all EHS/HS children in tribal programs acquire skills necessary for them to achieve in K-6 learning environments

The committee developed protocol to conduct community focus groups to identify the needs of children as viewed by parents and tribal elders

Results indicated consensus on two issues:

- The importance of maintaining traditional tribal culture
- The importance the community placed on the educational role of the tribal Head Start programs

Building on cultural strengths, the steering committee:

- Developed a Cultural Advisory Team of tribal elders and language experts to guide the cultural context approach to curriculum reform
- Contracted a site assessment to understand the cultural resources currently available to tribal Head Start centers

To strengthen the education supports provided by tribal Head Start programs, the steering committee developed a child and classroom assessment, conducted in the fall and spring of each year

- The primary goals of this component were to understand the quality of the classroom environment; the children's social, emotional, and academic development; and the educational supports provided by families

Data collected from this study, as shown in Figure 1, indicated a great need to improve children's opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills

Figure 1 Children's Academic Readiness in Year 1

To address the identified needs of improving children's literacy and numeracy skills, the steering committee brought MSU faculty members into the team to conduct training for early childhood educators

The faculty member worked in collaboration with the steering committee to create a professional development model which met the needs of the community partners:

- Distance education model to eliminate geographic barriers
- Individualized instruction for teachers' varied educational background
- Focus on children's developmental outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy

Results from the research project indicate significant growth for children in treatment classrooms as compared to those in control classrooms (Figure 2)

Figure 2 Numbers and Counting

Partnering with Michigan's American Indian Communities

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