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Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future. By Larry K .
Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern.

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to some readers, but it includes some minor errors that could have been avoided with a more careful review. Any such listing is, by definition, arbitrary, but one could quibble about matters to be included or omitted here.

Although Bennett implies in her introduction that accounts from the Navajo point of view have never emerged before, other significant stories from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been published previously. Navajo oral historical accounts have appeared in volumes published by the Navajo Community College Press about the Long Walk period and the era of livestock reduction. Robert W. Young and William Morgan earlier presented stories in Navajo and in English about these times.

Bighorse the Warrior is, however, an important addition to Navajo history. In about sixty-two pages of text, Tiana Bighorse has woven a story of which she may be justly proud. The University of Arizona Press also merits praise for its inclusion of photographs and illustrations that add to the impact of this fine, memorable book.

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Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future. By Larry K. Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service, 1990. 100 pages. \$19.95 paper.

Rather than basing their educational methodology on research, this trio of authors from Augustana College in South Dakota chose to provide a *mélange* of quotations and viewpoints from widely varied sources of practical wisdom about education and child development. They merge Euro-American psychological theories and philosophical approaches with the heritage of Native Americans to support proposals for "reclaiming" those alienated and troubled youth who present such a challenge to today's teachers and agency workers.

Emphasis throughout the book lies in strategies for developing supportive environments. This includes techniques that help at-risk youths master important skills, rather than controlling them in authoritarian settings designed to satisfy the needs of

adults. Although the authors recognize that harmful behavior must be controlled, they make a persuasive case for the involvement of young people in determining their own futures. Perhaps the book's most unusual portions describe ways to initiate service clubs and projects that transform young people from recipients of care to altruistic helpers of others. It should be noted that these recommendations are not made exclusively for those working with Native American youth but are intended to provide guidance for anyone in the helping professions.

Central to the book's approach, both in theme and in placement, is the Native American philosophy of child management depicted by George Bluebird (Lakota Sioux). His colorfully graphic medicine wheel is followed by four stylized illustrations to present the central values of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity as a unifying theme applicable to all children (pp. 51-52). These values can be readily transferred to situations beyond those mentioned by the authors. For example, the sense of belonging to the natural world is fostered by youth groups endeavoring to preserve ecological balance. On the negative side, inner-city gang activities can be seen as an attempt to form peer substitutes for the social structures these youths otherwise lack.

The introduction of "brain-friendly learning," based on the work of Leslie Hart, provides another four-part approach to education. Hart's synthesis of brain research and educational achievement is presented as nonthreatening pattern-making which is experiential and social. It is suggested that the term "interest deficit disorder" might be more appropriate than the label of "attention deficit disorder," since these children are attending to something their brains find more novel, worthwhile, and adventuresome than cautious curricula and textbook trivia. Like all the other brief chapters, this one is illuminated with anecdotes, quotations, and references.

The ideas expressed in *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, popularly called "empowerment" or "self-realization," are supported by contemporary research and by historical precedent. For example, over the past thirty years, social psychologists have developed a model known as Internal versus External Control of Reinforcement or *I-E* theory. Almost a thousand studies utilizing Rotter's 1966 *I-E* scale and its subsequent modifications have been published, many of them related to student attitudes and achievements. Internals, those with high *I* scores, seem to be individuals who function with the expectation that outcomes are contingent

upon their own behavior or characteristics. At the other end of the scale, Externals ascribe outcomes to fate, change, the control of others, or simply unpredictable random chance. Students with an Internal belief system incorporate a state of alertness termed "mindfulness," which is expressed in active information processing characterized by cognitive differentiation. These young people demonstrate such coping strategies as self-monitoring, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and self-control. This seems to be very much like the "brain-friendly learning" advocated in this book. In contrast, students who are strongly External in their approach to life tend to feel helpless, with an overly cautious response to defend against failure alternating with explosive breaking out of what they perceive to be a system arrayed against them. This, again, agrees with the point of view expressed by Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern. Theirs is a system designed to develop Internal approaches to academics and to life. Conventional educational practices are designed by Externals to create Externals, students who fit into an authoritarian system.

Historically, a prototype for the model described by these three authors was discussed in "Those First Good Years of Indian Education: 1894 to 1898," my article which appeared in this journal in October 1981. William N. Hailmann, superintendent of Indian schools during those years, emphasized student self-government, activity learning from kindergarten through high school, and strong community involvement. This strategy depended upon teachers able to function as empathic facilitators, not disciplinarians. Based on the writings of German educator Friedrich Froebel, primarily his 1826 *Education of Man*, this was a system that respected individual differences and viewed the natural world as an appropriate basis for curriculum. Despite a major economic crisis and frequent criticisms from politicians, Hailmann's version of education for self-realization was highly successful from the viewpoint of the Indian students and their families. Since the superintendent's position was a political appointment, the Indian schools reverted to their previous bureaucratic stance after McKinley replaced Cleveland as president. This four-year period during the 1890s, however, demonstrated, through student enthusiasm and progress, that ideas such as those expressed in *Reclaiming Youth at Risk* are viable.

The holistic approach presented in *Reclaiming Youth at Risk* appears to be gaining adherents as school administrators and others recognize that they have failed to educate a significant portion

of their students. This book would be helpful in their search for solutions.

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Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak. By Laura Coltelli. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990. 211 pages. \$22.50 cloth.

This volume is a collection of interviews with Paula Gunn Allen, Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris, Joy Harjo, Linda Hogan, N. Scott Momaday, Simon Ortiz, Wendy Rose, Leslie Silko, Gerald Vizenor, and James Welch. In an exhilarating trip around the country, which also surely must have been a travel agent's worst nightmare, Coltelli conducted all ten interviews during the month of September 1985, rushing between venues as distant as New Hampshire and Berkeley, Minneapolis and Tucson.

The interviews have a remarkable coherence, not only because of their having been conducted within this one particular period. Coltelli developed two sets of questions, a common set for all writers and an individual set tailored to each writer. The common set of questions addressed issues Coltelli felt to be of wide interest among scholars and general readers of Native American literature, including the writers' relationships to their tribal heritage and to the oral tradition, the role of anthropologists and critics, influential non-Indian writers and so on. Frankly, these questions elicited for me the least interesting responses, perhaps because I had heard the answers so frequently already, perhaps because the writers had been asked them so often that their answers seemed almost rehearsed. A noteworthy exception to this judgment, however, was Coltelli's request to the writers to describe the creative process at the heart of their work (Simon Ortiz: "No, I can't. I mean, I could tell you a few things . . ." [p. 117]. Paula Allen: "I sit down at the word processor and off we go. It's really a different process since I got this thing" [p. 33]).

In addition, Coltelli developed questions that were particular to the interests of each interviewee: the collaborative process between Erdrich and Dorris; Vizenor, the trickster figure, and post-modernism; Momaday's sense of place. A common thread running through the interviews with women writers had to do