

Teachers and Schools

To what extent do teachers of AI/AN students use native languages during instruction?

In addition to the cultural influences of their families and communities, students may also encounter their language and culture within their educational settings. Overall, 87 percent of fourth-grade students, 87 percent of eighth-grade reading/language arts students, and 90 percent of eighth-grade mathematics students had teachers who provided instruction entirely in English (figure 3-8). At both grades, however, a higher percentage of students in high density schools than in low density schools had teachers who reported “occasional use of AI/AN language(s)” in their instruction.

At both grades, a higher percentage of students in BIE schools than in public schools had teachers who reported “frequent use of AI/AN language(s)” to teach core subjects (table 3-14). For instance, 16 percent of fourth-grade BIE school students had teachers who used AI/AN language frequently, compared to 1 percent of public school students.

Table 3-14. Percentage of AI/AN students, by type of school, grade, and teachers’ responses to a question about the use of students’ AI/AN language(s) in class: 2007

To what extent do you use your students’ American Indian or Alaska Native language(s) to teach core subjects?	Type of school	
	Public	BIE
Grade 4		
Frequent use of AI/AN language(s)	1	16*
Occasional use of AI/AN language(s)	9	41*
Instruction entirely in English	90	43*
Grade 8 reading/language arts		
Frequent use of AI/AN language(s)	2	27*
Occasional use of AI/AN language(s)	7	33*
Instruction entirely in English	91	39*
Grade 8 mathematics		
Frequent use of AI/AN language(s)	2	14*
Occasional use of AI/AN language(s)	4	39*
Instruction entirely in English	94	47*

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from public schools.

NOTE: AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native. BIE = Bureau of Indian Education. Results are not shown for Department of Defense and private schools. Detail may not sum to totals because the response choice “Instruction is primarily in students’ AI/AN language(s)” is not shown.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2007 National Indian Education Study.

Figure 3-8. Percentage of fourth- and eighth-grade AI/AN students, by teachers’ responses to a question about the use of students’ AI/AN language(s) in class and school density: 2007

To what extent do you use your students’ American Indian or Alaska Native language(s) to teach core subjects?

